

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODCOTE HIGH SCHOOL

Coulsdon

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101806

Headteacher: Mr D People

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Browning
1510

Dates of inspection: 4–7 November 2002

Inspection number: 249091

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11–16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Meadow Rise
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Speller

Date of previous inspection: 9 December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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| 9472 | John Edmond | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? Partnership with parents |
| 8002 | Lionel Farraway | Team inspector | English English as an additional language | |
| 30699 | Arthur Kemp | Team inspector | Mathematics | |
| 32166 | Nasim Butt | Team inspector | Science KS3 Science | |
| 2391 | Peter Gossage | Team inspector | Information and communication technology | |
| 1990 | Graham Preston | Team inspector | Design & technology | |
| 7465 | Richard Brent | Team inspector | Special educational needs Geography | |
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| 1995 | Kate Seager | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages | |
| 32210 | Gerard Boyle | Team inspector | Physical education | |
| 18912 | Catherine Large | Team inspector | Religious education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities? |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woodcote is about the same size as other community co-educational comprehensive schools nationally with 961 pupils in Years 7 to 11. On intake, pupils' attainment levels cover the full range. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average, at 9.5 per cent. Over 21 per cent of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties, which is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need, 0.4 per cent, is well below the national average. Most pupils come from the area surrounding the school in the southern part of the London Borough of Croydon. The school is popular and oversubscribed. The area is socio-economically advantaged. The predominant group of pupils are of white UK heritage. Sixteen per cent of pupils come from a wide range of other ethnic groups – the main ones being Asian British Indian, Black British other, and Black British Caribbean. A small proportion, three per cent of pupils, speaks English as an additional language but none of them are at an early stage of learning. The school is in its first term of Sports College status.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving and increasingly effective school. Standards are average at the end of Year 9 but pupils who complete GCSE courses achieve standards that are at or above the national average in most subjects. Given the pupils' attainment on entry to the school, this represents at least satisfactory and often good achievement in most subjects. Teaching overall is good and often very good, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Leadership and management of the school are providing very good and purposeful direction. The school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in mathematics and science are above average throughout the school.
- Standards in art, drama, geography, history, information and communication technology and physical education at the end of Year 11 are above expected levels.
- The quality of teaching and learning are at least good and often very good.
- Pupils' very good behaviour, attitudes to learning and their personal development are all major strengths of the school. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- The school is a caring community, which gives good support to its pupils. Parents are supportive of the school and parental links are good.
- There is very good and effective leadership from the headteacher, senior staff and governors.
- The keeping track of and evaluation of standards, teaching and learning has led to improvements across the school.

What could be improved

- The achievement of boys in English and modern foreign languages, and achievement in design and technology throughout the school.
- Significant elements of the curriculum are weak.
- The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is limited with few opportunities for basic skills development and too few suitable programmes in Years 10 and 11.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection in December 1996 is good. Standards are maintained by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11 standards are above the national average. Unconfirmed school results for 2002 show a further upward trend in results. Teaching and learning are improved with significantly more instances of good and very good teaching seen. The role and effectiveness of curriculum co-ordinators have improved. Concerns remain in the management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties. Restructuring of senior management has clarified roles. Statutory requirements are met for appraisal but are outstanding for collective worship, design and technology and cross-curricular information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11. The mentioned health and safety issues are addressed.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | Similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| GCSE examinations | B | B | B | C |

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

The above table shows that GCSE results in 2001 were above average in comparison to those obtained nationally and were average compared with similar schools. In the 2001 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 9, attainment was below average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. However, these results have been steadily rising, above the national trend, over the last five years. The school has been affected by previous turnover of staff and some staffing vacancies. This has badly affected both end of Year 9 national assessments and GCSE results. Results for individual subjects vary. GCSE results are improving at a slower rate than the national trend. The school exceeded its set targets for GCSE results in 2001. Although national comparative data for 2002 results are unavailable, the school's GCSE results show an improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving GCSE passes, particularly for those achieving A* to G grades.

In work seen during the inspection, standards are at least average in Year 9 but those entered for GCSE courses achieve standards that are at or above the national average in most subjects. Standards in literacy and numeracy are average. Although there are pupils who underachieve, most pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory, and often good. Boys underachieve in English and modern foreign languages. There is underachievement in design and technology. Higher-attaining and gifted and talented pupils make appropriate progress.

Pupils with English as an additional language are appropriately supported and they achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Attitudes to learning are very positive, especially when the standard of teaching is high. Pupils really enjoy school and they show interest and involvement in all aspects of school life. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. The quality of behaviour and of pupils' attitudes makes a major contribution to learning. High standards of behaviour prevail overwhelmingly in class and behaviour round the school is civilised. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. There are very good opportunities throughout the school for pupils to take responsibility. Relationships are very good. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. Levels of attendance are in line with national averages; unauthorised absences are about half the national average. A significant number of lessons start late due to the distance pupils have to travel between classrooms. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good overall. In over a quarter of lessons, teaching is very good or better; in the remaining lessons, teaching is almost always satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in English; in mathematics and science they are good. The skills of communication, including literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, are not yet firmly embedded in all curriculum areas. The school generally meets the needs of pupils well. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve satisfactorily as a result of careful planning and good teaching in most subjects, but the variable quality of work suitably matched to their needs makes for uneven achievement across the curriculum. Pupils of higher attainment are usually suitably challenged. In most lessons, pupils gain and advance their knowledge, skills and understanding. Most have very positive attitudes to learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Unsatisfactory. There are some very noteworthy and distinctive features of the school's provision. The specialist Sports College status of the school and the range of extra-curricular activities are two such features. However, there are significant weaknesses. There is non-compliance with the National Curriculum in design and technology, and a relatively small number of pupils study a foreign language in Years 10 and 11. Few pupils have opportunities for the separate study of information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 8 and 11 or across all subjects. The initiatives for literacy, numeracy and citizenship are not sufficiently developed across the curriculum. The programme for pupils' personal, social, citizenship and health education has been temporarily curtailed. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is limited. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Unsatisfactory. Teaching support is not always used to best effect because of organisational arrangements. There are insufficient numbers of teaching and support staff. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | The language competence of these pupils is sufficient and does not impede their learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | Good. Although the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, there is little structure to this provision. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school is a very caring community. Very good systems are in place to monitor and assess pupils' academic and personal performance, and their attendance and behaviour. |

The school works well in partnership with parents and links with parents are very effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good clear, direct leadership and management. They work effectively with governors. The quality of management in subject areas is mostly good. The headteacher and key staff have increased the pace of change. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good. The governing body is very supportive and actively involved in the strategic and decision-making processes. They do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities in respect of some aspects of the curriculum. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. The structures and systems used secure effective tracking and evaluation of standards, teaching and learning. Very good action is taken to bring about school improvement. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| The strategic use of resources | Satisfactory. Appropriate use is made of staff, resources and accommodation. Staff are very committed and work hard. The school gives good value for money. |
|--------------------------------|---|

Staffing of the school has gone through a difficult period of change over the past two years. The school works extremely hard to recruit and retain staff. Vacancies and lack of specialist teachers in the past continue to have a significant impact on the school's ability to maintain statutory curriculum requirements and to introduce various curriculum initiatives.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school. • The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best. • Pupils make good progress at school. • Pupils are helped to become mature and responsible. • The quality of teaching. • Staff are easily approachable with questions or a problem. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with parents. • Setting the right amount of homework. • Provision of information about pupils' progress. • The range of activities outside lessons. |

Thirty-five written returns were received. The great majority were very supportive of the school, its standards, and the quality of leadership, teaching and curriculum. A few parents expressed concerns about staffing difficulties and difficulties experienced communicating with the school. The inspection team confirm the parents' positive views of the school. The school works closely with parents; homework set is appropriate; the quality of information provided is satisfactory overall, though variable. Information about how their children are getting on does not spell out strengths and weaknesses, nor tell parents what their child knows, understands or can do. The range of activities outside lessons is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, standards on entry to the school, as measured by national tests taken by pupils at the end of their primary schools, has been broadly average over the most recent years, though attainment on entry for the current Year 7 pupils was above the national average, particularly in English and mathematics.
2. At the end of Year 9 in 2001, the overall average points score of pupils in national tests was average compared to all schools nationally, and compared to similar schools, in English, mathematics and science. Based on the average points score in 2001, mathematics results were marginally better than those of science and English. The school met its targets for pupil achievement at the end of Year 9. The 2001 results showed a decline on those of 2000 in the percentages for Level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science.
3. The results for 2002 show considerable improvement, particularly in English. Currently no national comparisons are available for 2002. However, the 2002 school results in English show an increase of 29 per cent at Level 5 and a 34 per cent increase at Level 6. In mathematics and science results also indicate an upward trend by 5 and 9 per cent respectively at Level 5. The school targets were met or exceeded for 2002. The overall trend of improvement is above the national trend over the last five years. School analysis of the 2002 results for Year 9 pupils indicates significant progress from Year 6 to Year 9 for these individuals. The improved results in 2002 reflect the focus by the school on raising standards and the rigour with which this has been carried out.
4. At the end of Year 11 in 2001, GCSE results were above average in comparison with all schools nationally and were average when compared with similar schools. The school's overall average point score was slightly above all schools nationally. The school met its targets for pupil achievement in the GCSE results for 2001. When comparing actual results with matched pupils against their year profile and prediction scores the results indicate good value added (value added is the progress made by pupils at Woodcote in comparison to progress made by pupils of similar prior attainment nationally between the Years 9 to 11). Since the last inspection, performance overall has remained steady and has not kept pace with the rising national trend.
5. Results in individual subjects in 2001 varied. The best performing subjects were art and design, computer studies, geography, history, and business communications. Relatively weaker-performing subjects were English language, mathematics, double award science, drama, French, German and food technology.
6. Currently no national comparisons are available for 2002. The most recent school GCSE results (2002) are broadly similar to 2001 in the percentage of those pupils achieving A*-C and A*-G GCSE passes. Fewer pupils now leave the school with no graded results. Raising attainment remains a priority for school improvement and particularly in securing more A*-A grades; the latter was achieved in 2001 but slightly fewer pupils achieved the higher grades in 2002.
7. Pupils have been affected by the high turnover of staff in previous years; this has affected attainment, particularly in mathematics, drama, modern foreign languages and

design and technology. When compared to the local education authority's schools, Woodcote is near the top in terms of value added to pupil's education.

8. In work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9, standards are at least in line with expectations and examples of good progress were seen. Pupils make particularly good progress overall in science, art and design, drama, geography, history and physical education. Standards and progress are not as consistently good in design and technology, information and communication technology, and modern foreign languages. In modern foreign languages, this can in some respects be attributed to staffing difficulties. In the case of information and communication technology, it is more to do with access to the subject in Year 8 and information and communication technology not being developed across all curriculum subjects. In design and technology, there is insufficient curriculum provision and teacher expectations are not always appropriate. It is too soon for the school's response to national initiatives to improve standards in Years 7 to 9 to be showing in improved standards in the classroom.
9. In work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11, standards are again at least in line with expectations with many examples of good and very good progress. Most pupils do very well given their prior attainment on entry, and most pupils make at least satisfactory, and often good or very good progress through Years 7 to 11. Standards are well above expectations in the information and communication technology GCSE course. Standards are above expected levels in art and design, geography, history, music and physical education. Standards are well below expectations in food technology. The school is working hard to consolidate learning and ensure that GCSE performance reflects the pupils' achievements, particularly in the higher grades.
10. Although there are pupils who underachieve, most pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory and often they are good. Boys achieve well below expected levels in English, modern foreign languages and design and technology. In English, it is to do with the differing rates of overall progress made in acquiring basic writing skills and the boys' underdeveloped oral skills. In modern foreign languages, boys underachieve considerably, and more boys than girls are in the lower sets. Underachievement is related to staffing difficulties where previously unsatisfactory teaching has left gaps in pupils' knowledge. The gap overall is narrowing. In design and technology, there are considerable differences in outcomes between the two courses offered. When compared with other subjects, boys do better in physical education than in many other subjects.
11. The progress made by pupils from ethnic minorities is satisfactory. The school's analysis of GCSE results by ethnicity shows no discernible difference between the achievements of different groups. Pupils with English as an additional language achieved well in the 2001 GCSE examinations. Gifted and talented pupils are identified, and the developing programmes arranged for them are having an appropriate impact on their progress. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve satisfactorily as a result of careful planning and good teaching in most subjects. However, the variable quality of suitably matched work for their needs makes for uneven achievement across the curriculum. Good achievement is linked to effective support from other adults but the number of support assistants is too few for them to provide all the support that is needed. In Years 10 and 11, courses more suited to the needs of these pupils are required, as the school recognises.
12. Standards in literacy at the end of Year 9 are about average. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are broadly average, although a number of higher-attaining pupils articulate confidently and fluently. Boys do not readily engage in discussion and far too

often leave this to the girls. By the end of Year 11, most pupils' speaking and listening skills are above the national average. Pupils listen carefully and respond clearly and fluently. Reading skills are average overall at the ends of Years 9 and 11, but the school's reading records indicate that girls are generally better readers than boys. Many achieve well in their writing skills in relation to their prior learning at the end of Year 9 but do not achieve as well as girls. By the end of Year 11, writing is in line with national expectations for the majority of pupils; a third reach standards well above national expectations. However, there is a significant gap between lower-attaining pupils with writing standards below national expectations and the majority of pupils. Weaknesses in the lack of progressive basic skills are apparent in the work of boys and pupils with learning difficulties. The school is looking towards introducing a continuous basic skills course to address these concerns.

13. Pupils are generally able to meet the mathematical demands of other subjects, though there is no planned contribution to the development of numeracy skills across the curriculum. Pupils develop their number skills as an integral part of learning science. Transformation of formulae was included in physics, general arithmetic manipulation in chemistry and in biology elementary statistics were in evidence. In geography, statistics were used in representing data about world economies, and elsewhere the strategic use of water in developing countries was graphically displayed. Modest use of numeracy was seen in modern foreign languages, using simple mental arithmetic together with the recording of the outcomes of a survey with the use of pictograms. During a history lesson focusing on the First World War, the overall enormity of fatality statistics were recorded in emphasising the Battle of the Somme. In art, portraits using digital cameras involved the recognition of scale; this was used to illustrate drawing skills related to proportion, structure and negative space, helping pupils to understand how best to construct a measured drawing. Perspective drawing was emphasised in Year 7 using basic measuring techniques, linking with the shape and space aspect of the mathematics curriculum. In business education, good use of estimation was seen linked with the use of spreadsheets.
14. Standards in science are at least average by the end of Year 9 and pupils make good progress. In Year 11 standards are, overall, above expectations nationally.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. The last inspection report noted that pupils' behaviour in lessons was sound or better in nine out of ten lessons, was usually good around the school and contributed positively to learning. Pupils showed sustained concentration and enjoyed their work, especially in practical subjects. Relationships throughout the school were good. The situation today is at least as good as it was then, if not better.
16. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. Attitudes to learning are very positive, especially when the standard of teaching is high and when the teacher has consistently high expectations and fully engages the attention of the class; examples were seen in all departments. All year groups show interest and involvement in their lessons, and pupils apply themselves both to their work and to the extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Only a very small number of pupils display negative attitudes at times. Pupils have a desire to improve their work and take pride in the finished product, as seen in design and technology lessons, where they like the practical element and take great care in researching and presenting their work.
17. The overall standard of behaviour in class is very good, with pupils responding positively to good management in, for example, art and design, drama and physical education

lessons. Both the pupils and their parents consider that staff successfully maintain high standards of behaviour and the inspection findings support this view. The quality of behaviour in 84 per cent of lessons observed was at least good, and it was very good or excellent in about half. Behaviour was unsatisfactory in only 3 per cent of lessons and usually occurred where the teacher failed to inspire or control a small group of lower-ability pupils. No poor behaviour was witnessed. High standards of behaviour prevail overwhelmingly in class, with pupils displaying a sense of urgency and dedication. Pupils are co-operative and generally concentrate hard. The quality of behaviour and of pupils' attitudes makes a major contribution to learning.

18. Behaviour round the school is civilised; with pupils behaving sensibly when arriving at and leaving school, and most waiting patiently for lessons to start. They negotiate the staircases between lessons without incident under adult supervision. Pupils behave well at break time and when queuing for and eating dinner, even though some have to wait a very long time to be served. Respect for property is generally good, but pupils drop too much litter and there is some minor vandalism in the boys' washrooms.
19. In contrast to the high quality of behaviour overall, the number of fixed-period exclusions is high, 86 affecting 60 pupils (though there was only one permanent exclusion last year); the numbers have increased since the last inspection. The school is in the top third of the national table of fixed period exclusions, though at the last inspection the number was then average. It has introduced sensible measures for identifying those at risk of exclusion and for doing all it can to keep them at school. Most exclusions only last for three or five days and pupils are re-integrated unobtrusively through the pastoral support programme. The school maintains proper records of exclusions and follows the local education authority reporting system.
20. The school impresses on new pupils and their parents the need to consider others, and most pupils react very positively, though pupils in Years 7 to 9 reported the occasional instance of oppressive behaviour. All pupils interviewed from these year groups are confident that when bullying is reported, the school deals with it fast. Respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs are high throughout the school, and pupils are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. The school is very successful in promoting a tolerant and supportive society.
21. Pupils support the activities of the Senate (the equivalent of a school council), whose advice is welcomed by senior management. There are opportunities throughout the school for pupils to take responsibility, such as becoming senators, and 'buddies', though there could be more day-to-day opportunities for senior pupils to help around the school. Pupils take up the wide range of popular extra-curricular activities with great enthusiasm.
22. Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils are courteous to each other and friendly to staff. They relate positively to each other and work well together in lessons, both in pairs and groups. They react politely when addressed, and are friendly and helpful to visitors. Throughout the inspection, they co-operated positively and cheerfully with inspectors.
23. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attendance was reported to be satisfactory and in line with the national average, and unauthorised absence was substantially lower than average. The situation is similar today: in 2000/2001 it was 90.6 per cent compared with the national average of 90.9 per cent. In 2001/2002 it rose to 91.5 per cent. The level of unauthorised absence of 0.5 per cent in 2000/2001 was about half the national

rate and remained at a similar low level in 2001/2002. The legal requirements for recording and reporting attendance are fully met.

24. The last report noted that most pupils arrived at school on time, but punctuality in the course of the day was often poor, due to timetabling problems and to teachers being inconsistent in their expectations of punctuality. Now, most pupils display a responsible attitude to punctuality, though nearly one in twelve has been late more than five times in the first half of the current term. Teachers are usually in their classrooms on time, but the school has still not addressed the timetabling problem that causes a significant number of lessons to start late due to the distance pupils have to travel between classrooms. This weakness continues to cause a substantial loss of teaching time over a term, with consequent adverse effects on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

25. Strengths in teaching significantly outweigh weaknesses. In over a quarter of lessons, teaching is at least very good and it is at least good in nearly three quarters; in the remainder, it is almost always satisfactory. Teaching of high quality was seen in history, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education. In English, mathematics and science it was generally good. However, the quality of individual learning is affected by weaknesses in the teaching of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy initiatives are not yet firmly embedded in all curriculum areas. In English, where the strategy is more advanced than in science, pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching and learning styles.
26. The good and better teaching is a strength of the school. Common features are teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subject, careful and detailed planning, and high expectations of what pupils can do and are capable of. Successful teaching methods are employed and pupils are well managed. Where the teaching has been consistently good and better, examination results tend to be highest. Unsatisfactory teaching seen on occasion in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages was characterised by slow pace, unsatisfactory planning, and an insufficient range of tasks to challenge pupils suitably. Marking of pupils work is uneven; mostly helpful comments are made to enable pupils to improve the quality of their work. The homework set is appropriate overall. Assessment is satisfactory in all subjects with the exception of religious education in Years 7 to 9, and design and technology. Assessment information is not used consistently to guide curricular planning. The links between assessment procedures and the individual education plans of pupils with learning difficulties are good.
27. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve satisfactorily as a result of careful planning and good teaching in most subjects, but the variable quality of suitably matched work to their needs makes for uneven achievement across the curriculum. In the majority of lessons, most pupils gained and advanced their knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of the good teaching and learning. Where this was not the case, some pupils were insufficiently challenged to reach their full potential, others were given work that was too hard and struggled with tasks, for example, in a few English, science, design and technology, and modern foreign languages lessons. The pace of their learning was slower as a result. In one lesson, pupils were not motivated and unco-operative as a result of unsatisfactory teaching. Generally, pupils' attitudes are very positive, especially when the teaching is of high quality. Pupils are interested and are eager to learn. The headteacher and senior staff have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and they effectively identify where support it is needed and

provide it. As a result the quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection.

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

28. There are some very noteworthy and distinctive features of the school's provision. The specialist Sports College status of the school and the range of extra-curricular activities are two such features. However, there are significant weaknesses in the current provision which make the curriculum unsatisfactory overall.
29. Some National Curriculum requirements are not met in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT). These are still outstanding from the last inspection. In design and technology, the school does not provide sufficient time to deliver the programme of study and, in the first two years, focuses on food and textiles to the exclusion of other aspects of the subject such as learning in resistant materials. In Years 10 and 11, there is insufficient opportunity for all pupils to follow a course in this area of the curriculum. The number of computers has increased since the last inspection but is still not large enough for the school to comply with the requirement to provide information and communication technology. Opportunities to study ICT in different subjects are inconsistent and are not planned for sufficiently. Year 8 have no specific ICT timetabled lesson.
30. There is insufficient balance and relevance in the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, especially some who are less academic. The organisation of and provision for their needs across the school is generally inadequate. There is little accreditation, apart from vocational courses, available for those who would benefit from more work-related courses in Years 10 and 11. Local colleges have recently withdrawn some of the former provision for work-related courses. The school has introduced a leisure and tourism vocational GCSE this year. It had planned to offer a GNVQ course in health and social care until staffing problems prevented this from happening. The school development plan identifies this as an area of the curriculum for attention. The school is discussing the opportunities for introducing vocational GCSEs in subjects such as science, art, and design and technology. Although the school works within the disapplication framework and has the best interests of the pupils at heart, a relatively small number of pupils (mostly boys) study no foreign language after Year 9. The current modern languages provision for some lower sets in Years 9 and 10 is unsatisfactory.
31. The school has a good equal opportunities policy in place and is committed to the principles of meeting the needs of all pupils. It has not formally identified specific pupils who are gifted and talented although their needs are met in the curriculum. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are identified. Only one needs additional support and their needs are met by attendance at a local college. There is a significant lack of progression in learning a modern foreign language for the large numbers of pupils who drop out of the subject in Years 10 and 11. The majority of these pupils are boys.
32. The school timetable contains inconsistencies in time allocation for some subjects. This has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning in science, geography and history as they prepare for their end of Year 9 tests. The distribution of languages lessons is not always satisfactory. The school recognises the deficiencies in the current provision. It has undoubtedly suffered some significant problems, such as staffing. These problems have hindered its plans for the development of the curriculum and led to inadequate

short-term solutions. It is undertaking an urgently needed review under the leadership of a newly appointed member of the senior management team with specific responsibility for the curriculum.

33. There has been unsatisfactory progress in the introduction of the key skills of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, although literacy is more advanced. Some departments have made progress in their promotion of literacy skills, for example in the emphasis on key words. The school has good links with feeder primary schools. A summer school has been held in each of the last three years to improve pupils' literacy levels. Pupils are able to meet the mathematical demands of other subjects. However, the numeracy strategy is not yet fully in place and there is no co-ordinator for this area. The school has introduced one National Strategy lesson in Years 8 and 9 in order to respond more fully to the requirements for literacy, numeracy and citizenship. This is in the very early stages of development.
34. Until this year, there was a programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) taught weekly to all pupils by a specialist team of teachers. Pupils, parents and teachers regarded this provision highly. The programme included sex and drugs education as well as careers, citizenship and the wider programmes of study relating to the national guidelines. The staffing of this area became impossible once significant members of staff left for a variety of reasons, including major promotions. Therefore, pupils currently have no specific lesson provision for PSHCE although elements of citizenship are now covered in the National Strategy lesson. The school is concerned about this deficiency in the curriculum and is making provision for key elements of sex and drugs education to be taught by external visitors and former staff. Good links have been maintained with the police. The intention is to appoint new staff to continue the programme. But at the time of inspection, the provision for personal, social and health education was unsatisfactory.
35. The careers education programme continues to operate satisfactorily despite the time lost since the PSHCE lessons ceased to operate. Pupils have access to a good range of information in the careers library, which recently moved to the school library following the conversion of the careers base to a computer suite. All Year 11 pupils receive a booklet of information about the range of post-16 options available. A member of staff with responsibility for careers works closely with the local Connexions company ('Prospect') to ensure that pupils receive guidance and support at times of options choices and in preparing for and undertaking work experience. Personal interviews are provided for Year 11 pupils as requested or felt needed by the school.
36. Extra-curricular provision is a strength of the school. Art and design, drama, dance, music and sport offer many valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and character. There are good links between these areas and local groups such as the African and African Caribbean People's Advisory Group (AACPAG). Pupils and most parents are appreciative of these opportunities. There is a very good range of clubs and activities including chess, environment and a debating society. Within 'Flexibility week' at the end of the summer term, pupils in each year group benefit from enrichment and social activities. These include educational visits, for example to the Imperial War Museum. There are no language exchanges established but there are day trips to Boulogne and a German Christmas market.
37. The school has very good links with local primary schools and colleges. Primary school links are effective in preparing primary pupils for the next stages in their learning through the transfer of information. There are also 'taster' courses in music and modern foreign languages. GCSE pupils work with primary school pupils as part of their course in

physical education. The school has good links with the local colleges and community groups. Drama and dance groups have been successful in their performances. Links with initial teacher training colleges are very good and include a close working relationship with Trinity College in Dublin. The school is active in trying to recruit teachers.

38. Individual education plans (IEPs) are prepared carefully for all pupils identified as having special educational needs. Although there is sometimes an excessive emphasis on literacy targets, numeracy and behavioural objectives also feature. The targets in IEPs are clearly stated and identify the individual needs. The formal tracking of IEPs is to be made more regular as a result of changes to the school assessment policy and this should help future lesson planning for these pupils. The provision in statements is implemented well.
39. The provision made for pupils' spiritual development is good. There is a good range of opportunities, both in subjects of the curriculum and in assembly, for pupils to reflect on matters of enduring significance to themselves and the world around them. In assembly, considerable effort is made to engage pupils' interest and to create an atmosphere which encourages a thoughtful response to the ideas presented to them. For example, in an assembly on the theme of courage, a quiet, reflective atmosphere was effectively established through the use of music and photographic images, and very good use was made of accounts of personal experiences to add interest and relevance. Pupils listened spellbound to a description of the courage and tenacity of competitors in the London Marathon and were given the opportunity to reflect silently on their response to this. In a number of subject areas, good use is made of opportunities arising directly from the curriculum to analyse and reflect on matters of special significance to humankind, to make personal responses and to empathise with the experiences of other people. In a Year 9 history lesson on the Battle of the Somme, a video of interviews with some of the survivors was used very effectively to promote a discussion on the death of comrades and the way in which the experiences of the battle had a long-term influence on those who fought in it. While watching the video, pupils were visibly moved and they responded to the sensitively led discussion that followed in a well-informed and thoughtful manner.
40. Provision for moral development is good overall. The school behaviour code is clearly understood and provides a well-structured base for positive behaviour. Currently, teachers are involving pupils in reviewing the code of conduct and, as a result, some major changes are likely. The school places great value on listening to pupils' viewpoints and this is successfully achieved through the School Senate and Year councils. Pupils are elected and represent their peers well. Pupils democratically allocate the available funds to best serve pupils, for example purchasing picnic tables to improve lunch facilities. Moral development is promoted mainly through the curriculum via the *MAD* (making a difference) programme, where pupils learn to respect other people's qualities and skills. They are aware of world issues such as the impact of war and the holocaust. In drama, pupils put forward their own views and opinions and discuss their impact on others. Pupils are involved in fundraising, for example, sponsoring David Weir's training for a wheelchair marathon as part of an outreach into the wider community. Various charities are supported, such as for Afghanistan and Shelter. After September 11th, pupils made links with a similar school in New York and sent money to support them.
41. In spite of having no formally planned provision, the school promotes pupils' social development very effectively by giving them a wide range of opportunities to work and socialise together, whether in clubs, sports teams or the school drama productions.

Generally, throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to promote self-discipline and to behave considerately, and the teachers themselves act as effective role models. Within lessons, pupils develop very good social skills and co-operate very well when doing paired or group work. They learn the sense of living in a wider community by participating in the many extra-curricular activities, for example the debating society's external debating competitions, and skiing and cultural trips abroad. They further build their sense of social responsibility through taking part in activities such as the annual sponsored walk and working for the elderly. The school provides several opportunities to take on responsibilities in school, such as the 'buddy' scheme, in which Year 11 volunteers (nearly all girls) support Year 7 pupils, or representing their year group's interests in the Senate. However, there is still some room for older pupils to provide more day-to-day help around the school.

42. The school makes good provision for pupils to celebrate and explore their own and other cultural traditions and differences. The high quality provision in art and drama is particularly significant. Pupils research a wide variety of artistic styles from Africa, China, Australia and South America. There are regular dramatic performances and productions. Trips to Barcelona and drama-based exchanges with a school in Paris are valuable cultural experiences. There is a good range of musical activities and instrumental lessons as well as opportunities to study music of the world. In religious education, pupils are encouraged to explore their own cultures and those of others, including Islamic and Hindu traditions. In other subjects provision is satisfactory. There are trips to museums, field centres and a day trip to Paris.
43. Although the provision for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good there is little structure to this provision. The school does not have a policy on these aspects of pupils' development and there is no whole-school overview, which identifies opportunities for it to occur on a planned basis. There is a management expectation that co-ordinators ensure curriculum displays reflect society in its widest sense. Most of the provision takes place as a result of the work of individual teachers or departments and is not part of a whole-school programme. Because of this, experiences of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can vary from class to class.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The last inspection report noted that the school effectively promoted the welfare, health and safety of its pupils, with good systems in place to ensure their overall health and well-being. All staff were familiar with guidance on child protection issues. The pastoral work of the school was well organised, with a well-structured programme. There was an effective personal, health and social education programme and careers guidance was organised efficiently.
45. Pastoral care is delivered very effectively through a year structure, overseen by the two directors of studies. In order to maintain continuity of pupil care and to develop positive relationships with parents, tutors and most heads of year progress with their tutor groups right up the school. However, the head of Year 7 position is permanent in order to build effective long-term contacts with the primary schools. High standards of support and guidance to pupils and of provision for their welfare make a very positive contribution to educational standards and help pupils to feel happy and secure. The school has a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Pastoral staff know their pupils very well and pupils confidently turn to them or other members of staff for help. The high quality of co-operation and liaison between all staff on pastoral matters is an important feature of the school. Pupils appreciate greatly both the academic and personal support given. Year 7 pupils in particular feel well supported and their parents welcome the school's comprehensive arrangements for their induction. Pupils' personal development is well supported through the tutor periods, which are mostly effective. However, pupils' time is wasted in a few, notably when tutors are keeping track of pupils' planners and the pupils are just left to chat amongst themselves. The good arrangements for transfer to further education or for training for employment ensure that pupils move on with confidence.
46. The school complies fully with child protection guidelines, and liaison arrangements with most external agencies, especially the police, are very good.
47. The school is working hard to comply with legal requirements for health and safety. It has an up-to-date health and safety policy, and concerns about health and safety are quickly brought to the notice of appropriate staff and governors. Governors are very involved in promoting and keeping track of health and safety. There are sensible and effective procedures covering fire evacuation, playground supervision, and the safety testing of equipment. Those pupils questioned all knew the evacuation procedure in the event of fire. The new risk assessment procedure manual is very professional, though it is not yet finished and so not all risks have been assessed yet. Provision for medical care and first aid is at least satisfactory, and sick pupils have a medical room where they can lie down. One or two concerns were brought to the school's attention, notably the lack of ventilation and an accumulation of dust in two areas of the art department, the lack of cleanliness of the sports hall and adjacent changing rooms; also the boys' washrooms were not properly provisioned and some were rather unpleasant.
48. The school operates very effective measures for keeping track of and improving attendance. Procedures for keeping track of and promoting discipline and good behaviour work very well and pupils consider that they are fairly treated. The staff's high expectations of good behaviour are fully realised and promote an orderly and cheerful atmosphere throughout the school. The procedures for coping with bullying and oppressive behaviour are effective; and pupils and their parents are happy that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with rapidly and effectively.

49. At the previous inspection, the use of assessment was reported to be variable, with some departments using it particularly well. However, overall the procedures did not support planning enough or provide pupils with sufficient advice as to how to improve. The school has since made headway in developing procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and these are supported by extensive informal staff contact. A whole-school assessment policy has been in force for a year, though its implementation within departments is still uneven. At the same time, the school introduced the 'One to One' tracking system, which includes teacher and pupil assessment of progress, followed up by a pupil/tutor discussion at which major targets are agreed. This is a very positive move, though it has not been in operation long enough to prove its success, for example in improving GCSE results.
50. The quality of departmental assessment procedures is at least satisfactory in all subjects except design and technology and religious education; it is good in English, art and design, geography, information and communication technology and music. Very good records of pupils' progress are kept in geography, but there is scant evidence of records in mathematics. Attainment is reported against national curriculum levels or predicted GCSE grades in most subjects. Assessment information is not quite as well used to guide curricular planning. Only in English and art and design is it good, and it is unsatisfactory in religious education in Years 7 to 9, and in design and technology. However, the procedures for keeping track of and supporting academic progress are good in most subjects, and unsatisfactory only in mathematics and design and technology.
51. The quality of marking is variable: it is generally regular and thorough in modern foreign languages, though many language errors are not highlighted; regular but not always thorough in geography, and inconsistent in English and science. Helpful comments to encourage pupils to improve are made in English, art and design and music, but not in design and technology or in history in Years 7 to 9; useful comments are not used widely in science. The links between assessment procedures and the individual education plans of pupils with learning difficulties are good.
52. There is good liaison with outside agencies such as the educational psychology service and speech and language services. Every effort is made to help teachers get to know their pupils and to support them effectively. The school complies fully with the revised Code of Practice. Statements are up-to-date and the arrangements for ensuring that annual reviews are effective are good. Key staff know the requirements of statements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The last inspection report noted that the school provided a useful range of information for parents and gave regular opportunities to discuss pupils' progress. The quality of written reports was variable. There was an active parents' association, which made a significant contribution to the school, and parents were generally supportive of the school.
54. All pupil year groups confirmed parents' views that their children enjoy coming to school. Parents consider that their children are making good progress, but those at the parent meeting expressed concerns that achievement is depressed by poor homework, the short teaching week and high staff turnover. However, parents do think that the school is well led and managed. They recognise that the school tries to promote good behaviour, a view confirmed by the inspection. They see teaching as good, particularly in art and design, though those attending the meeting expressed some concerns about the inconsistency of mathematics teaching and about the setting and marking of

homework. Parents acknowledge that pupils are expected to work hard and that the school helps their child to become mature and responsible. However, at the meeting there were some concerns about pupils' washrooms being locked, the amount of time spent queuing for dinner and the quality of the food. The comment about queuing was borne out by the inspection, but the other two were not.

55. Parents are comfortable about approaching the school and feel welcome. However about a quarter of respondents to the questionnaire do not consider that they are kept well informed or that the school works closely with them. A substantial minority also doubts that the school provides an interesting range of extra-curricular activities, a view with which the inspectors firmly disagree.
56. The school's relationships with parents are strong and its links with parents, which it monitors carefully, are very effective. There is consultation with parents on matters of general interest, for example on the contents of the planner. The school provides a series of informative evenings on what pupils are learning, for example the curriculum briefing evening and how to support pupils in revision techniques, which are well supported. In most year groups there is also formal discussion opportunity for parents on specific matters, for example the Year 9 options evening or the Year 11 post-16 evening. The school encourages informal parent contact with teaching and pastoral staff. Parents are invited to a wide range of musical and dramatic productions, sporting events, and other activities.
57. The quality of the information the school provides to parents is satisfactory overall, though uneven. The prospectus and the governors' report to parents are just about adequate in content, but neither meets current statutory requirements. The newsletter is readable, but not very lively and rather short for a document only produced once a term; it also lacks pupil contributions. However, the visiting arrangements for prospective and new parents are much appreciated and the induction documentation is very clear and informative. The series of 'Practical Strategies for Learning' for both pupils and parents is very helpful. The school is still building up its well-planned Internet website and consults parents annually on their ideas for the school development plan.
58. The quality of written reporting to parents on pupils' progress is uneven. Pupils receive an academic review and an annual report. These are good as far as they go, but the annual report is rather soulless: it is mostly codes, with one short target per subject. It does not spell out pupils' strengths and weaknesses, nor tell parents what their child knows, understands or can do. This year the report omitted the pupil's attendance figures and so did not meet statutory requirements. Pupils' reports are reviewed with parents at an annual curriculum evening, but some parents complain that they are not allocated enough time to discuss their child's progress fully. Parents of those with statements of special educational need or with individual education plans are fully involved in the review of progress. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties are involved in identifying their children's needs and are provided with appropriate support. They co-operate in reviews of progress and are encouraged to help with their children's learning.
59. The contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school is good. The pupil planner, introduced about two years ago, contains much useful basic information about the school and is beginning to develop as an effective three-way communication between school, pupil and parent. Attendance at parents' evenings and the school's social and cultural events is good; several parent volunteers help in the school and support outings and overseas visits. They are also involved in organising the school's sponsored walk. There is a hardworking Parents and Friends Association that helps at

school functions and arranges a number of well-attended fund-raising events, which bring in substantial sums for their children's benefit.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. At the time of the last inspection management and leadership were good with a sense of purpose but there were several key issues relating to the roles and responsibilities and overall effectiveness of both senior and middle managers. These roles and responsibilities of senior and middle managers have been effectively re-defined and those with management responsibilities have benefited from appropriate professional development. Previously there was very limited monitoring of standards, teaching and learning. The management and provision for pupils with learning difficulties was another area for concern. Some statutory requirements were not met and some health safety issues were raised.
61. Since the appointment of the new headteacher two years ago, the school has addressed these weaknesses systematically and most effectively. Previously there were no structures or functioning systems and those in post were not held to be accountable. Now all managers have clear responsibilities and they know that they are accountable and also know what support they can expect. The vision for the school's future development is a shared one inspired by the headteacher. Staff are empowered, planning processes are improved and there is a better and sharper linkage between senior and middle managers. Communications are generally good. Heads of curriculum and heads of Year have good action plans and procedures for tracking progress and these are central to improvements. A very effective training programme for staff has been set up and good arrangements made for performance management. Weak management and teaching is identified and those concerned are supported well. With the rigorous monitoring of standards, teaching and learning and support provided there has been quite a culture change. Staff are accountable and professional, and school targets are being met. Another notable success is that the school achieved Sports college status in September 2001.
62. The headteacher and deputy headteacher particularly have effected change. The senior staff, including the directors of studies, and the governors ensure good and effective leadership. They work together well and are a strong team. The school improvement plan is a good-quality working document that places direct emphasis on improvement in all aspects of provision and focuses on raising standards. Leadership and management have responded to the Key Stage 3 National Strategy but it has yet to be firmly embedded into the whole curriculum. Improvements made since the last inspection are good. The majority of the key issues have been addressed; some are on-going, for example, improving the provision for pupils with learning difficulties, for design and technology and cross-curricular information and communication technology. A daily act of collective worship is not provided and although the previous health and safety issues are addressed some further minor concerns were raised with the school.
63. Undoubtedly the Sports College recognition is a significant success for the school, which has also successfully achieved Artsmark and Sportsmark status. The expansion of the school roll at the same time as difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff has affected standards in some subjects and in some broad curricular areas.
64. The governing body is very supportive and actively involved in the strategic and decision making processes. Governors have a good working relationship with the headteacher and a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities in respect of aspects of the curriculum. The

prospectus and the governors' report to parents are just about adequate in content, but neither meets current statutory requirements. Very good action is taken to bring about school improvement. Assemblies offer a strong moral and social message, but there are few opportunities for spiritual reflection and, therefore, assemblies do not constitute an act of collective worship.

65. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has implemented efficient day-to-day routines and procedures that are now well established. However, there are insufficient teaching and support staff, with the result that the full range of pupils who might benefit from the provision is not reached. Pupil-support assistants are well deployed and make a good contribution to the quality of learning. There is extremely effective liaison between teachers and pupil-support assistants: this is the result of careful planning by both the learning difficulties co-ordinator and curriculum heads of department. The special educational needs link governor is both committed and knowledgeable and she is aware of what needs to be done to effect further improvement. The school is well placed for further advance.
66. Staffing of the school has gone through a difficult period of change over the past two years with 32 teachers leaving and 34 teachers arriving at the school. Eighteen new staff joined at the start of the autumn term. Of these, four are newly qualified teachers and three are trained under the graduate training programme. For the first time, this year several curriculum areas are staffed with specialist teachers. Vacancies and lack of specialist teachers in the past and now continue to make a significant impact on the school's ability to maintain statutory curriculum requirements and to introduce the various curriculum initiatives. Staffing changes in subjects still mean that some subjects are still taught by non-specialists, for example in mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education. Despite its efforts to appoint specialists, 15 per cent of teachers in school are not trained to teach the subject they are involved in.
67. Newly qualified teachers receive good support and those staff that have been at school for more than two years are currently in the second round of staff appraisal, with good structures in place to support this national strategy. All teachers have targets for professional development.
68. Due to very recent staffing difficulties, there is no information and communication technology technician currently to support and service this area of the curriculum. Technicians in the science department make a positive contribution to the delivery of the subject. There are adequate numbers of administrative and clerical staff in order to ensure the good organisation of the school.
69. Resources across the school are generally adequate; an appropriate proportion of the school budget is spent on learning resources. Whilst there is a good ratio of computers to pupils, many of those in individual departments are under-used as a resource for learning. There are insufficient information and communication technology facilities in the music department. The library is well used as a place for study. However, with only 350 books currently on loan from its stock of approximately 12,000, it is under-used as a resource for the development of reading and as a facility for the development of independent learning skills.
70. Accommodation is adequate for the delivery of the National Curriculum. Facilities have improved significantly since the last inspection, as has the cleaning of the site. Both of these areas are under the direction of the business manager, who has had a positive impact on developments. The building is well cared for; increasingly, display is used as

a learning tool. New building work has provided, for example, science laboratories, a well-equipped hall, reception area, and staffroom and shower facilities. The expansion of provision has generally matched the increased intake. However, some areas are cramped and there is a lack of specialist provision, for example, an art studio is cramped. Recreational areas for pupils are at a premium, and corridors can be congested at movement times. Significant refurbishment and redecoration have been undertaken and there is an on-going building programme.

71. Financial planning is very good. As at the time of the last inspection, the school plans three years ahead in outline and two years ahead in detail. The school development plan continues to be a carefully considered document. The recent audit report contained only minor recommendations for improvement, which have all been dealt with. The proven financial administration systems have been in place for some time and are efficient and unobtrusive, allowing teachers to concentrate on their work. Specific standards fund grants received by the school are generally being used effectively for the specified purpose, though some subject heads are not aware of their entitlement. The business manager is most effective in his duties; he monitors spending weekly against budget and reviews financial matters with the headteacher monthly, before reporting to the monthly meeting of the governors' finance committee on the effectiveness of the school's educational and financial affairs.
72. The school's costs are in line with those of similar schools in London. It carefully exercises the principles of best value, ensuring fair competition. The performance of contractors and their costs are closely monitored. The school consults externally as appropriate and seeks parents' input to the school development plan. The school provides good value for money. Its use of new technologies is continually developing. However, the use of information and communication technologies in teaching is uneven and not good in all subjects. The school website is due for completion this year and the Internet is now being used more in support of learning. CD-ROMs are well used both in teaching and administration and e-mail is embedded in the school culture.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. In order to raise further standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and senior managers should:

- (1) Improve the achievement of boys in English and modern foreign languages, and improve achievement in design and technology throughout the school:

In English by:

- encouraging the active participation of boys in discussions;
- providing more opportunities for boys to organise and extend their oral responses;
- focusing across the curriculum on the teaching of a continuous and progressive programme of basic skills to support writing and increasing the curriculum time in Years 7 and 8.
(Paragraphs 5, 10, 12, 25, 75, 76, 79, 81, 82)

In modern foreign languages by:

- addressing previous gaps in pupils' knowledge;
- exposing pupils to longer texts and increasing their use and understanding of basic language;
- spending a greater proportion of time speaking in the target language.
(Paragraphs 10, 29, 31, 58, 146, 150, 152)

In design and technology by:

- increasing curriculum time in Years 7 to 9 so that full coverage of design and technology is provided and improving the planning to include sufficient coverage and challenge for all pupils;
- meeting National Curriculum requirements in Years 10 and 11 and ensuring that a greater number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a design and technology course;
- extending the use of design and technology criteria in on-going marking and assessment to help pupils improve their work;
- addressing the lack of sufficient specialist staff and developing resources relating to food technology, computer aided design and manufacture.
(Paragraphs 5, 8, 9, 10, 29, 62, 64, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125).

- (2) Strengthen the curriculum by:

- reviewing the time allocation for design and technology and information and communication technology and implementing the full curriculum for design and technology in Years 10 and 11;
- developing where appropriate the planned use of information and communication technology in all subject areas;
- ensuring that a continuous and progressive programme of basic skills to support writing is in place across the curriculum;
- implementing the national initiatives fully across the curriculum; ensuring that heads of department are clearly identifying the contribution of these to their specific subject areas and are including them in their lesson planning and

teaching and ensuring that work in lessons appropriately matches the needs of all pupils;

- reinstating regular and planned opportunities for pupil's personal, social, citizenship and health education development.

(Paragraphs 5, 8, 10, 25, 29, 33, 34, 35, 62, 64, 82, 83, 89, 101, 112, 123, 125, 140, 141, 147, 152, 177, 178, 179)

- (3) Improve the provision for pupils with learning difficulties, increase the opportunities for basic skills development, and consider more suitable courses in Years 10 and 11 for some pupils by:

- implementing a basic skills programme for pupils;
- ensuring that work matches the needs of pupils with learning difficulties;
- increasing the numbers of support staff to meet the needs of pupils;
- considering more suitable courses for some pupils in Years 10 and 11.
(Paragraphs 10, 11, 12, 25, 27, 30, 65, 82).

Minor weaknesses

- (1) A few minor health and safety issues were raised with the school.
(Paragraphs 47, 70)
- (2) The prospectus and the governors' report to parents do not fully meet current statutory requirements.
(Paragraph 57)

The school is already addressing some of these matters in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of lessons observed | 159 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 50 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 5 | 38 | 70 | 39 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2 | 25 | 45 | 25 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | 959 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 86 |

| Special educational needs | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 7 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 113 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 75 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 19 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 29 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 8.9 |
| National comparative data | 8.1 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.5 |
| National comparative data | 1.1 |

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

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

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | 94 | 84 | 178 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 53 [53] | 64 [64] | 67 [62] |
| | Girls | 55 [82] | 64 [73] | 56 [70] |
| | Total | 108 [135] | 128 [137] | 123 [132] |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 61 [76] | 73 [76] | 70 [73] |
| | National | 64 [63] | 66 [65] | 66 [59] |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 13 [30] | 47 [43] | 31 [31] |
| | National | 31 [28] | 43 [42] | 34 [30] |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 6 (36) | 50 (61) | 70 (70) |
| | Girls | 8 (68) | 49 (77) | 66 (83) |
| | Total | 14 (104) | 99 (138) | 136 (153) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 56 (58) | 74 (77) | 77 (85) |
| | National | 65 (64) | 68 (66) | 64 (62) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 0 (20) | 44 (46) | 35 (32) |
| | National | 31 (31) | 42 (39) | 33 (29) |

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2001 | 93 | 84 | 177 |

| GCSE results | | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A*-G | 1 or more grades A*-G |
|---|----------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified | Boys | 47 (52) | 86 (82) | 91 (86) |
| | Girls | 52 (51) | 81 (81) | 81 (82) |
| | Total | 99 (103) | 167 (163) | 172 (168) |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School | 56 (59) | 94 (93) | 97(96) |
| | National | 48 (47) | 91 (91) | 96 (96) |

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

| GCSE results | | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School | 40.9 (40.3) |
| | National | 39.0 (38.4) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British |
| White – Irish |
| White – any other White background |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean |
| Mixed – White and Black African |
| Mixed – White and Asian |
| Mixed – any other mixed background |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean |
| Black or Black British – African |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background |
| Chinese |
| Any other ethnic group |
| Information not obtained |

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 754 | 54 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 33 | 3 | 0 |
| 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17 | 6 | 1 |
| 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 21 | 2 | 0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 47 | 9 | 0 |
| 40 | 12 | 0 |

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 53.7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 17.9 |

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 16 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 319 |

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|---|------|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 71.1 |
|---|------|

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 3 | 23.7 |
| Key Stage 4 | 20.5 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001-2002 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 2874127 |
| Total expenditure | 2863213 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3072 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 99995 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 110909 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|------|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 32.2 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 34.2 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 6.6 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 6.6 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 961 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 199 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 36 | 58 | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 31 | 58 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 18 | 66 | 9 | 3 | 5 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 18 | 54 | 17 | 7 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 23 | 65 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 14 | 53 | 18 | 6 | 9 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 40 | 45 | 10 | 2 | 4 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 42 | 51 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 16 | 48 | 21 | 6 | 8 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 32 | 48 | 3 | 3 | 14 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 31 | 58 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 25 | 45 | 15 | 4 | 11 |

Other issues raised by parents

Some 35 written returns were received. The great majority were very supportive of the school, its standards, quality of leadership, teaching and curriculum offered. A few parents expressed concerns about the staffing difficulties the school had encountered and difficulties experienced communicating with the school.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths:

- The development of speaking and listening skills.
- The positive attitudes that pupils display towards their work.
- More pupils entered for the GCSE English Literature examination.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Improvement in the management of the department.

Areas for improvement:

- Raise the standards of under-achieving boys.
- Further develop a reading strategy in Years 7 to 9.
- Improve the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and ensure a continuous and progressive programme of basic skills teaching in Years 7 to 9.
- Use the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy in a more rigorous and consistent manner.

74. Pupils' attainment in English upon entry has been broadly average over recent years, though attainment upon entry for the current Year 7 pupils was above the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 7 to 9, though attainment as reflected in the 2001 national tests was below the national average and well below average when compared to schools with a similar intake. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is below that achieved in mathematics and science. There was significant improvement in the most recent unvalidated 2002 national tests results. Standards have fluctuated over the last four years, with standards being just below those achieved at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties and those to whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in the subject.
75. Pupils' speaking and listening skills upon entry into Year 7 are broadly average. Pupils are good listeners. They listen to their teachers in an attentive manner and value and respect the opinions of other members of the class. Although a number of higher-attaining pupils articulate their ideas in a confident and fluent manner, a number of lower-attaining pupils still lack the confidence and vocabulary to speak in well constructed sentences, and speak at length when engaged in anything like a formal situation. Good examples of role-play and hot-seating activities were observed during the period of the inspection. This good provision enabled pupils to achieve well in relation to their prior learning with attainment in oral skills by pupils in Year 9 being good and above those expected of pupils of a similar age.
76. Most pupils arrive at school with average reading skills, although the school's own reading records indicate that girls are generally better readers than boys. Listening to pupils read in classes indicates that many pupils read in a confident manner and with expression. Some lower-attaining pupils, however, have yet to consolidate their phonic and decoding skills. This impacts upon their ability to read in a fluent manner, with a number of pupils, particularly boys, having under-developed reading comprehension skills. Despite the good provision, standards in pupils' reading skills at the end of Year 9 remain average overall.

77. Although many pupils achieve well in their writing skills in relation to their prior learning, the scrutiny of work reveals that standards in written work in Years 7 to 9 are average and are in line with national expectations. The quality of work produced by girls is generally better than that produced by boys. Opportunities are given for pupils to write in different styles, for different purposes and with a specific audience in mind. This could be seen in an effective unit of work in Year 7 on the contemporary novel 'Buddy', as pupils produced character studies, diary entries and imaginary letters between characters in the novel. Information and communication technology and word-processing skills make little contribution to pupils' writing skills.
78. Standards in the classroom are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 11. The proportion of Year 11 pupils attaining A* to C grade passes in the GCSE English language and literature examinations in 2001 was above the national average. Although boys achieved the boys' national average, they did less well than the girls. Pupils did better in mathematics and science than in English. The proportion of pupils attaining A* to C grade passes fell in both GCSE English language and literature in 2002. Results have remained stable over time in English language and have improved in English literature, where there has been a significant increase in the numbers of pupils entered for the examination over the past three years.
79. The 2002 results in both GCSE English language and literature indicate significant under-achievement by lower-attaining boys. However, most pupils make satisfactory progress, with higher-attaining pupils and most girls making most progress and lower-attaining boys and most pupils with learning difficulties least progress. The principal reason for this difference is the progress pupils make in acquiring basic writing skills. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress.
80. By the end of Year 11, most pupils' speaking and listening skills are above the national average. Pupils listen carefully in class and respond clearly and fluently. Higher-attaining pupils are capable of presenting a well-argued case in formal English. For example, they discuss the character of Tybalt in 'Romeo and Juliet' and the attitudes to social class represented in 'An Inspector Calls'. Some lower-attaining boys find difficulty organising extended speech, and respond in brief phrases, leaving much of the discussion to the girls. There are good opportunities in lessons for discussion and most pupils make good progress. There are further opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills in assemblies and in school debates.
81. By the end of Year 11, reading is in line with national expectations. There is a wide range of attainment, with higher-attaining pupils reaching standards well above national expectations. These pupils read GCSE literature texts clearly and expressively and with understanding and appreciation. For example, pupils in year 10 read the novel 'Of Mice and Men' fluently. Most pupils read accurately, but there is a lack of confidence amongst some lower-attaining pupils, particularly boys. These pupils read hesitantly and some struggle to understand plays such as 'Blood Brothers'.
82. By the end of Year 11, writing is in line with national expectations for the majority of pupils. A third of pupils in the year group reach standards well above national expectations. These pupils are secure, independent writers, capable of writing well in a range of forms. For example, pupils show a sensitive appreciation of poetry and produce well-structured literature essays. They use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary in narrative, persuasive and descriptive writing. There is a significant gap in standard between lower-attaining pupils, with writing standards below national expectations, and the majority of pupils. The principal reasons for this underachievement in Years 10 and 11 are the lack of a continuous and progressive

programme of basic skills teaching in Years 7 to 9, such as the discrete programme provided by the National Literacy Strategy, insufficient strategies to support writing and insufficient curriculum time in Years 7 and 8.

83. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall, with some good and very good examples of teaching. Lessons are generally well planned and organised, with teachers having good managerial and disciplinary skills. Many of the lessons observed were teacher led and controlled, with limited opportunities for pupils to take control of their own activities and to become independent learners. A number of basic English skills activities are delivered through the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy but these are carried out in an isolated and under-developed manner and contribute little to the main English activity taking place in the lesson. Occasionally writing activities provided by some teachers are undemanding, with too few opportunities for pupils to write in an original manner and at length. Although some teachers occasionally readily accept the brief responses made by some pupils, the majority of teachers challenge pupils' initial responses and encourage them to speak in more detail and at length.
84. Where teaching is good or better, teachers display a personal enthusiasm for the work in hand, have high expectations of pupils and utilise a number of teaching and learning styles. This enables pupils to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum, with each activity developing and extending pupils' English skills. This results in good and very good learning taking place as pupils work willingly and hard to achieve the known lesson objectives.
85. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, ranging from satisfactory teaching to good and very good teaching. Much of the teaching is literature based and lessons are well planned with good opportunities for discussion. Teachers plan individual and sequences of lessons effectively, enabling pupils to build upon their knowledge and understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and establish good relationships in classes. Where this is allied with teaching expertise, pupils have the confidence to try out their ideas in a safe and secure learning environment. For example, pupils develop an understanding of the character of Tybalt, by imitating his walk and emulating his body language. In another imaginative approach to the study of 'Romeo and Juliet', pupils work in groups to produce modern versions of the themes from the opening scene, with confrontations between football fans and groups from rival schools. Teachers use the study of literature very effectively to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils explore human feelings and emotions and social attitudes as they study characters from plays such as 'Hobson's Choice' and 'Blood Brothers'. In their study of 'Romeo and Juliet', they have the opportunity to discuss moral codes through their study of the behaviour of young men in Verona.
86. Not all teaching is equally successful. In most lessons, teachers carefully match activities to the abilities of pupils in the class and provide them with extra help, but this is not always the case. Some pupils in mixed-ability classes struggle to understand and complete tasks. Most lessons begin with a short 'starter' exercise, designed to consolidate vocabulary, punctuation or grammar. Whilst this is sufficient to support the writing of higher-attaining pupils, it is insufficient for lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties.
87. Assessment procedures contribute to pupils' learning. Whole-school collection and analysis of information provides teachers with an effective system for keeping track of progress and predicting grades. The review system at the end of each major piece of work provides very good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their progress and for teachers to set personal targets for improvement. This is an improvement since the

last inspection report. Marking in Years 10 and 11 is thorough and supports learning. Pupils work well together in groups; they try hard and concentrate well. Their behaviour is good and most pupils enjoy lessons. Their positive attitudes contribute to their learning.

88. The leadership and management of the English department are good. The subject is well organised with clear policies. There have been a number of improvements since the last report. These include the development of an appropriate action plan and units of work, together with the introduction of formal and informal keeping track of teaching, which is supported with in-service training. After several years of staffing difficulties, there is now a well-qualified, stable, teaching staff. As a consequence, teaching has improved from unsatisfactory at the time of the last report to satisfactory, with much good and very good teaching.

Key Stage 3 for English Strategy

89. The department has responded to the introduction of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, though it is currently being used in an inconsistent manner by a number of teachers. Significant changes in staffing and the lack of qualifications of a number of temporary staff has inhibited the co-ordinator's ability to introduce, develop and monitor the Key Stage 3 National Strategy in a rigorous manner. Lesson objectives are not always shared with pupils or reviewed at the end of lessons to see if they have been achieved. A number of teachers regularly set time targets for all activities. This ensures that pupils stay on task and give their full attention to the work they are involved in. The lack of timed targets sometimes means that the pupils rather than the teacher dictate the pace of the lesson. Teachers generally provide pupils with work and activities matched to the ability of groups of pupils.

Drama

Provision is **very good**.

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

90. By the end of Year 9, pupils have made good progress in the development of drama skills and their attainment is above national expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and make good progress, achieving standards commensurate with their capabilities. Year 7 pupils learn to use stimulus material to create drama and improvise short, imaginative scenes from poems. By Year 9, pupils improvise scenes in pairs and groups developing a narrative. Pupils are beginning to use a range of performance skills effectively. For example, pupils improvise short scenes independently, developing dialogue and movement. They use techniques such as freeze framing and monologue and show a sensitive appreciation for characters and their feelings.
91. The proportion of pupils attaining A* to C grade passes in the 2001 GCSE drama examination was below the national average. In 2002 there was a fall in these results to well below the national average for 2001. These results are not reflected in standards in

the classroom, which are above the national expectation by the end of Year 11. The principal reason for the discrepancy in standards is the staffing difficulties experienced by the department over the past two years. Most pupils continue to make good progress. In Year 10, pupils are performing well-structured pieces. Pupils sustain a role and there is perceptive characterisation, an awareness of space and a good sense of movement. In Year 11, pupils communicate much more directly with the audience. Pupils use a wide range of techniques, with smooth transitions between split scenes and monologues. Although there is a wide range in standards, most coursework is at least satisfactory and some is very good. Most coursework is well researched and well structured. Pupils' thoughtful planning supports their creative group work.

92. Teaching and learning are very good. A feature of the teaching is very good planning, not only of individual lessons but also of sequences of lessons, so that pupils are constantly building on previous learning. For example, pupils build on their understanding and appreciation of themes from week to week. Thus pupils in Year 7 explore a range of different types of bullying and Year 9 pupils consider homelessness from different points of view. Lessons are planned to give time to research and discuss ideas before performance, with opportunities for pupils to evaluate their progress as lessons proceed. For example, pupils read and discuss a Metropolitan Police recruitment advertisement before improvising a confrontation between a policeman and a homeless person. Teachers have an excellent command of their subject and good class management skills. They demonstrate techniques expertly and develop ideas with pupils. For example, a teacher helped a group to develop a scene that demonstrated people's attitudes to HIV and then brought together the different scenes, which groups have prepared, to form a whole class play. There are high expectations and very good relationships and pupils respond positively to the challenges provided for them. Pupils enjoy drama; they are self-disciplined and take risks. They contribute significantly to their own learning.
93. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underlies teaching and learning. Pupils learn through an exploration of themes such as bullying, homelessness and the social and cultural issues surrounding arranged marriages. They learn to work together, to create drama as a group activity, to criticise each other positively and to respect other points of view. A strength of the department is the excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities provided which extend and consolidate classroom learning and pupils' personal development. Pupils take drama on tour in this country and abroad and take part in lunchtime drama and school productions. There are effective links with teaching and learning in other subjects, such as art, music and English, and opportunities for some pupils to gain work experience in the professional theatre.
94. The leadership and management of the department are very good. There are clear policies, very good planning and an appropriate action plan. The quality of teaching is monitored and opportunities for in-service training are provided. An area for further development is assessment in Years 7 to 9, where a new procedure has been introduced this year. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection report.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths:

- Teaching and learning are usually good.

- Standards overall by the end of Years 9 and 11.
- New leadership, which in identifying issues has immediately set the basis for change.

Areas for improvement:

- Fuller embrace of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy.
- Development of information and communication technology.
- Development of assessment procedures.
- Attainment at the highest levels A*/A in GCSE.

95. Standards in lessons and in work seen largely confirm the results of national tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations.
96. The attainment of pupils in mathematics on entry to the school is above national standards. The overall results of national tests for Year 9 pupils in 2001 were above the national average and above average when compared to schools with a similar intake. Performance at Level 7 and above is close to national expectations. Unconfirmed data for 2002 suggest a slight improvement in performance. The attainment has been consistently above the national average since the last inspection. The overall attainment during the last three years is better than English or science.
97. Higher grade, A* to C, GCSE results were in line with the national average in 2001 and A* to G grades were significantly above the national average. Unconfirmed data for 2002 indicate an improvement, which maintains the consistency of performance since the last inspection. Results at the highest levels A* to A GCSE are below national expectations.
98. Many pupils across the ability range recall explain and apply previously taught skills. Year 11 pupils use trigonometry in various ways, higher-attaining pupils recognise differing types of number, both rational and irrational, and confidently describe and apply their meanings. Year 10 pupils confidently recall straight-line graphs, recognise the meaning of intercept and distinguish the type and value of the gradient by reference to the equation. Pupils in Year 7 investigate number patterns, predict outcomes and some extend this to generate a rule for finding a solution. Many pupils use mathematical vocabulary in an effective manner.
99. The teaching and learning on balance are good overall. The best teaching is characterised by good lesson planning and thorough and incremental introduction to lesson objectives. The development of these is invariably shared with the pupils with the teachers using appropriate cues by judicious use of open questions. The teaching scheme uses a mixed range of books but this is supplemented by appropriate use of relevant material: this creates a balance and freshness, which encourages interest. In a high-ability Year 10 lesson, trigonometry was being applied to angles of depression and elevation. Pupils were challenged to unravel problems by effective recall and application of facts, testing ideas and interpreting outcomes. This reflected good preparation for examination questions with the emphasis placed upon identifying key issues prior to solving problems. Pupils were totally engaged with their work, they naturally shared opinions and strategies and were very able to explain clearly their thinking. Teachers' subject knowledge was good and pace was appropriate to the ability of the class. The pupils' books were particularly well presented, with clear evidence of high work output. Where teaching is less effective, this is mainly due to a toleration of inappropriate pupil behaviour, which leads to an adverse influence upon the atmosphere of the classroom and a weakened level of progress. Prior levels of output,

as seen in books, is poor and work often incomplete with little pride shown in presentation and scant evidence of teacher intervention in improving this position.

100. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are good overall, and where teachers are new to the school, expectations are explicitly demanded; pupils accordingly respond. Learning by pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory overall. All pupils are entered for GCSE. The proportion of pupils currently entering the school at Level 3 or below is less than the national average. The department is yet to focus on the selective use of suitable catch-up materials. The use of success maker is within the school but not included within departmental provision.
101. The implementation of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy is limited and inconsistent. In lessons observed where lesson starters were used, additional resources were limited to the use of wipe boards with a restricted mathematical focus upon number work. The new planning in Year 7 emphasises lesson starters and provides examples. Many lessons used a plenary session and indeed this practice was observed in lessons in Year 10 and 11, evidence of the positive influence of the Key Stage 3 Strategy on teaching styles. However, overall the fuller use of the wider features of the strategy remain an issue for development. Pupils do not consistently use information and communication technology as a part of their mathematics lessons and scant evidence of its use was seen in pupils work or in classroom display. Problems of access to computer facilities and technical maintenance with the department's networked computers prevent a developed use of this aspect of the curriculum. The current assessment provision is underdeveloped and its application is inconsistent with the net result that too many pupils are unaware of their current, predicted and target levels. However, in Year 7, the department are currently reviewing their provision and are developing a scheme, which uses a database for recording, keeping track of and weighing up pupils' progress through the National Curriculum. The intention is that this practice should continue to move through the age range.
102. The department has recently experienced severe staffing issues which weakens efforts to develop or sustain initiatives because of the need to react to more immediate and pressing demands. In spite of these issues, attainment has remained consistent at the ends of Years 9 and 11. This is a testimony to the good work of key members of the department, particularly the newly internally promoted head of department. Since assuming his post he has identified areas which need increased levels of development; leadership is therefore now a strength of the department.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths:

- Improving standards at Year 11.
- Good teaching, especially organisation and planning.
- Good use of literacy.
- Good relationships.
- Good leadership.

Areas for improvement:

- Marking is not sufficiently informative.
- Extent to which good teaching practice is shared.
- A sharper focus on in-class assessment.
- Use of information and communication technology.

103. In the work seen in lessons, and from the analysis of pupil's notebooks, standards in Year 9 reflect the test results of the past few years (up to 2001) and are in line with national expectations. In Year 11, standards in lessons and written work, although variable, are overall above national expectations.
104. In the 2001 national tests for Year 9 pupils, results were close to the national average. The average point score and the percentage of pupils gaining Level 5, or greater, were both close to the national average, and close to the average in similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 6, or greater, was also close to the average. The performance of boys was close to that of girls. Attainment in science has been higher than in English but not as good as in mathematics. Results have improved faster than the national trend since 1998, with a particularly marked improvement between 2001 and 2002 (comparative data for 2002 is, as yet, unverified). In the 2002 school results standards were well above the 2001 average. Based on available data for national tests at Year 6, pupils' attainment on entry to Year 7 was close to the national average and therefore progress from Year 7 to 9 is good.
105. The 2001 GCSE examination results in science are well above the national average for both double award and single award science. Boys' attainment was above that of girls by a small margin. In comparison with all schools nationally, the percentage of pupils gaining A* to C was above average. In comparison with similar schools, the percentage of A* to C grades was well above average in 2001 and indicates that progress from Year 9 to 11 was good. In 2002, the GCSE results were higher than those in 2001 and over the past four years results have improved significantly.
106. Pupils have a basic knowledge of essential principles. For example, in the study of inheritance, pupils understand how inherited features pass on from parents to offspring, but some struggle to apply the principles to unfamiliar situations – how selective breeding can lead to new varieties, for instance. Most pupils are competent in investigation work, especially in recording measurements and simple analysis.
107. In Year 11, standards in lessons and written work, although uneven, are overall above the national expectations. A significant number of pupils, in higher sets, have gained a good understanding of, for example, chemical reactions and symbol equations. They present their ideas confidently in front of the class and are subjected to assessment by

their peers. The great majority of pupils have acquired a clear awareness of the approach to investigations; they consider sensible predictions, and measure and record observations with care. However, they do not think sufficiently widely about the results, nor evaluate the methods. Both higher and lower-attaining pupils make good progress, especially since the setting arrangements enable appropriately demanding work to be planned. However, within the sets, higher-attaining pupils do not make the progress expected if there is insufficient match of challenging tasks to their capabilities.

108. Standards of literacy in science are good. Teachers stress important scientific words and their meanings using key word displays in most classrooms. For example, in one Year 9 class, the teacher encouraged pupils to think of alternatives to the word 'properties', and then explored with them the differences between rusting and corrosion. However, there was little evidence for good practice such as this being shared across the department. Numeracy is not very explicitly promoted, though it is embedded in the schemes of work throughout the school. Opportunities for using information and communication technology in science are insufficient and contribute only slightly to overall standards. There is an access issue here as other subject areas have priority access to the computer suite. Where information and communication technology is used in science, it is used effectively. For example, in a Year 9 class pupils used their prior knowledge of inheritance to conduct Internet research on why scientists believe that the extinct quagga and the zebra are varieties of the same species.
109. The quality of teaching and learning, overall, is good. During inspection, three fifths of lessons seen were good and one very good. Teachers have a good level of expertise in their subjects and plan lessons well to give variety of task and clear progression from previous work. Insufficient attention is given to work that matches the capabilities of higher-attaining pupils. Good support is given to pupils with lower capability and to those with learning difficulties so that these groups can work easily alongside other pupils. Overall, expectations are high and pupils are encouraged well to make every effort. Pupils respond positively to this, relationships are good and learning is productive. Pupils are managed well to ensure good behaviour and the atmosphere is conducive to purposeful work. In some classes, however, pupils are not sufficiently engaged in discussion and opportunities to assess learning are not taken. Sometimes teachers explain concepts in great length without giving time for reflection or for pupils to ask questions effectively. Marking is regular and gives encouragement, but does not give enough formative guidance to pupils on how they can improve their level of work.
110. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear focus on improvement and strategies to raise standards, which are proving to be effective in Years 9 and 11. Good planning is evolving, although more reference is needed to tasks that stretch higher-attaining pupils. The handbook provides good support for teachers. Assessment data are gathered well and are being increasingly used to look for underachievement and in course planning. External test result data for pupils are used well in relation to predicted targets and progress. Keeping track of teachers' work takes place but could be more rigorous, especially through classroom observation, to clearly identify strengths and weaknesses. Accommodation is used well. Resources are good and well managed except for the lack of information and communication technology equipment. Staff contribute well to development, work effectively as a team and are supported well by two able technicians.
111. The department has made good progress since the previous inspection. GCSE examination results and the test results for Year 9 pupils have both improved significantly. Teaching is better than it was at that time. Relationships remain good in lessons, and risk assessments are now embedded in experimental work. Assessment

data is used with increasing confidence. Marking of pupils' work and a sharper focus on in-class assessment are areas for further improvement. Leadership is good.

Key Stage 3 Strategy for science

112. The Key Stage 3 Strategy for science is at an early developmental stage. The head of department has initiated the 'audit' or review process and the progress made so far is satisfactory. He has received some training for implementing the National Strategy and he is of the opinion that there has been insufficient guidance. The local education authority's Key Stage 3 Strategy for science consultant will be visiting the department later this term to give further guidance on key areas of implementation. At this stage, therefore, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on the impact of the strategy on the quality of teaching and on pupils' attainment.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths:

- Pupils show a high level of commitment and interest; GCSE pupils spend much of their own time on their artwork.
- The quality of teaching is good; it shows careful planning and a good integration of theory and practical work.
- Very good use is made of sketch books to support work and develop independent study.

Areas for improvement:

- The third space used for teaching art is inadequate for practical lessons.
- The fan in the dark room is in urgent need of repair and an extractor fan is required above the kiln and a cage assembled around it.

113. In Year 9, standards are average overall. In Year 11, standards are above average. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were in line with national expectations. Results attained in 2001 GCSE examinations were above the national average. Almost two thirds of the entry was girls and they achieved significantly higher than boys. The trend since the last inspection has been one of improving attainment, especially in the highest grades. The most recent results for 2002 show a considerable improvement for both boys and girls. Over 90 per cent of girls gained grades A* to C, which is very high.

114. Standards seen are consistent with the improved results. In Year 9, standards are average overall, although many pupils are working at a higher level. Pupils are competent working in 2 and 3 dimensions and in a range of media. Work produced after studying the potter, Clarice Cliff, captures the main features of her ceramic patterns. Digital photographic images of little wire and clay figures on a background of the school buildings indicate good experimental computer skills with an amusing outcome. All pupils keep a record of their planning in their sketchbooks and some of these are well annotated, with attention paid to good quality, accurate writing. Higher-attaining pupils show very good effort and a good critical awareness in researching their own studies of artists and artistic movements. Pupils with learning difficulties make progress because teachers are sensitive to their needs and plan for them. Achievement from Year 7 to Year 9 is good as pupils build on skills learned and become more confident with line, colour and media.

115. Many higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 are producing work of a mature quality as a result of very good guidance from the teachers. Lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties do well because each pupil is valued and treated as an individual. Current studies in Surrealism show clear evidence of extensive research. Pupils' personalised sketch books reflect information gleaned from a variety of sources; the library, the Internet, video and, in some cases, visits to galleries to see first hand paintings by Dali, Miro and Magritte. Achievement from Year 10 to 11 is very good. Pupils refine their skills and approach potentially daunting tasks with confidence. Some of the sketchbooks are outstanding examples of pupils' effort, independence and creativity.
116. Attitudes to the subject are good. Pupils generally behave well, try their best and respect each other's work. Pupils working towards GCSE are highly motivated and, encouraged by their teachers' commitment spend much of their own time working at their art. They appreciate the accessibility of their teachers for advice and the opportunity to use the studios at lunchtime and after school.
117. Teaching and learning is good in all years and usually very good in Years 10 and 11. There are many strengths. Teaching and learning strategies have improved since the last inspection. Good lesson planning ensures that pupils of all abilities remain interested and on task. Clear explanations and the teaching of specific art concepts help pupils increase their understanding and become more articulate in discussing and writing about their work. Assessment is on-going. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. The teachers work well as a team, utilising their different strengths. The one-to-one guidance teachers give in lessons indicates their very good knowledge of each pupil's potential and targets set at the appropriate level. Teaching is supported by two studios, which offer good space. It is to the credit of the teacher that work is good in a third room, a classroom unsuitable for practical work.
118. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are very good and this is reflected in the schools gold Artsmark award. Pupils are already excited about and preparing for the annual trip abroad to Barcelona to study the buildings and designs of Gaudi. Display around the school offers an excellent celebration of pupils' artwork, including huge murals in the drama and sports areas, underlining the diversity of interests in a sports college. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on and respond to the work of professional artists and to work collaboratively at times on whole-class projects. The exhibition of GCSE work in the summer is an excellent chance for parents to see their children's work but also draws compliments from the primary schools and the community.
119. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The organisation and administration are excellent, evident in the high quality and well-used departmental handbook. Lessons are very well planned to include regular assessment of pupils and revision of elements of the course. Keeping track of lessons enables good practice to be shared and less experienced teachers to learn effective strategies in pupil management. Examination results have been thoroughly analysed and the emphasis on improving GCSE grades and attracting more boys is proving successful. The development plan is forward looking with clear direction and the department offers an effective contribution to the creative life of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The overall quality of provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths:

- There is good teaching in the GCSE courses.
- Recent results in GCSE resistant materials were above the national average.
- Teaching areas are well maintained with attractive and informative displays.
- Pupils enjoy the learning opportunities, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement:

- Pupils underachieve in Years 7 to 9 because of insufficient curriculum provision.
- National Curriculum requirements in Years 10 and 11 are not met.
- There is a significant shortfall in the number of specialist teachers and insufficient staff development within the department.
- Planning, particularly in Years 7 to 9, lacks coverage and challenge for all pupils.
- Assessment procedures are insufficiently developed.

120. In lessons and work seen, standards in Years 7 to 9 are below national averages when taking account of the range and depth of knowledge and skills required by the programme of study and described by the National Curriculum levels. Standards in Year 11 are average in resistant materials and graphic products but well below in food technology.
121. In 2001, the GCSE results were above average, with 61 per cent of pupils attaining grades A* to C compared with nearly 51 per cent nationally. Girls perform better than boys though both generally do as well in design and technology as they do in their other GCSE subjects. A smaller group took design and technology courses in 2002 and pupils gained overall results similar to those in 2001. There were, though, considerable difference in outcomes between the two courses taken, with 75 per cent of pupils attaining grades A* to C in resistant materials compared with 40 per cent in graphic products. The reduction in course numbers and the variation in results were primarily the result of continuing staffing problems.
122. In Years 7 and 8, pupils' experience is limited to learning activities in food and textiles. In those lessons, pupils demonstrate sound practical making skills with higher-attaining pupils able to evaluate their outcomes. In Year 9, the increased lesson time enables pupils also to use wood and plastic and develop their graphical skills. For the first time, they are able to work through a simple design process, for example in designing a clock face and producing corporate image designs. In the different practical making activities, pupils use tools and equipment with some confidence and their stronger than average literacy and numeracy skills enable most pupils to present their ideas and planning effectively. However, pupils have little understanding of material properties, structures and systems and control, and limited awareness of a design and make process. At the end of Year 9, standards are below national average reflecting unsatisfactory progress over the three years.
123. The school has failed satisfactorily to address the concern raised in the last inspection report that, unless there are special circumstances, all pupils are required to follow a design and technology course in Years 10 and 11. In most years, only a minority of pupils have opted to do so although most of those that do make good progress. This is particularly true of those taking either resistant materials or graphic products where the good teaching helps most pupils reach standards in line with national average. In those lessons, pupils work with considerable interest and care in researching and presenting their initial design ideas and pupils with less strong literacy make good use of information and communication technology to improve the accuracy and appearance of their work. Many pupils tend to be dependent on teacher guidance to make progress in developing designs; this is in part a result of the need for the teacher to redress earlier

curriculum weaknesses. However, in one Year 11 lesson, higher-attaining pupils, who experienced a better design and technology provision in earlier years, showed a good understanding of different mechanical systems when evaluating and designing mechanical toys. Standards in the Year 11 food technology course are well below national average in terms of design, planning and practical work. While most of the pupils are particularly interested in the practical making activities, evident in the lesson exploring vegetarian dishes from different cultures, the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and the higher-than-average absence rates result in many pupils making barely satisfactory progress.

124. The quality of teaching is less strong than it was in the previous inspection as a result of the current staffing problems. Even so, teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in the GCSE courses. Learning objectives are clearly established in all lessons. The best practice, evident in GCSE resistant materials and graphic products courses, provides a range of specified tasks that meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers have clear expectations about behaviour and application and almost all pupils respond well. This is evident in much of the folder work in which both girls and boys show care and accuracy. In the good GCSE lessons, the teacher's high expectations relating to the research and presentation of design ideas helps many pupils make good progress in developing their information and communication technology skills and annotated drawing skills. Teaching in the food and textile technologies is effective in engaging pupil interest through the different practical activities, though the work schemes address the design and make process less rigorously and provide few opportunities for higher-level attainment. Related to this is the limited use of design and technology criteria in on-going marking and tracking of pupils to help them improve their work.
125. The leadership and management of the subject have lost considerable momentum as a result of the diminishing curriculum provision and inadequate staffing. The head of department leads by example in providing good class teaching, supporting newer staff and ensuring that the teaching areas are well maintained with attractive and informative displays. Nonetheless, there are weaknesses in some management aspects. These include a lack of a shared and coherent approach to all aspects of the subject, limited planning, particularly for Years 7 to 9, and an insufficiently developed assessment system. There are also wider management issues that relate to the implementation of the subject. The lack of curriculum time and failure to meet National Curriculum requirements, insufficient staff recruitment and training, and some limitations in resources relating to food technology and computer aided design and manufacture, all frustrate efforts to ensure a satisfactory provision.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **very good**

Strengths:

- The consistently good teaching leading to very good achievement.
- The well-developed geographical curriculum.
- The excellent quality leadership.

Area for improvement:

- Review timetabling arrangements to further develop pupil achievement.

126. Standards in Year 9 are broadly average and standards in Year 11 are above average. Results in the 2002 GCSE examination were well above both the national average and that for similar schools at grades A* to C. Many pupils get better results in geography than they do in their other subjects and boys also perform above the national average. The 2002 results were higher than those of 2001 and substantially higher than at the time of the last inspection. The major reasons for this transformation are high quality leadership and good teaching. As a consequence, pupils' achievement is very good.
127. In work seen during the inspection, pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 9. This is confirmed by the teacher assessments in 2002. This represents good achievement as pupils start school aged eleven with geographical knowledge and skills below the expected levels. Pupils are introduced well to concepts such as the need to protect the coast and why literacy and life expectancy are good indicators of economic development. Most pupils possess an appropriate range of map and graphical skills, and apply numerical skills correctly when using the scale of maps to measure distance and draw graphs of climate patterns. Pupils' written work is good and most use a range of technical words such as 'weather', 'precipitation' and 'erosion' in appropriate contexts as a result of teaching which emphasises the importance of the correct geographical terminology. Although the comprehension and communication of geographical ideas is a weakness, for a number of pupils across the school, it is linked to more fundamental difficulties of verbal reasoning than to specifically geographical weaknesses.
128. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards at the end of Year 11 are above average but results are on course to be the best for some years. This represents a very good level of achievement based on their standards at the ends of Years 6 and 9. Pupils consolidate map skills and produce a good standard of GCSE coursework. For example, pupils in Year 11 conduct in-depth studies in which higher-attaining pupils, in particular, demonstrate their skills of investigating, collecting and processing data in their understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of green and brown-field sites. Pupils are encouraged by very good teaching to produce high quality, accurate presentations of cartographic, graphical and written work using a variety of sources, including information and communication technology.
129. Teaching is good across the school; it is very good in Years 10 and 11. The quality of pupils' learning is, therefore, good overall, being firmly linked to high quality teaching. It is also better in Years 10 and 11 because there is more curricular time for pupils to be taught concepts and knowledge. Teachers' knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the subject interests the pupils and enables them to see the relevance of social, environmental, economic and political issues. During a lesson on national housing problems, an older pupil explained that she liked geography because 'the lessons are

always different'. Teachers use an effective variety of techniques in their approach to the subject and encourage pupils to think about contemporary geographical issues. Thus pupils in Year 8 understand after discussion how the question of coastal protection can be viewed from a number of angles before going on to justify their choice of protection scheme. Fieldwork is used well to allow pupils to collect and process information: following their visit to Cuckmere Haven, most could link theory to practice and explain how and why the beach and cliffs have changed over time. Accurate and regular assessment helps pupils' achievement across the school: for example, through careful analysis the department confirmed that many pupils encounter difficulties both in interpreting questions and in understanding geographical theory. Teachers then adjusted their teaching to take account of these factors and pupils' understanding was enhanced as a result.

130. The quality of learning is helped by the pupils' positive attitudes to the subject, which, in turn, are stimulated by stimulating teaching, which catches their interest. The analysis of pupils' exercise books showed good quality work with a regard for appearance.
131. The subject makes a very good, planned contribution to pupils' moral, social, cultural and citizenship development. For example, very good examples were seen of both group work and role play and an awareness of local, national and international issues was generated by requiring pupils to examine the plight of poor nations with significant child poverty. Teachers provide excellent role models as they seek to help all pupils do their best. Computers are used well: pupils use them competently to analyse the differences in water use between Egypt and the United Kingdom. Geography makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy development and teachers are aware of the continuing need to enhance pupils' writing skills. Pupils use a variety of styles and good examples were seen in work explaining why 12 million people visit the Lake District every year and some poetry written by Year 8 pupils to express their thoughts on the rainforest. Excellent account is taken of inclusion factors: great care is taken to set suitable learning challenges, which are linked to a wide range of learning needs, and the department has succeeded in raising the achievement of boys considerably.
132. The leadership of the department is excellent: in the space of a few years geography has leapt from the academic depths to its present position. The head of department sets a first-class example and has forged a united and capable department with good quality teaching and high standards as its hallmarks. Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent and, provided the school timetabling does not handicap the subject, the future is promising.

HISTORY

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

Strengths:

- Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- There are good procedures in place to support the identified needs of pupils, in order to further raise levels of attainment.

Areas for improvement:

- The disparity in attainment between boys and girls.
- The awarding of National Curriculum levels which accurately reflect the attainment of pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- The identification of opportunities to develop pupils' information and communication technology skills.

133. Standards in Year 9 are average and in Year 11 they are above the national average. In 2002, standards in history at the end of Year 9, based on assessments carried out by teachers, were in line with the national average. Unconfirmed data for 2002 suggests a similar pattern but with fewer pupils attaining the higher levels. In 2001, a small number of pupils attained very high levels. In 2002, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels was below the percentage attained in 2001. The attainment of girls is significantly higher than that of boys; in 2001, the latest year for which comparative national figures are available, the difference was greater than the national difference. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with the national average. This indicates maintenance of the standards reported after the previous inspection.

134. Pupils enter the school with very varied experience of the study of history. Overall, attainment in history of pupils entering the school is below national expectations. They achieve well to meet the national average by the end of Year 9, particularly in the acquisition of key historical skills upon which future progress depends. For example, pupils make good progress in understanding the order in which things happened, and how long ago, which enables them in turn to understand the causes and consequences of historical events. The historical vocabulary of all pupils develops well; for example, Year 9 pupils studying trench warfare used good specialist vocabulary when discussing this topic, but were hampered in understanding and answering questions about this by their limited general vocabulary.

135. Standards, in 2001, were well above the national average for pupils attaining both A* to C and A* and A* in the GCSE examination. There are annual fluctuations in the percentage of pupils who attain grades A*-C but this has remained consistently above the national average for a number of years. The attainment of girls was considerably higher than that of boys in 2001 but this gap narrowed in 2002 to a level which is close to what is generally seen nationally. The full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that pupils in Year 11, who are still some months away from their GCSE examinations, are on course to attain above the national average. This represents maintenance of the standards reported after the previous inspection.

136. Pupils start their examination course in Year 10 with attainment which is close to the national average, and their achievement is good to reach standards which are above the

national average. In general, pupils make better progress in history than they do in their other subjects. Achievement is good in their knowledge and understanding of a considerable volume of historical facts and situations and in using this to make evaluations of the topics they study. They develop well their ability to evaluate and use historical source material to explore and enhance their understanding. Pupils make good progress in planning and structuring their written answers so that they meet examination requirements.

137. The quality of teaching is good overall. This represents maintenance of the standards reported at the previous inspection. All teaching seen was at least good and a small proportion was very good. One lesson was excellent. Teachers plan a good range, of activities in order to meet pupils' identified needs across the attainment range, and they respond well to this, showing interest, good concentration and the ability to work hard. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress as a result of the support they receive from teachers. Teachers make good use of questioning and discussion to extend pupils' thinking and they make good progress by listening to and evaluating the ideas of others. The quality of discussion is a strength of the department. Teachers have identified extended writing as an area where most pupils experience difficulty and they offer a range of good support to enable pupils to plan both their written answers and notes and pupils make good progress in this vital area. However, there are instances when the comprehensiveness of the support given means that pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop independent learning skills. Teachers place good emphasis on the importance of the use of correct historical vocabulary and pupils frequently show more confidence in using this than in their general vocabulary.
138. The leadership and management of the subject are good overall. There is a clear commitment to raising standards and there are good strategies in place to support pupils who are likely to under-achieve. The department development plan has correctly identified areas which inhibit pupils' progress, and some effective strategies have been put in place, for example those for the development of extended writing. Although the narrowing of the disparity in attainment between girls and boys has now been identified in the development plan, too little has been done so far to address this problem. Although the formal assessments of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 are well organised and have been carried out regularly, very rigorous interpretations of National Curriculum levels have meant that pupils have been awarded levels which are lower than they deserve. There is effective planning in place which is regularly revised and updated to meet changing circumstances, but plans do not identify opportunities for the development of information and communication technology skills and there is little evidence that pupils are given the opportunity to develop these as part of their study of history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths:

- Year 11 examination results are very good.
- There is good learning in Years 7, 9, 10 and 11 in ICT lessons.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard.
- Teachers' have good knowledge of the subject.

Areas for improvement:

- Pupils in Year 8 and a few pupils in Year 11 have too few opportunities for ICT.
- The use of computers across the school is not sufficiently developed.
- Currently there is no technical support for ICT.

139. Standards on arrival are average and improve during Year 7. There are no ICT lessons in Year 8. Standards are below average in Year 9 and have fallen three years in a row. Standards are well above average in Year 11 for those taking a GCSE course. Achievement over Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory but in Years 10 and 11 it is satisfactory. The school is currently taking effective steps to improve provision for all pupils. The appointment of new staff and a review of provision are beginning to raise standards. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
140. Standards of work seen in Year 7 were average. Work in Year 9 was below average. The quality of learning in Years 7 and 9 during the inspection was satisfactory or good in all ICT lessons. Pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT, and the role of the computer in learning in most subjects has not been developed. Girls perform better than boys and this mirrors the national trend.
141. Pupils taking a GCSE course in Year 11 have a broad range of skills in ICT. Results are well above average. A small number of pupils do not follow an ICT course. They have too few ICT experiences in other subjects. This situation has been improved for Year 10. Pupils who do not take the GCSE course now take a course in key skills. However, there are still too few ICT experiences in other subjects. Boys perform better than girls. This is the reverse of the national trend and possible reasons have not yet been identified. The quality of learning in GCSE lessons is good.
142. Pupils with learning difficulties are well integrated with other pupils in lessons, and their learning is satisfactory. No special arrangements are made for gifted and talented pupils. Some GCSE coursework is of a high standard and the department provides good support for individual pupils through the use of specific marking frameworks that show exactly what a pupil should do to improve. Literacy and numeracy skills are effectively supported; for example, an exercise in Year 10 encouraged pupils to estimate share volumes based on a share price.
143. Teaching is good overall, and was very good in a few lessons. The main strength of the department lies in teachers' extensive knowledge and understanding of the subject. Lessons are well planned and presented, and relationships are good. Where the teaching is good, teachers give careful and clear instructions and provide good support to individuals. The department only recently became full strength and the standard of teaching to the GCSE classes remained constant through a difficult period largely

through the efforts of one teacher. This enabled the pupils to maintain the high standards of previous years.

144. The management of specific ICT courses has been taken over by the head of department who was appointed last January. He provides good leadership. However, the ICT co-ordinator responsible for ICT across all subjects has no time to develop ICT. Since the recent departure of the ICT technician, he maintains all the school equipment; this is also affecting his teaching because of the continuous interruptions to his lessons by teachers requiring technical support.
145. Development planning is in place and does identify targets, responsibilities, success criteria and deadlines. However, long-term financial planning for the replacement of existing equipment has yet to be undertaken. Library facilities for ICT are satisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is improving, but **is not yet satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Standards are improving.
- Current teaching is mostly at least satisfactory and much is good.
- The management and leadership of the department are good and new teachers are supported well.
- The teachers are hardworking and give generously of their time to pupils, for example by providing additional oral practice.

Areas for improvement:

- A relatively high number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 study no foreign language.
- Too many boys are under-achieving.
- The current achievement of many pupils, in lower sets especially, is too low. Their learning has suffered from, and is still affected by, the school's difficulties in recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified languages teachers.

146. From the time of the last inspection report until 2001, pupils' standards in Year 9 and Year 11 dropped from above to below the national average, significantly so in German in Year 11. They are now rising and are broadly in line with national averages overall. Standards in upper and some middle sets are in line with those expected for Year 9 and Year 11, although several pupils in top sets reach above that level. In summer 2002, about half the pupils reached Level 5 in Year 9 and gained GCSEs in French and German graded A* to C. Relatively low proportions gain grades A*/A. Standards in the lowest French and German sets in Year 9 and the lowest German set in Year 11 are unsatisfactory or poor, well below what should be expected. Boys achieve considerably less well than girls but the gap is narrowing. Boys significantly outnumber girls in lower sets. The attainment and progress of many pupils have been badly disrupted by staffing problems.
147. In the large majority of lessons, pupils make satisfactory and often good and occasionally very good progress. Pupils get a good start in Year 7 and achieve well as a result of lively interactive teaching with much use of the foreign language. Progress slows in Years 8 and 11 because pupils have fewer lessons. Progress is held back in several classes, where previous unsatisfactory teaching has left gaps in pupils' knowledge, which current teachers need to plug. In most classes, pupils' speaking and

listening skills are good; several speak spontaneously in French and German. High and average-attaining pupils understand major points and abstract details from written texts, but in Years 7 to 9 read mainly short passages, and have little exposure to longer texts, an issue raised by the previous inspection. Higher-attaining pupils write using a good range of structures and vocabulary, but many rely too heavily on the excellent support sheets prepared in the department; this reliance is stopping the most able reaching the highest levels. Progress is too slow in a small number of lower and middle sets in Years 9 to 11. Several pupils with learning difficulties are in these groups. Pupils retain very little of their previous learning and struggle to understand and use very basic language. Outside these classes, the progress of pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory or good. They make good progress in Year 7 and in other years where the teaching is good or better. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are very well integrated and make progress in line with others in their sets; several pupils from Asian backgrounds work at the top ability range in their group.

148. Italian, recently offered to GCSE, is taken by 23 girls and 2 boys, in Years 10 and 11. It was lightly sampled. Teaching is good and progress rapid. Pupils enjoy their lessons.
149. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are mostly good. They participate well and are especially motivated by games and competitions. They collaborate well and listen carefully to each other and the teacher. Independent research and learning, however, are not well developed.
150. On balance, teaching is good. It is almost always at least satisfactory and about two thirds is good. Occasionally it is very good or excellent. Teachers are competent to teach their allocated classes, and several are strong linguists. Most use the foreign language extensively and encourage pupils to do so. A few use too much English and pupils wait for translations; this reduces their progress. Teachers relate well to the pupils and motivate them with extensive use of praise. The best teaching maintains a good pace and sequences well a rich variety of imaginative tasks, which make learning fun. Good class routines ensure that pupils speak, and a strength is recording good oral contribution to encourage participation.
151. Marking is satisfactory overall, but a little is cursory with failure to indicate errors of gender, accent and agreement. National Curriculum levels are indicated twice termly on more substantial pieces of work. Some are over-generously graded, for example insufficient account is taken of inaccuracies in work deemed Level 5. Recording is satisfactory. The best records allow monitoring by separating language skills to allow quick recognition where pupils' performance varies across the skills.
152. There are weaknesses in the languages curriculum. Pupils choose French or German in Year 7 and are expected to continue with that language to GCSE, a relatively small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 (nearly a third and mostly boys) are allowed to do no foreign language. The lowest Year 9 French set spends too large a proportion of time speaking, reading, and writing about France in English, rather than following the National Curriculum programme. Progress is restrained in Year 11 as less than the national average time is allocated.
153. The department has too few full-time linguists and uses non-specialists who are not yet qualified. They, and the newly qualified teacher, are well supported by the head of department and head of German. The situation places a heavy burden on the head of department. Leadership and management are good. The head of department provides strong, purposeful and caring leadership and has brought many improvements since the last inspection, including keeping track of teaching and learning. Language

assistants are well deployed. Accommodation is enhanced by attractive, stimulating displays. Resources are good.

MUSIC

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

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Standards in Year 11 are above average.
- Pupils have positive attitudes.
- There is good provision for spiritual, social and cultural education.

Areas for improvement:

- National Curriculum requirements to teach information and communication technology are not met.
- Assessments do not accurately reflect attainment levels of Year 9 pupils.

154. Pupils come to the school with broadly average attainment and by Year 9 their achievements are satisfactory. The achievements pupils in Year 11 are good.
155. GCSE results in 2001 for pupils gaining A* to C and A* to G were above average. Group sizes are small and trends fluctuate. Year 9 pupils show average attainment. Pupils with learning needs and talents achieve similar results.
156. GCSE pupils perform with written music, use appropriate language to discuss musical style and compose music using a variety of textures. Most Year 9 pupils read music and can appraise music. Singing and keyboard skills generally throughout the lower school are less well developed.
157. Pupils enjoy their music lessons. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are very enthusiastic for the subject. GCSE pupils enjoy their work and the challenges offered them.
158. Music is well taught throughout the school. Lessons are well planned and paced. Expectations are high and resources are used well. Discipline is good. Standards of learning are good at both levels. Pupils make sustained creative and mental efforts to improve their work. The pace of learning is good and pupils are confident about their progress. They explain how they might improve on their work and keep records of their attainment. A well-planned Year 7 lesson on dynamics included a variety of activities. Keywords were practiced and written into course booklets. Pupils with learning difficulties were supported well through a range of presentations. The learning of basic skills was good. Pupils rose to challenges and worked at a good pace. A Year 8 lesson on performing a folk song was very well taught. The pace of teaching was blistering as pupils were led through a wide variety of challenging tasks. Expectations and discipline levels were very high. As a result, pupils were totally focused and sustained high levels of creative effort to improve on their skills. They were extremely enthusiastic to perform to each other. The lesson ended with energetic testing of musical knowledge using charts of signs and symbols. Good teaching was seen in Year 9 lesson featured challenging listening and chord-playing tasks. As a result of good pace and time management, pupils maintained high levels of interest and improved their basic keyboard skills.

159. Teaching was good in a Year 10 lesson comparing performances of 'Something Stupid'. Poorly motivated pupils were well managed and there were a good variety of tasks. Pupils with learning difficulties were supported with appropriate tasks. As a result, pupils gained confidence and fluency in appraising music and in performing from the score. Year 11 pupils studying Indian music experience inclusive teaching. Probing questions were followed with a good range of listening and performing activities, which challenged and explored pupils' knowledge. Consequently, pupils made sustained efforts to extend their understanding of ragas and discuss improvements.
160. During the inspection, the department was led by an acting subject co-ordinator. The teaching team meets regularly to co-ordinate its work. Staff changes mean that the good teaching seen has not yet made an impact on achievement in Year 9. The department makes a good contribution to the social and cultural education of pupils. The use of information and communication technology in terms of computer use is not developed. There is a wide range of activities including instrumental tuition extensively subsidised by the school and the local music service. Performances are given regularly and are well attended. Accommodation for the subject is good. Tracking of pupils' progress is generally good but recent tracking of low-attaining Year 9 pupils has not been accurate.
161. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in the standards of teaching and the attitudes of pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching.
- The extra-curricular provision.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

Area for improvement:

- Build on assessment at the end of Year 11 in general physical education.

162. At the end of Year 9, overall standards are above average. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average. Teacher assessments show that boys are slightly above the standard expected nationally and girls are slightly below. In lessons, pupils make good progress extending their knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of activities and competitive situations. In a Year 9 dance lesson pupils worked in pairs, combining routines which they had developed as individuals, and confidently feedback on the quality and content of their partner's routine. Pupils in a Year 9 soccer lesson improved the level of attainment by moving off, having passed the ball, within a game. Year 9 pupils commented on how to improve the quality of front and backdrops in a trampolining lesson. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to observe. They evaluate what they see and decide what needs to be done to improve performance.
163. GCSE results are below national averages for A* to C grades, but slightly better than national averages for A* to G grades. When compared with other subjects in the school, boys do better in physical education than many other subjects. Girls do significantly less well in physical education. This underachievement by girls has been recognised and strategies are in place to improve their level of attainment. Pupils with learning difficulties make very good progress.

164. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are constantly engaged in the lessons. They have a very good understanding and knowledge, and evaluate different types of skills. For example, in Year 11 GCSE lesson pupils defined the meaning of 'open and closed skills' and successfully applied their knowledge to a range of different sports. Pupils have a good knowledge of the rules and coach effectively in different activities. In a Year 11 soccer lesson pupils coaching a group of their peers offered constructive coaching points on the skills involved in a lifted pass and trapping. Pupils understand the importance of health and safety; in a Year 11 'Tae Bo' class pupils evaluated potential risks within the room prior to beginning work. Pupils' skills of observation and evaluation are very good. They used them in Year 11 lesson where they observed each other coach primary school children. Their feedback was focused and constructive.
165. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is better in Years 10 and 11 where the majority of teaching is very good. In Years 7 to 9 the teaching is good. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding. They introduce lessons by linking with prior learning and a strength is the focus on literacy. For example, teachers check pupils' understanding of key words; in a Year 10 GCSE dance lesson the word 'obscure' was discussed in relation to a choreographer. Pupils are clear on what they have to do next and how to do it. Teachers were very observant and gave the pupils responsibility for improving their own level of skill. In a Year 10 table tennis lesson, the teacher asked the group, 'How do we improve the service?'. Through skilful questioning the pupils contributed a range of strategies, which they then began to use in a game. A strength of the teaching is that the pupils are consistently challenged to improve and careful attention is paid to the identification of individual pupil's strengths and weaknesses.
166. Pupils make a very good contribution to lessons, demonstrating the quality of learning, which has taken place. Very good lessons are characterised by teachers skilfully judging when to make teaching points. Questions are phrased to challenge the pupils but also to provide the building blocks necessary to help them arrive at an answer. Lessons are characterised by purposeful, calm, confident teaching, good planning and organisation. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils who respond with either excellent or very good attitudes and behaviour during their lessons. Pupils co-operated with each other very well, either in pairs or groups, in a variety of activities. In a Year 9 gymnastics lesson, girls worked in pairs on balance and counter balance and discussed how to improve their level of performance. Year 11 pupils showed an excellent sense of responsibility whilst coaching children from a partner primary school. Participation levels are excellent, the very few who were unable to take part for medical reasons were involved in the lesson. For example, in Year 11 physical education lesson boys were given the task of weighing up the strengths and weaknesses of the class involved in a passing skills practice. They make clear and accurate coaching points. Pupils responded very well to their teacher, they concentrate on tasks set for a considerable amount of time. They are courteous and display a confidence, which assists them to ask questions, engage in discussion and use their own initiative.
167. The National Curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, supported by staff from other departments. The award of 'Sportsmark' and Sports College status are recognition of both what has been achieved and the potential for the future. For example, developments of links with partner primary schools have supported the introduction of the Junior Sports Leader Award in Years 10 and 11 and Project Oarsome, a partnership with a rowing club, has been introduced. Pupils are actively encouraged to achieve representative honours and attend gifted and talented summer schools.

168. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear vision and awareness of the strengths of the department and good strategies are being introduced to raise the levels of pupil attainment further. The development plans for Sports College status and physical education give a clear focus for work. Planning is detailed, organised and consistent. Teaching opportunities are identified for the development of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and citizenship. The recently introduced baseline assessments in Year 7 provide a means of assessing the progress of individuals and groups of pupils in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, the introduction of formal assessment enables a closer keeping track of the impact made by curriculum initiatives. Pupils enjoy the subject and it makes a good contribution to their social and moral education.
169. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. GCSE courses are now offered in dance, games and physical education. Behaviour in lessons and extra-curricular activities is very good. Pupils show careful and appropriate use of equipment. Teachers have high levels of expectation in relation to pupils' behaviour, learning outcomes and levels of attainment. There has been an improvement in girls' participation in extra-curricular activities. The conditions in the gymnasium have improved somewhat but facilities for changing and showering are restricted. The floor areas in the showers and sports hall were dirty; two lights in the sports hall were not working, this is unsatisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths:

- Quality of teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Management of the subject is very good.
- Contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessment needs to be developed.
- The use of information and communication technology is under-developed.

170. Standards in religious education are in line with expectations in Year 7. Overall, this standard is maintained through to Year 9. Standards in Year 11 are in line with national averages. All pupils enter a GCSE short course. Results over the past three years have fluctuated but the trend is still close to national averages for A* to C grades. A few pupils are entered for the full course GCSE and achieve results above national averages for A* to C. The majority of these pupils are girls. Girls also attain the higher grades in the short course. Overall, boys underachieve in religious education. This reflects the national picture in the subject. Across the key stages, pupils with learning difficulties are well supported in their learning and make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress. Higher-attaining pupils underachieve in some aspects of the subject.
171. Achievement in religious education overall is satisfactory. It is best in Years 10 and 11. There has been a slight decline in standards since the last inspection. The issue of pupil behaviour from the last inspection has been well addressed.

172. By the end of Year 9, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of religious customs and practices well. They are, for example, able to describe birth ceremonies in Judaism and in Islam. The school involves pupils of a variety of faith backgrounds to support pupils' learning. As pupils move through the Years 7 to 9, they begin to reflect more personally on their learning about religion. They are sensitive and serious about issues such as suffering. Many apply their learning about religion to their own experience. By Year 9, most pupils begin to identify key points of view about issues such as racism and prejudice. Higher-attaining pupils are not always fully developing their skills of analysis and evaluation.
173. By the end of Year 11, pupils have a sound grasp of the main beliefs of Christians and Hindus about a range of moral issues. They work well in groups of different abilities, supporting each other well and listening to the perspectives of others. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils displayed their sensitivity to the issue of voluntary euthanasia, taking on the role of different groups for the purpose of a radio broadcast. Overall, pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding throughout the school. The weakest areas are those which require pupils to work more independently of the teacher. This is mostly the case in relation to the forming and expressing of their own beliefs and comparing these to the beliefs of others.
174. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and most lessons are good or better. The best of the teaching overall is in Years 10 and 11. All teachers plan well, have clear objectives for the lesson and manage pupils very effectively so that learning takes place. In most lessons, pupils with learning difficulties are supported well with materials and appropriate tasks. There is some inconsistency across the department in relation to the level of challenge in the lesson, particularly for the most able. There is a satisfactory level of written comment in books to help pupils be aware of the stronger and weaker features of the work undertaken.
175. Religious education makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. It does so through the emphasis on key words, by the use of writing frames to support lower-attaining pupils and by the range of creative ideas used for writing. Numeracy skills are applied infrequently but appropriately. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. There is a good grasp of its potential. Planning is in place and progress is being made towards the development of teacher skill across the department.
176. Management of the subject is very good. The new head of department is developing new and effective planning to deliver more recent additions to the locally agreed syllabus. There is a good awareness of current developments in the subject nationally and a clear recognition of what the department needs to do to respond to these developments. Textual and video resources are satisfactory and used well. Religious artefacts are limited. Non-specialist teachers are valued and supported well. There is a need for further training for these teachers and for the sharing of good practice across the department. The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils through the uses of reflective activities and the consideration of a wide range of moral issues. The main area of weakness lies in the lack of clear criteria for subject assessment at the end of Year 9. There are some creative and well-planned tasks set for assessment. However, these tasks are not sufficiently linked to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus or to the national expectations, which the department has chosen to use as guidance on standards. There is not yet a clear and shared understanding across the department of how to measure attainment and progress rigorously. This is recognised by the department in its development planning.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**

Strengths:

- The sound teaching of the subject in the single lesson observed.
- The positive attitudes and interest displayed by pupils in this area of the curriculum.
- The effective introduction of a commercial scheme of work for Citizenship in Years 8 and 9.

Areas for improvement:

- Ensure that appropriate time is provided for the subject in both key stages.
- Carry out an audit of the provision of citizenship both as a discrete subject and across the curriculum, and ensure that it is clearly identified in departmental documentation.

177. It was only possible to observe two periods of citizenship and one of these was taken by a visitor. This, along with an examination of planning documentation, interviews with the subject co-ordinator, the senior management team and pupils, indicates that provision and practice in the subject introduced this September is in the early stages of development and has yet to make a significant impact on pupils' learning.

178. The situation has not been helped by the school's inability to appoint a member of staff for personal, social, health and citizenship education, with this impacting on the ability to provide a full coverage of this area of the curriculum. The school appointed a member of staff with specific responsibility for citizenship in September of this year. Because of the late timing of this appointment, the school has yet to clearly identify how citizenship will be delivered as a discrete subject and as part of other subjects across the curriculum.

179. The school's first task has been to include citizenship as part of a 'National Strategy' package for pupils in Years 8 and 9, with one period each week being devoted towards the literacy, numeracy and citizenship strategies, though with the citizenship element forming only one third of this package it is questionable as to whether the school will be able to cover national requirements for the subject in the time available.

180. In the main, the provision for citizenship in Years 7, 10 and 11 forms part of the MAD, or 'Making a Difference', programme which is delivered within tutorial time, with teachers and visiting speakers providing a thematic series of talks and tutor group based activities designed to raise awareness and promote discussion on a range of contemporary, moral and citizenship issues

181. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. In the single teacher-taught lesson observed, the lesson was well planned, organised and managed. Good resources from a commercial scheme of work were used in an effective manner to promote a good discussion on voting rights, and their contribution to democratic institutions at both local and national levels. As with the lesson on 'Teenage Crime' delivered by a visiting woman police constable, the pupils listened with interest and were keen to voice their own opinions and ideas.

182. Although the subject co-ordinator and heads of department have yet to clearly identify the contribution of citizenship to specific subject areas and include them in departmental handbooks, some good examples were observed in individual subjects, both within lessons and within planning. In history, pupils develop a satisfactory

understanding of how events in the past have helped to shape our parliamentary system, whilst in geography, pupils come to an understanding of civic responsibility as they consider the issue of the protection of the environment in an imaginary seaside town as it addresses the provision of sea defences, with all its financial implications. A significant number of issues are explored in religious education each year as pupils consider their rights and responsibilities, relations within the family and the impact of divorce.

183. Pupils put their knowledge of citizenship and their social responsibilities into practice through their raising of funds for national and international projects and charities.
184. The school is planning to provide pupils in Years 8 and 9 with some interesting extra-curricular activities with visits both to the Houses of Parliament and to the Local Magistrates Court. The school also promotes pupils' knowledge of personal responsibility and concern for others through its well-attended Amnesty International and Environmental groups. The school Senate acts in a very positive manner in promoting pupils' knowledge of how they can contribute to the democratic organisation of the school. This is much valued by all pupils. The school is involved in a number of local initiatives, which impact on pupils' knowledge of good citizenship. This includes a Home Office funded research project on the links between bullying and street crime.