

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL**

Croydon

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101814

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Harding

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Evans  
1049

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 September 2002

Inspection number: 249092

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: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Woburn Road  
Croydon  
Surrey

Postcode: CR0 2AB

Telephone number: 0208 686 3837

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Jack McVicker

Date of previous inspection: 12 May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1049	Brian Evans	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievement How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13762	Norman Shelley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1068	Janet Allcorn	Team inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics	
17917	Iranganie Hilda Fernando	Team inspector	English	
28002	Sue Taylor	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science	
8076	Terence Bendall	Team inspector	Design and technology	
7582	David H Roberts	Team inspector	Geography	
13122	Stephanie Matthews	Team inspector	Equal opportunities History	
2172	David Saunders	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
29510	Nicholas Mayfield	Team inspector	Music	

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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23268	Kevin Corrigan	Team inspector	Physical education	
30317	Elizabeth Barthaud	Team inspector		How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8052	Kenneth McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
32219	Nicholas Smith	Team inspector		

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's High is a mixed Catholic comprehensive school serving a wide area of Croydon and neighbouring boroughs. It has 729 pupils aged 11-16, which is smaller than the average comprehensive school. Pupils' attainment when they join the school is below average. There are 329 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), which is very high: they include a significant number who have very little English on admission to the school. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average and includes pupils with learning difficulties and behaviour problems; the proportion with Statements of Special Educational Needs is below average. Nearly one in three pupils on the school roll is eligible for free school meals. This is above the national average. There are 627 pupils from ethnic minority groups, mainly Black Caribbean, Black African and Asian Indian.

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

The school is effective in enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress. Standards generally are in line with those expected nationally, taking into account the attainment levels of pupils on entry to the school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school very well. Under his leadership, and supported by all staff, satisfactory progress is being made on improving pupils' basic skills and raising achievement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils have good attitudes to school and there is a positive learning ethos in the school.
- There is good support for pupils with English as an additional language.
- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- There is very good leadership by the new headteacher in establishing key priorities for raising achievement.
- All staff are keen to raise standards.

#### **What could be improved**

- Implement policies for improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in Years 7 to 9.
- All subjects to meet National Curriculum requirements for ICT in Years 10 and 11.
- Introduce a wider range of teaching methods in order to develop pupils' learning skills.
- Use assessment data more effectively to guide teachers' planning on raising achievement.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in May 1997. In the last year, the newly appointed headteacher has accelerated the school's response to the key issues identified in the last report. Strategic planning is good and the senior managers have begun to implement newly agreed school policies. Teaching has improved. There continues to be a need for a greater range of teaching strategies to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Recent investment in ICT hardware has led to significant improvement in younger pupils' ICT skills, although the school does not comply with ICT requirements in Years 10 and 11. Staff receive regular training on child protection issues. Health and safety issues have been addressed. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. The school's capacity to improve is good because there is a strong commitment from all staff to raise standards within a well-structured school development plan.

## 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	D	D	D	C

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

Overall standards of pupils on entry are below average. Results in the 2001 national tests for pupils at age 14 were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Over the past five years, the rising trend in results has been lower than the national trend. In 2002, test results for mathematics and science showed significant improvement over 2001, whilst English results remained much the same as in 2001. Overall, results were below average. In 1996-2001, GCSE results for pupils at age 16 have been below national averages. They have not risen in line with the rising trend nationally. In 2001, GCSE results were in line with those of similar schools. The 2002 GCSE results show an improvement over those of 2001. In work seen, pupils at all levels of attainment and age make satisfactory progress. The school has not met its GCSE targets over the past two years. Current targets are realistic but challenging and based on more accurate assessment data.

Literacy and numeracy skills are below average on entry. Overall, they remain below average by the end of Year 11. Girls make better progress in their writing skills than boys as they move through the school. The school has recently, under the leadership of the new headteacher, begun to implement effective school policies on raising standards in basic skills in Years 7 to 9. Pupils make good progress in developing their ICT skills through the school but do not have enough opportunity to apply these skills across most subjects. The subjects in which pupils achieve best are art, modern foreign languages and physical education. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory, occasionally good, progress in lessons, but their achievement is much higher when special educational needs support staff are present. In work seen, there was no significant difference between attainment of the different ethnic minority groups.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and have positive attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Levels of exclusion are low. There are occasional lapses but most pupils are amenable and courteous to each other and to adults. Staff and pupils work well together in dealing effectively with any incidents of bullying, sexism and racism.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school supports pupils well and this enhances their personal development and self-esteem.
Attendance	Attendance is above average. Punctuality is generally satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is better than at the last inspection because pupils' attitudes to learning have improved and senior staff are providing good support for classroom teachers. Teaching is generally good in art, modern foreign languages and physical education. It is generally satisfactory in all other subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Strengths include good classroom management and teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject. Pupils are eager learners and work supportively with each other when appropriate. They respond particularly well when challenging demands are made on them in the classroom. The major weakness in many subjects is that teachers limit pupils' scope for independent learning by an overemphasis on instructional methods. This results in a slow pace in a significant number of lessons and progress is unsatisfactory because individual pupils find the work either too easy or too hard. There are weaknesses in the teaching of literacy and numeracy because the school's policy is in an early stage and there are variations in its implementation between subjects. The specialist teaching of ICT is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection following the school's substantial investment in computers. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs in subject lessons is satisfactory overall. It is very good for pupils in withdrawal groups because staff are aware of pupils' needs and have a wide range of strategies and expertise when teaching. The quality of teaching for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is very good in lessons where support teachers are present and in specialist withdrawal groups. Pupils of all attainment levels make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study the full National Curriculum as well as citizenship, drama, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education. Arrangements for ICT do not meet statutory requirements for all subjects in Years 10 and 11. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Specialist support is good. However, subject teachers do not always address specific targets for individual pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Very good specialist support is provided for pupils. Good resources are available for subject teachers but these are not used widely enough.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good and it is very good for moral and social development. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pastoral care is very good and staff have a good awareness of child protection procedures. Health and safety practices are satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development are effectively monitored and promoted. Guidance for students is good. Assessment arrangements are good but are not used universally to monitor and support students' progress. The school's partnership with parents is

	satisfactory.
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## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher, in post for one year, is a very good leader who works well with staff. Priorities for raising achievement are fully supported by all staff. The newly structured management team is having a positive impact on monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The effectiveness of middle managers is satisfactory overall but varies from very good to unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work closely with the headteacher in shaping its development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory but improving as new procedures are implemented to ensure that good learning is taking place in all subjects. Strategies for raising achievement are clear and supported by staff.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses resources, including staff, learning resources and the buildings, efficiently. Specific grants are used appropriately and well. The school exercises well the principles of best value when buying goods and services. The learning resources centre is making a good contribution to improving pupils' independent learning skills.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of pupils.</li> <li>• The progress that pupils make.</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They are comfortable about approaching the school with concerns.</li> <li>• The Catholic ethos of the school and its effects on pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount and quality of homework and use of homework diaries.</li> <li>• The school should work more closely with parents.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Support for pupils with learning and language difficulties.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with most of the parents' positive views. In particular, pupils' attitudes to school and to their learning are impressive. Inspectors judge that teaching is satisfactory overall. The school is seeking to work more closely with parents through consultation and improvements. Homework is generally consistently set but pupils' diaries are not always used for recording homework. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and many external visits are arranged to enrich pupils' learning experiences. Support for pupils with learning and language difficulties is good overall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The ability profile of pupils on entry to the school in Year 7 is below average. The nature of the intake has changed since the previous inspection. Many more pupils entering the school need support with their language skills. In work seen in Years 7 to 11, there were no significant differences in the progress made by ethnic groups in the school given their attainment on entry. This is because relationships between pupils are very good and expectations of them by staff are fair and consistent. There is no evidence of discrimination by teachers or support staff either in or out of the classroom. Girls improve their writing skills at a faster rate than boys. Girls also perform better than boys in science. Overall, boys enter school with lower literacy levels than girls but, in work seen, boys generally were as motivated as girls in improving their writing skills. In all years, pupils of all attainment levels have good attitudes to school and make at least satisfactory progress in a positive learning environment.
2. Inspection evidence shows that standards by the end of Year 9 are:
  - at the national average in art, design and technology, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and physical education;
  - below average in English, history, mathematics and science;
  - well below average in geography.
3. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve
  - well in music, physical education;
  - satisfactorily in art, design and technology, English, geography, history, ICT, mathematics, modern foreign languages, science;
4. Inspection evidence shows that standards in GCSE subjects are:
  - above average in art, design and technology, ICT and physical education;
  - average in mathematics, modern foreign languages and music;
  - below average in English, geography, history and science.
5. Pupils achieve:
  - well in art, design and technology, history, ICT, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education;
  - satisfactorily in English, geography, music and science.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. They make satisfactory, occasionally good, progress in lessons, but progress is better when special educational needs support staff are present. Sometimes pupils are withdrawn for small-group or individual sessions with support staff and these pupils make good progress towards their Individual Education Plan targets and very good progress towards literacy targets. Entry assessment data is effectively used to identify pupils with special educational needs and there are systems in place to identify these pupils after they have entered the school. Individual Education Plans are written by the special educational needs support staff.
7. The school has not yet developed a policy for gifted and talented pupils and consequently these pupils are not formally identified, although teachers are aware who their more able pupils are. Teaching strategies are generally limited to teaching at a

faster pace, having different textbooks and occasionally extension activities are used. There are no planned extra-curricular activities for these pupils to extend their experiences.

### **English as an additional language**

8. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress. Although those at the early stages of learning English do not achieve their full potential, they achieve well given that they are not working in their first language. This is shown by the results they attain in National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds and at GCSE. For example, in 2002 all pupils receiving additional support gained five or more passes at GCSE. Pupils perform better in mathematics than in English and science. Higher attaining pupils have good opportunities to gain qualifications in their first language. In 2002, 19 pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 took GCSE in their first language. All obtained an A\*-C grade: most achieved the highest A\*/A grades. Three pupils gained an AS qualification. EAL pupils achieve well because of their very positive attitudes towards learning and the good support they receive from the EAL department, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development and attendance are good. Relationships between pupils are very good. Relationships and attendance have improved since the previous inspection. Parents say that their children like school and make good progress in their personal development, although some parents are not entirely satisfied with standards of behaviour.
10. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and say that they enjoy almost all of their lessons and activities. Pupils who have recently started at school say how well older pupils looked after them and that the school is better than they had expected. Older pupils say that personal and social education is particularly helpful and they are right to place great value on the mentoring support that they receive throughout Years 10 and 11. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their lessons and have considerable respect for the Catholic principles and practices that are promoted. Pupils' involvement in extra-curricular activities and in numerous experiences in the community is good.
11. Behaviour in lessons is good and often very good. Pupils conscientiously apply themselves to their studies and conduct themselves in a responsible manner. A minority of pupils, mainly boys, behave unsatisfactorily in a small number of lessons. This is usually due to teaching or activities that are not sufficiently stimulating, or ineffective management of behaviour by the teacher. Pupils behave well outside lessons. They are generally polite and considerate, though noisy at times. They cope well in congested areas of the school. The number of pupils who are excluded is lower than the average for similar schools. Anti-social behaviour is almost non-existent because of the strength of relationships and inclusive nature of the school community. Pupils of all ethnic groups get on extremely well with each other both in and out of the classroom. This is a very impressive feature of the school.
12. Pupils make good progress with their personal development. Older pupils in particular take on responsibilities well. Younger pupils have too few opportunities to develop some social skills such as representing others. Pupils develop a good sense of awareness of right and wrong and of moral and social issues such as human rights. They realise the importance of forgiveness and consider emotions and the effect of their actions on the feelings of others. School trips abroad, fund raising for charities and work with a

refugee centre are examples of experiences in the community that add further dimensions to pupils' personal development.

13. Attendance is good overall. Rates of attendance are well above the average for secondary schools. Most pupils arrive on time for the start of the school day and for lessons.

### **English as an additional language**

14. Pupils with English as an additional language have very positive attitudes towards learning. They are extremely motivated and want to achieve well. They respect their teachers, behave well and take full advantage of the competent teaching they receive. Even when teaching is mundane they stay on task. All this has a positive impact on these pupils' learning and leads to good progress. Because relationships between pupils are good, they help each other in the classroom. They translate for each other, explain tasks and appreciate the difficulties pupils new to the school may have.

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

15. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, with no major significant difference between Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of the lessons seen, good or better in 58 per cent and very good in 17 per cent. Six per cent were unsatisfactory and two per cent were poor. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection two years ago, when 20 per cent of lessons seen were considered to be less than satisfactory. Inspection evidence indicates that there is now a good environment for learning in the classroom and in the school generally. A much higher proportion of pupils is now making satisfactory or better progress. The improved quality of teaching and learning is recognised by the parents. Most unsatisfactory or poor lessons occur mainly because teachers' expectations are too low and work is not pitched to pupils' levels of attainment. Disruptive behaviour by pupils is rarely the reason for unsatisfactory teaching.
16. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology, history, mathematics, music and science. It is generally good in English, discrete ICT lessons, modern foreign languages, physical education and for PSHE. Most subjects had one or two examples of good or better teaching and of unsatisfactory or poor teaching. Examples of very good or excellent lessons observed, for instance in English and in physical education, were characterised by a well-structured sequence and variety of activities which challenged pupils to contribute to their learning at levels of thinking only just within their reach.
17. However, there are weaknesses. In many otherwise satisfactory lessons, the teaching does not always respond sufficiently to the different needs of pupils. Teachers do not consistently use methods that actively involve pupils in the lesson. For example, in a significant number of lessons, the initial teacher introduction was followed by pupils working individually, without the opportunity to develop their understanding in partnership with others. In a number of classrooms, this lack of variety in teaching approach is related to a lack of appropriate materials and practical resources, which limits the development of independent investigative skills. ICT is well taught in specific ICT lessons where the specialists provide challenging and well-designed activities that enable pupils to be actively involved and develop a wider understanding of the different applications. In many other subjects, the use of ICT as a teaching tool is still limited.

18. Most pupils have a desire to succeed by working hard and listening carefully to advice to raise their attainment. Attitudes to learning are very good and most teachers are able to concentrate on pupils' learning without having to dwell on behaviour. Pupils' concentration spans are good across all levels of attainment, although the pace of their learning on occasions is hindered by low teacher expectation by the teacher.
19. Homework is used effectively in a few subjects to support students' learning. Overall, it is set satisfactorily. Marking of students' work is also sometimes good but again there is some inconsistency in practice.
20. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs in subject lessons is satisfactory overall. High quality Individual Education Plans provide clear targets for pupils. The teaching of pupils in withdrawal groups is very good because staff are aware of pupils' needs and have a wide range of strategies and expertise when teaching. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good, both in small groups and in class groups. The learning support assistants are very knowledgeable about the needs of the pupils they are supporting and provide sufficient help and challenge to enable them to become increasingly independent. The learning support staff are very aware of the progress made by individual pupils towards the targets on their Individual Education Plans. However, there is insufficient planning for lessons between subject teachers and teaching assistants, which reduces the effectiveness of support. Individual Education Plans are reviewed by the special educational needs co-ordinator twice a year, with good input from learning support staff.

### **English as additional language**

21. The quality of teaching for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is very good in lessons where support teachers are present and in specialist withdrawal groups. Where additional support is not available in lessons, teaching, and consequently the progress pupils make, is more variable. Here the teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory but is satisfactory overall.
22. EAL support teachers liaise well with class teachers. They know the purpose and tasks of the lesson in advance and prepare good materials that make the lesson accessible to the pupils they support. Many good examples were observed. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson for a below average group, not only did the EAL pupils wish to have copies of the supporting worksheets but so did many other pupils. The rules were written in very simple language with good diagrams to which the pupils could easily refer. Sometimes the EAL teacher leads the lesson in partnership with the class teacher. In one excellent Year 9 English lesson, pupils worked on the description of the convict in Dickens's novel 'Great Expectations'. The use of visual images, and strategies to support their writing, helped all pupils in the group, especially the EAL and SEN pupils, to make the best possible progress in the use of adjectives in description. The class teacher, new to the school, gained a valuable insight into the best teaching approaches to support the learning of EAL pupils.
23. Teaching in small withdrawal groups is very good. Its strength is the support it provides for pupils' learning in whole-class lessons. A well-planned session for four Year 10 pupils on the novel 'Of Mice and Men' helped them to understand the characters of George and Lennie and the relationship between them. The teacher explained that this work would help with their coursework. A session for Year 9 pupils helped them to understand the use of the past tense, the different pronunciations when 'ed' is added, and those verbs that are irregular. In these sessions, the teachers' well-planned activities, their enthusiasm, supportive and helpful questioning, and opportunities for

pupils to ask their own questions, ensure pupils make very good progress in their learning.

24. In English lessons the good teaching and learning styles used by the English department support EAL pupils well, whether classroom support is available or not. In other subjects, when support staff are not present, good practice is more variable. During the inspection, in art and geography, teachers showed awareness of the needs of EAL pupils, adapted learning materials, and used good strategies to explain new work. In other classes, worksheets were written in complex sentences or teachers made no effort to ensure EAL pupils understood the task set. The EAL department has a large bank of resource material, much based on mainstream units of work. However, procedures do not appear to be in place for subject departments to access this, which would support their planning for EAL pupils.

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

25. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are satisfactory. There are, however, some weaknesses in relation to all year groups. Arrangements for ICT do not meet statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11 and the National Numeracy Strategy has yet to be implemented in Years 7 to 9.
26. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study the full National Curriculum as well as citizenship, drama, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education. The banding and setting arrangements provide a common curriculum and ensure that all pupils are provided for appropriately, whatever their attainment, ethnicity or gender. However, many departments do not contribute effectively to the development of pupils' ICT, literacy and numeracy skills within a subject context.
27. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils study English language and literature, mathematics, religious education, science, a design and technology option, physical education, and PSHE, which includes careers education and guidance. The majority also studies one modern foreign language but no one is currently studying both French and Spanish. Those pupils for whom a full programme of GCSE courses would be too demanding are given the opportunity to develop their basic communication skills further in place of some of the optional courses. At present there is no provision for pupils to attend courses in conjunction with a local tertiary college and provision for vocational education is much narrower than in many similar schools. Certification in ICT is only available for pupils selecting to follow a GCSE course.
28. The school's provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There are a number of well-supported sports clubs and teams, run both at lunch-time and after school. Overseas activities include an annual visit to Spain. The music department organises a range of additional opportunities for both instrumentalists and singers. There are fieldwork opportunities for pupils studying geography. All of these opportunities extend and enhance pupils' experiences and their learning.
29. All pupils follow a personal, social and health education programme (PSHE). A small team of teachers, the majority of whom are very experienced practitioners in this field, delivers this programme. The content of this programme covers all the recommended strands, including health, sex and drugs education, as well as covering careers education and guidance from Year 9 onwards. All pupils in Year 10 complete a two-week work experience placement in June of each year. The school has developed very strong links with the local careers service Prospects and with the local Connexions

service. Citizenship is a strong feature of the curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 and this programme is extremely well planned, co-ordinated and delivered. The whole programme is strengthened by input from a wide range of visiting experts including the local police and representatives from support organisations such as local counselling and advice service providers. The PSHE programme provides pupils with the continuity of learning that will help them to develop the skills needed to make informed choices about their futures.

30. Links with other schools are satisfactory. The school has established positive links with the Crystal Palace study-support centre. This provides additional learning opportunities after school for pupils in their last year of primary school and first two years of secondary. Links are beginning to develop with post-16 providers within the area. Overall, the school's links with the local community are satisfactory. Community links to support the learning of pupils for whom English is an additional language are good.
31. The school has addressed most of the curricular issues raised in the previous inspection. The two-week timetable has been abandoned, which has helped to eliminate some of the limitations that were in place with regard to the amount of time available to some subjects. The revised timetable structure now ensures equality of access for nearly all pupils. Curricular planning shows foresight in the way citizenship lessons have been introduced in line with statutory requirements. The school has been less successful in addressing the issues relating to the range of courses available for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in addressing issues in relation to curricular planning. Governors have continued to take a keen interest in curricular matters and they are now moving towards having governors linked to individual departments to enable them to gain a greater understanding of curricular requirements.
32. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). The provision for their moral and social development within lessons is very good. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. There is some evidence of planning in departments for pupils' spiritual and cultural development but this is inconsistent. In some subjects, the spiritual development of pupils does occur. For example, the notions of good and evil, explored in texts such as 'Lord of the Flies', enable pupils to reflect on these concepts. Topics in history such as stereotyping and discrimination help pupils to develop appropriate attitudes and values.
33. The promotion of pupils' social development is very good. Very good relationships are seen in many lessons, with pupils working well together. The PSHE programme provides many opportunities in this area, in terms of specific curricular provision such as rights and responsibilities, healthy environment, citizenship and sex education, making a valuable contribution to developing attitudes and fostering independent thinking. In addition, lunch-time clubs and sporting activities all help to develop skills of social interaction. Pupils create a safe environment, free from intimidation, and their concern for others is evident in class and around the school.
34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. There are several opportunities provided for pupils to be involved in activities that extend their cultural development. For example, pupils in Years 10 and 11 work on a volunteer basis with the local refugee centre. Field trips, visits to museums and to Spain all assist pupils' cultural awareness.

35. Curricular arrangements promote inclusion of all pupils with SEN and they have access to the National Curriculum. Pupils spend most of their time working in their class group, although some withdrawal is offered, for example for pupils to have small- group tuition sessions or individual work with the behaviour support staff or on highly structured programmes to improve literacy. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 may take back-up lessons to support their learning instead of taking a foundation GCSE subject.
36. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good overall. Most support is provided in the classroom and any specialist teaching is organised so that these pupils continue to have full access to the curriculum. The majority of support is provided in the core subjects, especially English and mathematics. In-depth work with departments on teaching strategies is at an early stage. The small number of withdrawal groups is focused well on pupils' learning needs. In Years 10 and 11 pupils can choose to do one fewer GCSE subject to work on skills in other subjects and this effectively supports the pupils' overall learning. To maximise support, EAL pupils are placed in one teaching group in the upper band or one teaching group in the lower band. However, for some pupils in the lower band, particularly in mathematics, the level of work is too easy.
37. Activities to develop pupils' numeracy skills across all subjects of the curriculum are not yet in place. Subject teachers have a lack of awareness of the contribution they can make. The school has only just appointed a co-ordinator for numeracy as part of its implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy for improving the achievement of 11 to 14-year-olds.
38. The EAL department makes a significant contribution not only to EAL pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development but also to that of the school as a whole. It promotes knowledge and understanding of different ethnic groups and cultures. Older pupils visit the local refugee centre where they work with young children and gain an insight into the difficulties people new to the country experience.
39. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There are some activities in most subject areas. For example, the music department has a busy programme of activities, which caters for a range of interests throughout the year, and includes performances at the Fairfield Halls. There are fruitful links with the LEA music service which seek to stimulate interest in playing wind instruments. The EAL support base provides a secure and supportive environment at lunch-times and after school helping pupils with a number of subjects. In addition it is involved with Refugee Week, Black History Month and summer booster classes in maths and English. Pupils have ready access to the recently refurbished Learning Resource Centre, which is well equipped with computers, and there is some access to computer rooms for homework and coursework.
40. The provision of external extra-curricular activities for pupils is generally good. It is particularly strong in physical education, English and also in the support of pupils who have English as an additional language. Pupils appreciate the good range of activities offered by the school and the open access policy adopted by departments. The physical education department runs a number of sports clubs and training sessions at lunch-times and after school and school teams compete successfully in a range of sports, including football, basketball and athletics. A number of gifted and talented pupils have represented the school in district and county competitions. The English department offers a range of interesting and relevant activities which aid the learning of pupils. These include visits to the theatre, Shakespeare workshops and opportunities for pupils to engage in public speaking. There are also opportunities for pupils to

perform with the local mime agency. Pupils regularly visit the local refugee day centre and play an important role as volunteers in helping refugees and their children acclimatise to living in England. There is also an excellent programme of activities for pupils who use English as an additional language. These include having specific community language examinations and a film club. There is also a range of extra-curricular activities offered in geography, where pupils participate in trips abroad and have regular fieldwork activities and, in conjunction with the physical education department, the geography department has begun to offer outdoor pursuits to pupils.

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

41. The school's arrangements for pupils' general welfare are good. The procedures for monitoring and supporting attendance, behaviour and personal development are good. Some improvements have been introduced since the previous inspection. Parents are generally pleased with the quality of care and support but some are not satisfied with the support provided for pupils with learning and language difficulties.
42. The school's Catholic ethos underpins a very strong sense of concern for all pupils regardless of ethnic origins. The school goes to considerable lengths to try to support pupils whatever their difficulties. It cultivates an environment in which pupils feel encouraged to learn and are valued, respected, supported and cared for. Relationships between adults and pupils are constructive, positive and co-operative. Child protection procedures are in place. Most health and safety procedures are satisfactory. Plans are in place to deal with the several recommendations that were made by a recent health and safety audit. First aid provision is adequate. The school uses the services of specialist education and health agencies to meet the needs of pupils.
43. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactorily monitored and an electronic system has recently been introduced but is not yet fully in place. The school effectively engages the co-operation of most parents in providing reasons for absence and improving attendance. High attendance is recognised by the presentation of certificates and is reported to parents.
44. Behaviour is effectively monitored and reported. Most teachers conduct well-planned lessons and pupils are well engaged in learning. In a minority of lessons, the standard of behaviour is not as good as it could be because teachers do not apply appropriate teaching or behaviour management methods. In most cases of more serious unacceptable behaviour, the strategies employed to assist the pupils, and sometimes families, are effective. When the last resort of exclusion has occasionally been applied, it has been appropriate. Good or improved behaviour is recognised by a merit award system that motivates the pupils.
45. The school strongly encourages pupils to report anti-social behaviour and believes that most incidents are reported. It very effectively promotes the social and moral principles and practices of the Catholic faith. In an assembly, pupils heard examples from the Bible about being sorry and admitting being wrong and asking to be forgiven and to start again. Frequent messages such as this promote positive attitudes to relationships and serve to minimise the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour. The comparatively few incidents are recorded and all are dealt with promptly. Pupils confirm that incidents are dealt with effectively.

46. Some aspects of personal development are graded and included in reports to parents. Through the programme for personal, social and health education, careers education and citizenship, pupils develop an awareness of social and moral issues and the world of work. Pupils are given opportunities to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses and determine what they need to do to improve. They are given work and projects to undertake in pairs and groups. Form tutors and mentors contribute very much to the process of self-review and targeting. Opportunities for responsibility are less well developed and at present are mainly limited to older pupils who are prefects and routine form tasks for younger children. Pupils' personal development benefits from a good number of enrichment experiences, such as supporting a centre for refugees, entertaining elderly citizens, attending retreats, participating in a mock trial, attending masses and services, raising funds for charities, listening to visiting speakers and participating in competitive activities such as sport. Field trips related to studies and school trips abroad contribute further dimensions to pupils' development.

### **Assessment**

47. Procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall but there are areas for further improvement. The way in which data on pupils is collated has improved since the last inspection. The school is now developing its systems for monitoring pupils' progress and target setting based on their earlier attainment. The appointment of a whole-school assessment manager has enabled the school to begin to use a range of data with greater understanding. Data on individual pupils is now available to all staff, which will enable the progress made by pupils to be frequently and accurately reviewed. Middle managers and heads of department have recently started to focus on how best to use the centrally collated data available to identify underachieving pupils, so that extra support and guidance can be given. The use of National Curriculum levels in marking pupils' work across subjects is currently inconsistent, and inaccuracies in the formal assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 indicate some failings in teachers' understanding of the level descriptions.
48. In addition to a published whole-school policy on assessment, a number of other school policies make reference to the importance of using data as part of raising the achievement of all pupils. Since November 2001, all departments have been working towards setting targets for pupils using national performance data. A programme of one-to-one academic mentoring has been established through tutor and mentoring time, which provides pupils with the opportunity to review their own progress and identify areas for improvement. Some pupils record their targets in their school diaries.
49. The use of assessment information in guiding curricular planning is inconsistent. There are elements of good practice in planning in English, art and design technology but in many other subjects current practice is unsatisfactory and it is poor in geography. All teachers have not yet capitalised on the potential of this information to help them to plan the curriculum or to accelerate pupils' progress.
50. Statements of Special Educational Need are reviewed regularly with parents, with input from other professionals. Pupils are expected to attend their review meeting. The provision outlined on the Statements is implemented by the school and effective use is made of support staff. Support staff report back to the special needs co-ordinator on the progress made by individual pupils.

51. There is effective working between pastoral and special educational needs staff, which facilitates information exchange and a consistent approach to pupils with both learning and behavioural difficulties.

### **English as an additional language**

52. The support, care and guidance given to EAL pupils are good. Careful assessment of their language skills and personal needs takes place on entry to the school and appropriate support is provided. Progress is well monitored by the EAL department for those Key Stage 1 pupils they support, but not for other pupils for whom English is not their first language. School procedures do not yet enable this information to be accessed easily. Clear learning targets are set for pupils and progress is regularly recorded. However, these learning targets are not yet fully shared with pupils so that they can know what is expected of them. The very good relationships that exist between the EAL support teachers and the pupils with whom they work help to make these pupils secure and happy and able to integrate well into the life of the school. The pupils share concerns and difficulties, both within the school environment and outside it and consequently the school is able to take appropriate action. The EAL support room provides a secure environment where EAL pupils go to work in their lunch-time. EAL pupils speak very positively of the school and compare it very favourably with other schools they have attended. In Year 11, EAL teachers support pupils on visits to post-16 educational institutions to help them understand the choices available to them.

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

53. The school's partnership with its parents is satisfactory, although its relationships with them are good. Parents are satisfied with the school's provision and are supportive towards their children. The quality of information has improved since the previous inspection.
54. Parents are right to be satisfied with the quality of education and care that their children receive. They say that pupils make good progress because teaching is thought to be good and the school has high expectations of pupils. The Catholic ethos contributes much to the way in which the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. Parents are right to say that homework diaries are not always used well but the quality and quantity of homework are usually satisfactory. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The school tries hard to work closely with parents, for example to support pupils who encounter difficulties, and, during this past year, has consulted with parents, for example about the behaviour policy, and has brought about a number of improvements in many areas of the school.
55. The school keeps parents well informed through various communications. Newsletters are very informative and the school advises parents about what is to be taught. The annual school reports are much improved and, in addition to good academic information, provide details about what has been taught, pupils' personal development and a focus for improvement. A helpful initial report is circulated at an earlier stage in the year. The school organises an annual parents' evening so that parents may discuss pupils' progress. Parents are invited to an induction meeting, an options meeting and a post-16 meeting. Attendance is very good at almost all of the meetings for parents. Parents of pupils who have special education needs are satisfactorily involved in the assessment and review process. The school successfully engages the support and co-operation of almost all parents in strategies to support their own children.

56. The school seeks the views of parents from time to time about major issues and does this mainly through letters that call for a reply slip to be completed and returned. It is not able to confer with members of a parents' association because it has been unable to raise enough support for one. A very few parents support the school in practical ways, for example with cooking for events and providing work experience for pupils. Overall, there is only a little involvement of parents in the life and work of the school and plans are in place to encourage their participation.
57. Increased efforts are being made to involve the parents of all pupils with special educational needs in the review meetings held twice each year. Both pupils and their parents are expected to attend and almost all do. There is much more frequent contact with home by the behaviour support team.

### **English as an additional language**

58. Satisfactory links exist between the parents of EAL pupils and the school. EAL support teachers attend all parents' evenings to provide support and advice. Opportunities are missed to involve EAL parents more closely in the work of the school, for example to support pupils in the classroom situation.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

59. The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher and key staff are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has given very good leadership in his first year in post. He has been able to steer the school by taking positive, purposeful and effective action to bring about many improvements. He enjoys the trust of the governing body and is ably assisted by the senior management team. He leads effectively and communicates a clear sense of purpose and educational direction to all members of staff. The senior management team has been restructured and members have clear roles and responsibilities related to raising achievement. They have analysed a number of the developmental needs of the school and established key priorities for action. By making the improvement of teaching and learning the main priority in the school development plan, the headteacher has focused staff on the need to raise standards. Lines of communication have been strengthened and the systems and structures necessary for improvement are now in place. The impetus for improvement in standards is provided through target setting based on assessment data and extensive monitoring by senior staff.
60. Leadership and management are good in art and music and are satisfactory in design and technology, English, history, ICT, modern foreign languages, physical education and science. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory in mathematics and in geography. In mathematics the head of department's role within the senior management team in the recent past has adversely affected the time available for implementing the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 7, 8 and 9. Under the new management structure, his whole-school responsibilities have been reduced, so that curriculum development and monitoring of standards in mathematics are key tasks in raising achievement. In geography, priorities for raising achievement are not clear. Staffing for special educational needs is led by an experienced and able co-ordinator, who manages the learning support team well. The teaching assistants have ongoing training and are effective when supporting pupils.

61. The school has a clear set of achievable aims and values. There is a very strong commitment to raising attainment of all groups of pupils and to supporting their personal development. All staff are well supported by the headteacher and senior management team. This enables them to focus on raising standards. The school is keen to confront all forms of discrimination and racism.
62. Positive relationships exist between the governing body and the senior management team. The governors are aware of their roles and responsibilities in shaping the direction of the school in partnership with the headteacher. They receive information from the headteacher that enables them to carry out their duties satisfactorily. They are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The governors' annual report to parents contains all the necessary information required by law. The mechanisms for the appraisal of the headteacher are in place and effective. Governors receive regular financial updates and this enables them to fulfil their overall responsibility for the school's financial arrangements.
63. The school development plan is an effective working document. It is well costed, identifies areas of weakness and provides positive ways of rectifying them. Subject teachers are issued with academic review folders containing profiles of achievement for individual pupils. However, teachers' use of this assessment data in their medium- and short-term planning is at an early stage of development.
64. Financial management in support of the school's priorities is very good. The allocation of funds is well targeted at the priorities stated in the school development plan. Funds carried forward are clearly designated towards raising standards through improving the range of resources available for teachers. Reports are presented monthly to the governors' finance committee and this ensures accountability. There are no significant outstanding issues from the last audit report. The administration uses appropriate systems for financial management. The headteacher inherited on his appointment a large financial carry-over that has been well spent in improving the learning environment and on enhancing the ICT and learning resources of the school. The learning resource centre now plays an ever-increasing and effective role in the drive to raise standards. The school applies the principles of best value well. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
65. The match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is unsatisfactory in a number of subjects. The school does have a clearly defined policy for recruitment. There is a clear recognition by the school of the need to appoint good quality staff. The school sees recruitment as a clear and continuing priority.
66. Teachers and other staff undertake a wide range of professional development activity. Monitoring has revealed inconsistencies in the extent to which this is matched to agreed school priorities. This is now being addressed in the context of the school's new staff development policy.
67. The quantity, quality, accessibility and use of resources are good in ICT and art and mostly adequate in other subjects. However, there are insufficient practical resources to implement the National Numeracy Strategy in mathematics. In geography, the range of books is insufficient for use by higher attainers, and in history some pupils have to share books. A lack of consumables is constraining the range of materials available to pupils in design technology, and in music there are insufficient resources for the planned extra-curricular programme. All issues identified in the previous report have been addressed. Significant improvements have been made to the learning resources

centre, which now has additional computers available for pupils' use and is generously funded.

68. Accommodation is adequate. Accommodation is very good for English, and good for mathematics, modern languages and music. It is satisfactory for the other subjects. In art, there is a shortage of storage for large-scale items of pupils' work. The food technology rooms are in urgent need of refurbishment to provide hygienic working conditions. There is one good room for teaching information and communication technology, but the others are small and lack proper benching for computers. In science there are sufficient laboratories, but some are in need of updating in order to improve teaching and learning in the subject.

### **English as an additional language**

69. Since the last inspection, the leadership and management of the EAL department has continued to be very good. Staff have a high level of commitment and contribute much to the work of the school as a whole by arranging events such as Refugee Week and Black History Month. Their expertise in working with departments and their subject knowledge have led to the appointment of two of the staff as whole-school literacy and numeracy co-ordinators. Whilst unusual, this is an appropriate strategy for St Mary's school.
70. The EAL department has responded well to changes in funding. Its action plan is moving the department appropriately in the direction of work with subject departments rather than individual children to make the best use of the money available and to reach the maximum number of pupils. The use of computers for administration and for teaching and learning is developing well.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. In order to raise levels of attainment and improve the quality of education in the school, the governors, senior management team and teaching staff need to:

- (a) \*\*implement policies for improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in Years 7 to 9 by:
- implementing the strategies for improving pupils' literacy and numeracy outlined in the school's development plan;
  - continuing to explore strategies for raising the achievement of boys;
  - improving students' writing skills.
- (Paragraphs: 26, 37, 60, 67, 84-85, 93, 96-97, 101, 114, 130)
- (b) meet National Curriculum requirements in Years 10 and 11 for ICT by:
- providing pupils with opportunities to measure, to record, to respond to and to automate events in applying their ICT skills across all subjects;
  - analysing schemes of work in all subjects for appropriate opportunities to use ICT.
- [Paragraphs: 17, 25-26, 77, 82, 101, 116, 121, 137-138, 147]
- (c) \*\* introduce a wider range of teaching styles in order to develop pupils' learning skills by:
- teachers highlighting the link between teaching and learning in their lesson planning;
  - teachers using a range of teaching and learning activities in their lessons to enable all pupils to improve their independent learning skills;
  - teachers raising their expectations and planning work at a suitable level.
- (Paragraphs: 7, 11, 17, 80-82, 90, 92, 94-95, 103-104, 116, 130)
- (d) \*\*use assessment data more effectively to guide teachers' planning on raising achievement by:
- using assessment data for tracking individual pupil progress and setting targets for each pupil.
- (Paragraphs: 47-51, 92, 106, 116, 131, 140, 156)

The school also needs to address the following issues:

- \*\*The leadership and management skills of post-holders under the new management structure;  
(Paragraphs: 59-60, 95, 106, 123)
- \*\*Improved learning resources;  
(Paragraphs 17, 67)
- \*\*Improved accommodation for design and technology when opportunities arise.  
(Paragraph 68)

\*\* Already identified in the school's development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	149
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	25	58	51	9	4	0
Percentage	2	17	39	34	6	2	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	729
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	206

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	76

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	329

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	61
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	8.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	65	71	136

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	28	31	23
	Girls	40	32	22
	Total	68	63	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	50 (55)	46 (53)	33 (38)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (20)	18 (27)	8 (9)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	9	30	9
	Girls	29	36	20
	Total	38	66	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	28 (57)	49 (59)	21 (43)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	5 (13)	27 (23)	1 (15)
	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	78	59	137

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	18	72	75
	Girls	22	55	56
	Total	40	127	131
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	29 (34)	93 (97)	96 (98)
	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	33.0
	National	39.0

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0
	National	N/a

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	33	1	0
White – Irish	27	0	0
White – any other White background	41	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	3	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	10	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	113	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	59	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	26	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	140	5	1
Black or Black British – African	209	10	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	17	4	2
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	19	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	36.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.4

### Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	317

### Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.8
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### Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.3
Key Stage 4	24.2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	2301262
Total expenditure	2174162
Expenditure per pupil	3054
Balance brought forward from previous year	13773
Balance carried forward to next year	286889

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	18

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	734
Number of questionnaires returned	322

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	33	4	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	42	46	6	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	35	10	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	37	16	9	4
The teaching is good.	37	49	6	3	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	36	16	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	5	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	30	4	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	37	35	20	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	41	40	8	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	46	7	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	38	13	9	12

## 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

- Higher attainers express opinions, listen to others' point of view and offer mature and perceptive responses.
- Strategies in the departmental action plan set out well-constructed initiatives for raising standards.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally very good.

#### Areas for improvement

- Writing skills are weaker than other language skills, especially for boys. This has an adverse effect on pupils' achievement in national tests and in GCSE examinations.
- Teaching styles do not include a sufficiently wide range of activities to meet the needs of all pupils.

72. The language skills of most pupils on entry to the school in Year 7 are below average. Standards reached by pupils at the age of 16 are below average but pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. Value added statistics show that pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11 when compared to their attainment in Year 9 tests. In 2001, the proportions of pupils achieving GCSE A\*-C and A\*-G results were below the national averages in both English language and literature. Results in the 2002 examinations were similar to those of 2001 and the overall standards have been below average over the past four years. As at the time of the previous inspection, girls perform better than boys at GCSE.
73. Performance in national tests by pupils at the age of 14 was well below average in 2001 and test results have been generally below the national trend. However, the profile of pupils' English skills on entry to Year 7 has changed since the last inspection and a greater proportion of pupils now need support in developing their basic language skills in Years 7 to 9. As in Years 10 and 11, girls achieve higher standards than boys.
74. Speaking and listening skills are above average. Pupils contribute to discussion and develop ideas in a sustained manner. Pupils express their opinion, listen to each other's point of view and argue a point, substantiating it with reasons. For example, low attainers in a Year 7 lesson debated well the topic of school learning versus home learning. In most lessons in Years 7 to 9, pupils volunteer responses readily and the reluctant speakers are encouraged to contribute. In Years 10 and 11, speaking and listening skills are more developed for the higher and average attainers. A small proportion of pupils, particularly low attainers, are reluctant to contribute to discussions.
75. In Years 7 to 9, pupils enjoy reading class texts. Pupils volunteer to read aloud in class and do so confidently. Higher attainers identify differences in features between types of short story and define plot and theme. Low attainers, and a significant proportion of average attainers, need support in their understanding. A few pupils volunteered to read sections and were particularly interested in the unfamiliar vocabulary. In Years 10 and 11, reading standards are higher and pupils make better progress than in lower years. The learning resource centre contains an extensive fiction collection, which has been successfully organised into 'pupil-friendly' sections to encourage borrowing by all

groups of pupils. It makes a very positive contribution to developing pupils' interest in reading. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. There is good literacy practice throughout the department. For example, key words and vocabulary are written up on the board in every lesson. ICT skills are integrated into the scheme of work and opportunities for pupils to apply their skills are limited, but increasing as the school invests in more computers.

76. The standard of written work is below average and ranges from very good to very poor in Years 7 to 9. Higher and lower attainers make satisfactory progress over time but the written work of average attainers lacks variety. Unsatisfactory presentation of work hinders many pupils from achieving higher standards. In Years 10 and 11, the standard of written work varies from exceptionally good work produced by talented pupils to work which is well below average by a number of average and lower attainers. The department is implementing effective strategies to raise standards of written work, including using ICT for drafting. These are beginning to address weaknesses in writing. Boys of all levels of attainment do not produce written work which matches the levels of their oral skills. In work seen in Years 10 and 11, there was a significant difference between boys and girls in the GCSE coursework folders. Girls on the whole had completed work and it was carefully produced. Only a few of the boys had completed work – the majority had missing or incomplete work.
77. Pupils' attitudes to English and behaviour in lessons are generally very good. Good learning opportunities are provided for higher attaining pupils through challenging tasks. In a study of 'Lord of the Flies' in Year 9, pupils' analyses of two characters, Ralph and Piggy, were particularly successful. Insightful questioning by the group displayed good understanding and clear enjoyment of the text. Pupils are encouraged to think and reflect on issues and, in the same lesson, in the discussion on the qualities of a leader, both boys and girls made interesting contributions and were able to express their point of view confidently. In Years 10 and 11, the discussion of the issues raised by the study of war poetry stimulated mature and perceptive responses and the pupils were able to be analytical and offer empathetic views. Extra support sessions are offered to average and low attainers in Year 9 who are at the borderline of National Curriculum levels 4 and 5. There are voluntary revision classes and mentoring for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Both these initiatives help to improve pupils' confidence and enable many to work more productively in lessons.
78. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and some lessons include good or better teaching. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and resources are used effectively. For example, a Year 9 lesson included a powerful rendering of Sojourner Truth's 'Ain't I a woman', with Maya Angelou's analysis, from the video, 'Power of Speech'. These demonstrated well the techniques of public speaking. In the best lessons, a good pace is maintained and activities are varied. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, long periods of listening to the text being read by one individual and a lack of varied tasks tended to make some pupils, especially boys, lose interest. Work is marked regularly and linked appropriately to National Curriculum levels. Helpful comments assist pupils to know how to improve their work. Homework is set and marked regularly.
79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are strengths. The department's action plan sets out clear priorities for raising achievement. It focuses on pupils taking more responsibility for their own learning as well as extending the range of teaching styles. However, many initiatives for improving standards are at an early stage of development. Data analysis procedures to support target setting are currently being introduced. All Year 7 classes are timetabled for a weekly literacy session and this is

addressing the needs of the large number of pupils who have below average basic skills. Assessment and monitoring of pupils' achievement are satisfactory and developing well. The department has begun to compile a folio of work of different levels, marked with comments, which aims to establish standardisation across the department. Teachers also observe each other's lessons and share good practice.

80. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Many of the issues raised have been addressed. These include improvements in the use of ICT, staff development programmes, delegation of responsibility for developments, and assessment and monitoring. Schemes of work have time scales built into them. There are weaknesses in teaching when activities are not varied and teachers do not meet the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. Boys' writing skills remain an issue. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which contributes positively to the ethos of the school. These include theatre visits and workshops as well as opportunities for debating and oratory.
81. Standards in drama are below average but pupils achieve satisfactorily. Drama is currently being taught by a temporary teacher who has wide experience in the theatre. The teacher has a positive outlook and class management is very good. Pupils work in groups which at times can be lively; but, with careful direction from the teacher, the pupils develop their improvisation skills as well as their ability to work as a team and they produce interesting work.

### **Literacy**

82. Standards of literacy across all subjects are below average. The Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy has just been established, which is later than in most secondary schools. The cross-curricular co-ordinator has been appointed from September 2002. The Literacy Strategy is only at its inception and has not been established across the curriculum although there are clear plans for this development. All Year 7 pupils are time-tabled for one period of literacy a week in which they follow the progress units from the National Literacy Strategy. This option was chosen rather than offering catch-up lessons as the majority of the intake needs a literacy input.
83. Well-presented literacy notice boards have been set up in classrooms, in subject areas and in the foyer. The benefit of these boards in pupils' learning varies from good to very limited. The co-ordinator is raising awareness across all subjects of the importance of language and literacy skills in accessing the curriculum. A good mentoring scheme for EAL pupils who are late arrivals accelerates the development of their language skills. A very good contribution is made to literacy initiatives across all subjects by the manager of the school's learning resource centre.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Pupils achieve well by the time they leave school at 16 years old given their below average attainment on entry to the school.
- The pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, hard work and desire to do well.
- The teachers' good subject knowledge, hard work and commitment to the pupils doing well.
- Good liaison with support teachers for pupils with English as an additional language.

### Areas for improvement

- The leadership and management of the department to ensure the implementation of the department's action plan and to raise standards further.
- The range of teaching styles used by teachers, particularly questioning of pupils to check their understanding and to explore their methods of approach to a problem.
- The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to improve standards in national tests for 14-year-olds.
- The use of computers in the teaching of mathematics.

84. By the time they become 16 years old, pupils' standards in mathematics are in line with those expected nationally for their age. This represents good progress given the pupils' below average attainment on entry to the school. It is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when too few pupils gained the highest A\*-C grade at GCSE. Pupils' performance in mathematics compares well with that in other subjects. National Curriculum test results for 14-year-olds in 2002 show better progress in mathematics than in English and science, and at GCSE in 2001 pupils did much better in mathematics than in most other subjects. The department reached its targets in 2002. A significant factor in the good progress pupils make is the very positive attitudes they bring to their studies. These enable them to take full advantage of the competent teaching they receive.
85. For the last three years, performance in National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds has been well below that nationally, although it was close to that for similar schools in summer 2000. Summer 2001 results were not as good as those in the previous year and were well below those of similar schools. Preliminary information for 2002 indicates improved performance, especially at the higher levels. Two pupils gained the highest level, a considerable achievement. Given the pupils' below average attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 and the high number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), achievement in national tests for 14-year-olds is judged satisfactory.
86. At GCSE, the pass rate for the last three years has been close to, or better than, that nationally when non-attenders and pupils educated off-site are discounted. In summer 2001 it was better than that nationally and in summer 2002 all pupils entered gained a pass. Although in 2000 and 2001 the proportions of pupils attaining the highest A\*-C grades were below national figures, they were much better than for schools with similar intakes. Preliminary data for 2002 indicates the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades is close to that nationally for the first time. Results for the last two years represent good achievement given the pupils' below average results in National Curriculum tests at 14 years old.

87. No significant differences exist between the performances of boys and girls in national examinations. This matches the national picture. Boys do perform slightly better at the higher GCSE A\*-C grades, which is against the trend of pupils' performance in the school. EAL pupils make good progress, especially when support teachers are in lessons. The support teachers liaise well with class teachers and provide additional materials to help these pupils achieve well. In national tests, and at GCSE, EAL pupils do better in mathematics than in English and science. However, the progress of some able EAL pupils is affected adversely because they are placed in the lower teaching band. They do not have sufficient access to the technical language and techniques required to gain the best possible results, even though class teachers provide additional work. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make sound progress in Years 7 to 9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11. Progress for the younger pupils, including those with special educational needs, would be better if more practical resources were available.
88. Inspection evidence indicates current pupils' attainment and progress are similar to those achieved in national examinations in summer 2001 and 2002. In Year 9 the overall attainment of pupils is below average, although pupils in the top set are working at levels above those expected for their age. These pupils have a good grasp of the relevant algebraic techniques required to achieve the highest levels in the national tests for 14-year-olds. Work is appropriately demanding. Elsewhere, progress is more variable, although satisfactory overall. It depends on the quality of teaching pupils receive. Where planning meets pupils' learning needs, progress is good. Where teachers do not structure materials well and do not provide appropriately for EAL and SEN pupils, progress is not as good as it could be.
89. Pupils in Year 11 are on course to achieve at nationally expected levels at GCSE in summer 2003. The most able pupils have completed a good quantity of work at the highest levels. They can use the sine and cosine formulae and are able to manipulate competently algebraic terms. Such knowledge and techniques are essential to attain A\*/A grades. Pupils in the middle ability groups also make good progress because of well-structured teaching that progressively develops concepts and ideas. The good GCSE pass rate in recent years reflects better teaching for the lowest attainers than at the time of the last inspection. In a very good Year 10 lesson, the teacher's experienced and enthusiastic approach engaged and interested fully a group of such pupils in quite challenging work. As a result, pupils made good progress in working with negative numbers.
90. Pupils' numeracy skills are variable but, for most, satisfactory by the time they leave school. They are best for pupils in Years 7 and 8. Many pupils in Year 7 have a quicker recall of times tables up to ten and a better range of mental calculation strategies than older pupils in the school. This is the result of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy in primary schools. Teachers are beginning to focus more on mental starter activities, and some good practice was seen. In one Year 7 lesson, the teacher involved all pupils in the number starter through the strategy of each having a number card. The pupils had to stand up or sit down to answer the teacher's questions on factors and multiples of numbers according to the number on their card. All had to think about the questions and check each other's responses, thus both reinforcing and developing pupils' previous learning. However, in most classes the range of activities is limited, with too few practical resources available. Teachers still most frequently give pupils ten mental calculations that are marked without any discussion of the answers. Hence pupils do not know why they have made a mistake.

91. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and, for the 14 lessons observed, ranged from one very good lesson to two that were unsatisfactory. Teaching is better for pupils in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. This is because the pupils are better able to access the competent, if somewhat unexciting, teaching styles of the department. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Their good subject knowledge and hard work, linked with good expectations of work and behaviour, ensure pupils learn appropriate and accurate mathematical techniques. Good developing assessment procedures help teachers to monitor pupils' attainment and progress and set work at appropriate levels of difficulty. Homework is regularly set. However, marking is not consistent across the department and not all teachers give clear feedback to pupils on how well they achieve and what they can do to improve.
92. Most lessons are well structured. For example, a good lesson with a lower attaining Year 11 group started with a quick revision of previous learning, moving on to a pattern of teacher input and pupil activity within clear time frames. Pupils moved from finding the rules for sequences that involve addition and subtraction to rules that involve multiplication and division. Pupils were kept on task and were not confused initially by a range of possible techniques. They completed a good amount of successful work. The department is beginning to support the development of pupils' literacy skills by displaying key mathematical words, but teachers need to ensure that these words are large enough for all to read and focus clearly on the topic being taught. Most lessons observed had a final session that recapped what the pupils had learnt. The most effective sessions clearly define the purpose of the lesson and, through questions, check pupils' understanding of new ideas. In less effective sessions teachers do not leave sufficient time to explore fully what pupils have learnt.
93. A weakness in many lessons is the lack of sufficient opportunities for pupils to explore and discover mathematical ideas for themselves. Teachers explain the topic with questions that rarely check pupils' understanding by asking them to justify how they arrive at their answers. Too often teachers take answers from the first pupils to put up their hands, so that slower pupils do not have enough time to work out answers for themselves. Girls in the middle and lower sets are more reluctant to respond than boys. Pupils are very motivated to respond and are prepared to ask their own questions. Teachers do not take full advantage of this. On the two occasions during the inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory, the teachers had not matched work sufficiently to pupils' learning needs. Too many complex ideas were presented and, in one lesson, the worksheet was not easily accessible to EAL pupils.
94. Whilst progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory because performance at GCSE is now close to that nationally, developments in other aspects of the department's work have been more limited. Leadership and management of the department have suffered from the head of department's role as a member of the senior management team. Consequently, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy for 11 to 14-year-olds, a wider range of teaching styles, and the use of computers to support pupils' learning, has been slow. Schemes of work have not been adapted nor appropriate practical resources bought. This has affected improvements in pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Monitoring of teaching and pupils' achievement has not been rigorous enough. The headteacher has recently reviewed the head of department's job description to make it more manageable. This should put the department in a good position to implement in full its appropriate and well-constructed action plan. It can now build on its current sound practice and the good commitment of its staff to improve standards further.

## Numeracy

95. Pupils' ability to manipulate numbers, to understand their use in different contexts and to calculate accurately is for most satisfactory by the time they leave the school. It is best for pupils in Years 7 and 8. These pupils have quicker and more accurate recall of their times tables and a wider range of mental calculation strategies than many older pupils. This reflects the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy for primary schools over the last three years. Older pupils are given insufficient opportunities to practise and develop their skills, particularly in everyday contexts, both in mathematics and across the curriculum. In subjects such as design and technology and geography, pupils use appropriate measuring and graphical skills. However, across the subjects, there is a lack of awareness of the contribution they can make to the development of pupils' numeracy skills.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- There is a new acting head of science who has achieved noticeable improvement in pupils' achievement.
- All staff are committed to raising achievement.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Pupils' experimental and investigative skills.
- Teaching methods to meet the needs of all levels of attainment.

96. Standards of work seen in science are below the national average for pupils aged 14 and 16. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. These standards represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment and are the result of teaching that is satisfactory overall. Although some pupils' behaviour in lessons is occasionally unacceptable, most pupils have a positive attitude towards learning, which contributes to a satisfactory rate of learning.
97. Pupils' results in the 2002 national tests at the age of 14 were below the national average for all schools. The results showed a marked improvement from those achieved in the previous year and are average when compared to the results in similar schools. There are no significant gender differences at this stage. The school's performance in science in 2002 was similar to that in mathematics but better than that in English.
98. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, over half of the pupils at the age of 16 were entered for the single-science course whilst the remainder studied for the double-award science. This is counter to the national trend of most pupils taking double award. Results for science as a whole were below the national average for all schools. The proportion of pupils obtaining the higher A\*-C grades was below the national average. However, when compared with results in similar schools, these results are better than expected. Girls' performance was better than that of boys for both single and double award. The 2002 results are similar to previous years.

99. In work seen, standards are below average. Despite grouping by attainment, there is a broad range of attainment in each class. In many lessons, teachers' expectations are set towards middle and lower attaining pupils, so that many higher attaining pupils are not provided with challenging tasks that match their abilities. For example, lessons were observed where pupils were working through the topic in their textbooks ahead of the pace of the rest of the class. At age 14, most pupils display a satisfactory knowledge of the topics they have studied. For example, they are able to recognise different types of joint in the body, how muscles work in pairs and name the major muscles. The work of boys and girls is of a similar standard. There is a lack of investigative work and so pupils generally have few opportunities to suggest their own hypotheses, to make predictions, or to plan and evaluate their own experiments. Consequently, attainment in experimental and investigative science is weaker than in other areas of science.
100. Teachers help pupils to develop their literacy by putting key words on the board but there is insufficient oral use of these words and linking to other terms to develop understanding of meaning. Pupils' application of their numeracy and ICT skills are not fully integrated into the science scheme of work and are below average. By the end of Year 9, pupils' achievement remains below average. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress overall.
101. Standards in the work seen in Years 10 and 11 are below those expected nationally overall. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. For example, higher attainers in Year 10 lesson were able to show a good understanding of the circulatory system. They name the major blood vessels and know how the heart and lungs work. Pupils explain how several lifestyle factors affect the circulatory system adversely, and know what to do to maintain good health. However, as in the lower school, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop investigative skills. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. Overall, pupils are not given time to reflect on how new ideas relate to those already learned.
102. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and good for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. The differences in teaching quality between lessons produced marked differences in pupils' response to learning. In the most effective lessons, the teachers' good knowledge and expertise, combined with high expectations and effective planning, motivate pupils' interest and confidence in the subject. They respond positively and try hard. In the best lessons, teachers challenge the pupils with careful questioning to explore their understanding and to make them reflect. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils made good gains in knowledge and understanding on heart disease and arteriosclerosis because the work was challenging and well planned to build on their previous work. In the same lesson, pupils used scientific vocabulary accurately. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, time was wasted in trying to control the class, the pace was slow, planning was poor and insufficient learning of any depth took place.
103. Teachers know their pupils well and recognise the importance of adapting their methods according to individual needs. However, in practice, much of the teaching is instructional, directed at the whole class, without adaptation for those who need it. Teachers frequently maintain a directive style throughout the lesson, asking questions and providing the answers when pupils struggle to respond. Pupils have little opportunity to discuss significant issues, highlight important points, feedback their own views, plan their own experiments, or make their own notes. Opportunities are lost really to challenge pupils and make them think, particularly in relation to experimental

design for pupils in Years 7 to 9. While this more directive approach is frequently effective in conveying information, it reduces opportunities for pupils to take the initiative, think for themselves and solve problems. Marking, with a grade, is regular, but there are few comments made which give pupils a clear enough indication of what they have got wrong and what they need to do in order to improve.

104. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall. Behaviour is satisfactory. The majority of pupils respond well to their science lessons, are co-operative with their teachers and help each other. They make efforts to learn from their textbooks, even when the pace of the lesson is slow and the challenge insufficient. Pupils share equipment safely and work together well. They are very sensitive to the needs of pupils who are in the early stages of learning to speak English. Most answer teachers in a courteous manner and to the best of their ability. Few pupils ask questions to enquire more deeply into a topic, which inhibits learning.
105. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. A new head of science has been in post since September 2002 and has already begun to make some effective changes and some further improvements are planned. Some observation of lessons has recently begun, but this has not yet had an effect on standards. There are regular departmental meetings and informal daily contacts. The head of department has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the department and has already cleared unused chemicals and improved chemical storage; produced a system of assessment and marking in line with the school policy; purchased new textbooks; begun to compile new schemes of work for pupils aged 11 to 14, which include suggestions for the development of literacy, numeracy and the use of computers; and begun to look at staff training needs. Staff are well deployed and accommodation is used effectively.
106. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards at age 14 and 16 have remained below average. Achievement remains satisfactory. Investigative work remains unsatisfactory, particularly for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Schemes of work are improving and checks being made for continuity and progression. Textbooks have been purchased, electrical equipment tested and chemical storage improved.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is good and leads to good achievement by pupils.
- There is a broad range of two and three-dimensional learning experiences linked to a rich variety of cultures and reflecting the school's multicultural intake.
- The importance and value of observational drawing has been effectively integrated into thorough and well-planned schemes of work.
- Homework and coursework are regularly marked with diagnostic comments in many cases.

### Areas for improvement

- Opportunities to extend the achievements of the known gifted and talented pupils, as well as those identified as underachievers, need to be more specifically addressed.
- The work of famous artists is used frequently to inform and stimulate thinking, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work.

107. GCSE results have consistently been above average. In work seen, standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Drawing and painting skills are effectively developed. Research is often extensive. Knowledge of artists and of the culture of other countries is broad and influential in the students' work. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and to pursue individuality of response. This is a strength of the department. Learning outcomes and individual achievement gain in personal confidence and artistic competence over time as the result of good planning and teaching. The imaginative and bold work based on 'Distortion' is a good example. There are many opportunities for the use of ICT as a method of enquiry and as a medium of creativity as part of the taught courses. Planned opportunities for written work increase significantly as pupils move through the school.
108. At the age of 14, attainment is close to national expectations. This is the result of teaching, which is well structured and well taught, with good resources. Many pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of technical vocabulary and a satisfactory range of drawing, painting and modelling skills. The construction and modelling work inspired by Caribbean stilts and the concentrated approaches to portraiture are good examples. The use of workbooks as a means of research and experimentation needs further development in Years 7 to 9.
109. The overall quality of teaching is good. Specialist teachers have good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for their subject which they relate well to pupils' needs. Achievement and attainment were most successful in those lessons where a brisk start, clear aims as well as a variety of teaching methods were used effectively to maintain pace and interest. Classes are well managed and lessons well planned. There were a few occasions where pace and achievement were inappropriate and where end-of-lesson review opportunities were not used effectively. Teaching provision for gifted and talented pupils, as well as those identified in Years 10 and 11 as underachievers, needs to be more focused and specific. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, are well integrated and make good progress.
110. Working relationships are good and generally very productive. The good use of demonstrations has a positive impact on learning outcomes. The use of assessment to inform teaching and regular marking that is often diagnostic contribute to progress and also influence curriculum development. Pupils' behaviour and their attitude to work are good in all years. Many pupils are enthusiastic about their work and acknowledge the progress they have made over time owing to good teaching and class support. Pupils settle quickly, listen attentively and many work with determination and concentration, taking pride in their achievements. Whilst the department recognises the importance of personal development through the spiritual aspects of art education, more could be done to enrich this aspect of the course, using the many opportunities that already exist.
111. Art is well managed by an experienced and enthusiastic specialist. Teaching and learning outcomes are monitored through class visits, made easier by the interlinked rooms. Accommodation is well managed, although storage space is inadequate. There are well-resourced, well-planned schemes of work for all year groups. These include a variety of cultural themes which influence and enrich learning outcomes and achievement. Methods of assessment are thorough and applied consistently across the department. Pupils are aware of the system and are themselves involved in part of the assessment procedure. A good range of extra-curricular opportunities are planned and available to all year groups. Improvement since the last report is good, although more can still be done to improve effective use of workbooks in Years 7 to 9. Standards

have been maintained despite a significant reduction in the time allocation for art over recent years and the current unavailability of double lessons in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' achievements are celebrated through the range of good displays in the department and public areas of the school.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Pupils achieve well in their GCSE examination.
- Staff are committed to raising achievement levels.
- Pupils' progress is monitored well through effective assessment procedures.

### Areas for improvement

- Attainment at the end of Year 9 needs to improve in order to match more closely the national average.
- Planning needs to match tasks which challenge all levels of attainment.
- There is a need for more open 'design and make' tasks, especially in Years 7 to 9.

112. Standards at GCSE represent good progress for most pupils from their low attainment on entry to the school. In 2001, for the subject as a whole, about two-fifths of those entered gained grades A\* to C, compared with about half nationally. These results do, however, compare well with other subjects in the school. In 2001, for the individual subjects, textiles achieved the best results with two-thirds of those entered gaining GCSE grades A\* - C. The results for 2001 continued a rising, if modest, trend. Results in 2002 were again good in textiles, where almost three-quarters of those entered gained GCSE grades A\* - C. The drop in overall performance is due to a cohort of slightly lower ability than in the past and the difficulties which the school has had in appointing staff to cover long-term teacher absence. At GCSE, girls achieve better results than boys, but there are no significant differences in the performance of different ethnic groups. Pupils achieve results which are in line with their ability. In all the specialist areas a number of pupils produce coursework which is of a very high quality, particularly in textiles. Standards achieved by current pupils indicate an improvement on previous years. Work by pupils in Year 11 is of a high standard. In Years 10 and 11, good quality work is seen in all specialist areas, but is particularly strong in textiles.
113. Standards in work seen at the age of 14 are average and pupils achieve well given their attainment on entry to the school. Good work is produced by pupils in Year 9 in both resistant materials and textiles, but work by pupils in Years 7 and 8 was not as good. In a Year 9 resistant materials lesson, pupils were rapidly developing skills in the cutting of woodwork joints and, despite their lack of previous experience, were achieving considerable success as a result of very good teaching. Opportunities to develop skills in literacy and numeracy are currently limited, although effective use is made of displays of key words in each teaching room.
114. The quality of learning was good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in years 7 to 9. Learning was most effective in lessons that proceeded at a good pace and where the teachers had planned for a range of different activities. The most effective learning was seen in lessons with Years 9, 10 and 11. Some particularly effective learning was seen in textiles and child development in Year 10. In a Year 10 textiles lesson, pupils were working independently to investigate the properties of fabrics and were clearly making

good progress. In child development, pupils learnt about cultural differences through effective paired discussion.

115. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. In lessons where the teaching was good or very good, lessons were well planned and teachers had a positive working relationship with the pupils. Assessment procedures are good but teachers need to make greater use of the information when planning lessons. Not enough attention is given to planning tasks to suit pupils of different abilities, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Effective use of ICT was seen in some lessons, particularly textiles, and it is clear that this is a regular feature of the work in this specialism. The use of ICT in other specialist areas is limited. In graphics and resistant materials this is mainly because of the lack of equipment.
116. Leadership and management of the department are quietly effective. Some parts of the department handbook need updating. The department has made good progress since the last inspection and has attended to most of the points raised. There is still, however, a need to raise attainment at the end of Year 9. The department needs to review the scheme of work, especially in resistant materials, where much of the work in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 consists of focused practical tasks. Whilst staff have correctly given attention to the development of skills and knowledge, there is a need for more emphasis to be given to 'design and make' assignments which allow pupils scope to develop their design capability, and to the evaluation of existing products. Although some elements of systems and control are covered through the electronics tasks, there is a need to develop computer control.
117. Resources in the department are good, but there are some limits on the range of different resistant materials available, which inhibits some work. A recent increase in the amount of technician time available has now created a good level of support. Staff have worked hard to create rooms which are bright and cheerful, with excellent displays of work from pupils and of teaching resources. Accommodation is good in textiles but poor in food technology, where both of the rooms are in urgent need of long overdue refurbishment in order to provide better working conditions. In resistant materials and graphics, accommodation is satisfactory but needs re-modelling to meet the current demands of the subject. The wood store is cramped.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Teachers know their subject very well and they explain new ideas very effectively.
- Lessons start promptly and continue at a good pace.
- Pupils are well-prepared for lessons and they work well together.
- Teachers have a good awareness of the additional needs of individual pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- Teachers use too narrow a range of strategies to support pupils' learning.
- Work is not matched to the full range of attainment in the class.
- Priorities for developing the subject are not clear.

118. At age 14, standards are below average but pupils achieve satisfactorily. The pattern of improvement has been a little faster than the national trend. Pupils learn geographical terminology well: for example, they use accurate terminology when discussing

underground water systems in Year 9 and rainforests in Year 8. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate their understanding of quite complex concepts and processes in their oral and written work.

119. Relatively few pupils continue their studies in Years 10 and 11. There is no GCSE group in Year 11 and pupils in Year 10 have only just begun the course. Most of these pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and make confident contributions in lessons. Their initial progress is at least satisfactory. The department also offers a GCSE course in travel and tourism. Pupils are enthusiastic about the course. Teaching strategies are suitably varied and there are good field work and vocational opportunities.
120. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There has been a clear improvement since the last inspection. Pupils come well prepared and lessons start promptly. Time is used well. Teachers' explanations are effective. Teachers regularly check pupils' grasp of new terminology through questioning. This is not sufficiently targeted nor does it encourage extended thinking by pupils, some of whom therefore remain too passive. Teaching resources have improved since the last inspection but there is too little use of additional resources to extend higher attaining pupils other than in the top band classes. The use of ICT supports learning but is unimaginative. There is good support for pupils with additional needs, both from class teachers and support teachers and teaching assistants. In one classroom there is a very effective display of key words relating to the current topics. Pupils' behaviour in nearly all lessons is very good. They work well together and relate well to the teachers. Their written work is generally well presented. Their attitude has clearly improved since the last inspection.
121. The scheme of work makes too little reference to the National Curriculum. Marking, though regular, makes too little use of the level descriptors, so that pupils are not helped to understand how they can improve their work. Insufficient notice is taken of pupils' learning in geography in primary schools. There is a good programme of fieldwork, covering all age groups.
122. The leadership provided by the head of department is unsatisfactory. The department's development plan contains no targets for improved pupil performance. Actions are not prioritised and do not adequately relate to the whole school's current priorities. In addition, a number of issues raised in the last inspection remain to be addressed. In particular, it remains true that only small numbers opt to continue their studies into Years 10 and 11.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Teaching in GCSE classes is good and pupils are achieving well.
- There is an enriched curriculum provision in Years 8 and 9 which meets the needs of pupils in the school well.
- The contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good.

### Areas for improvement

- Some classes in Years 7 and 8 are taught by non-specialists who have insufficiently developed skills, knowledge and understanding. This adversely affects pupils' learning.
- The procedures for and use of assessment are not sufficiently well developed
- During the inspection there was insufficient focus on the development of literacy and computer based skills

123. Attainment at age 14 is below average. Although the higher attaining pupils reach the higher levels required, the majority of pupils show a level of knowledge and understanding below that nationally expected. Pupils are achieving at an appropriate standard in relation to their performance in other subjects.
124. At GCSE, attainment is below the national average. The number of pupils who were awarded the higher grades was below average in 2001 but the overall pass rate was higher, in that all candidates were awarded a pass grade. The trend over the last three years has been similar, although numbers taking the subject vary from year to year. In 2002, the results of boys were slightly better than those of girls, although only four took the subject. The number of pupils awarded A\* or A grades varies but in 2001 five pupils were awarded A grades. Pupils in GCSE classes achieve well.
125. The standards observed during the inspection reflect a similar picture and the trend is one of some improvement in standards since the last inspection. More pupils are now choosing to take the subject at GCSE. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is high because of the quality of teaching within the department and because of the positive attitudes of pupils.
126. In Year 9 the majority of pupils are able to talk about the topics that they are studying and they have an understanding of some of the ways in which historians find out about the past. Their knowledge of key developments is sound because they are able to use a variety of resources, for example contemporary pictures of selectively bred animals to form conclusions about change during the Agricultural Revolution. The written work of higher attaining pupils is good. They are able to fit their studies into a wider context and to show how economic and other factors link together, for example the profit motive in agricultural change. In previous work on slavery and the triangular trade, their notebooks shows that pupils can grasp essential facts in order to develop an understanding of how the trade operated. The approach to this topic, and to the study of Native Americans, makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of pupils.
127. In Year 11 the majority of pupils have a secure knowledge of the topics that they have studied. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand about the conflicts of the twentieth century and about social and political change such as the emancipation of women. The highest attaining pupils are able to use documents and extracts very well and to undertake research in preparation for coursework on the battle

on the Somme. Pupils of all levels of attainment show the ability to evaluate evidence and use it effectively, for example when considering the use of cartoons and posters as propaganda. The highest attaining pupils clearly show the level of skills, knowledge and understanding to reach the higher grades at GCSE.

128. Attitudes to the subject are satisfactory overall and they are good in GCSE classes. Many pupils work hard and contribute well in lessons. They enjoy activities in class and find the work interesting and challenging. They enjoy visits to the British Museum and role-play activities in school. The response of boys is often good and they are very eager to take part in discussion. However, in some classes of average or lower attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8, attitudes are unsatisfactory in that pupils do not use time well and are reluctant to complete homework. Where behaviour and response are unsatisfactory or poor, it is usually a result of weaknesses in teaching.
129. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with variations between poor and very good teaching. Teaching is good in GCSE classes. There is an inconsistent focus on providing the opportunity for the improvement of skills in literacy. The identification of subject-specific vocabulary, a good variety of tasks, and writing frames to help those of lower potential attainment, are features of only a few lessons. Some use is being made of computers but this is not consistent across the department. Tasks and resources are not always well matched to the attainment of pupils. Resources are generally used well and subject-specialist teachers have good subject knowledge. Assessment through questioning is used well by some teachers. Because of this, progress for the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is sound.
130. Pupils have the opportunity to develop skills in history as they progress through the school. The work of pupils at the beginning of Year 7 shows that they are learning to use a range of skills based on the 'History Detectives' approach and history skills are taught consistently through the school. The department now has access to ICT in the main history classroom and in the library but has not yet been able to take full advantage of its potential in promoting effective learning. Assessment information is not readily available and procedures within the department are not in place. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who are using English as an additional language, make sound progress because of the quality of support available outside the classroom. Tasks and resources in class are not always appropriate for them or for lower attaining pupils. On occasions, the same task and resources are used in the highest and lowest ability band classes. All pupils are well supported in GCSE classes. Pupils with the highest level of ability are achieving as they should and some pupils achieve the higher grades at GCSE each year.
131. Pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment work together well. The history room is used for displays of pupils' work and is well equipped. However, the accommodation provided for teaching some history classes is unsatisfactory. This has an adverse effect on the learning of some pupils and affects their access to the curriculum. Specialist teachers are using a variety of approaches to teaching and learning. They are knowledgeable about the subject and their lessons are well planned, managed and resourced. However, non-specialist teachers do not always have the same level of skills and knowledge. Some lessons lack focus, pace is slow, objectives are not met and some aspects of learning are unsatisfactory.

132. Management of the department is sound. It has clearly been effectively managed in the past and the subject is popular with pupils. The absence of the head of department has added to existing staffing problems. Curriculum development has been good and standards are improving. Improvement since the last inspection has been sound.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good in ICT courses but unsatisfactory across the curriculum.**

#### **Strengths**

- Teaching and learning are good in GCSE ICT lessons.
- Pupils on the GCSE course are monitored and assessed well.
- All pupils in Years 7 to 9 receive specialist ICT teaching which enhances their ICT skills.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The programme of study does not meet all National Curriculum requirements in ICT.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities in most subjects to apply their ICT skills on measuring, recording, responding and automation technology.

133. In 2001, by age 16 the attainment of those pupils who took GCSE ICT was above average. Results were above the national average for the proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grades and well above the school average. The most recent GCSE results have demonstrated another significant improvement and were well above average, and again well above the school average. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys in A\*-C grades, although girls have a slight advantage in terms of A\*-G grades. These results indicate very good progress during Years 10 and 11 for those who take the ICT examination course.
134. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 have one ICT lesson each week, in which they are able to cover most National Curriculum requirements. In lessons and in examples of pupils' work seen, attainment by age 14 was consistent with national expectations in most aspects of ICT. For most pupils this represents good progress. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils were adept at manipulating the computer network and had good skills when searching for resources to enhance learning. In particular, presentational skills were well developed as a result of good teaching. Documents were well set out and appropriately illustrated. Teachers discussed assessment requirements and emphasised the need for pupils to organise and save their work carefully. As a result of new, challenging schemes of work and the good working atmosphere in lessons taught by ICT specialists, the majority of pupils are well motivated and very responsive. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place and are used well to enable teachers to target pupils for additional support or more challenging activities. There are a number of non-specialists teaching ICT but the team is well supported with resources and guidance by the co-ordinator. This ensures that almost all teaching is at least satisfactory or better, enabling the majority of pupils to make good progress with their learning.
135. Pupils make very good progress in GCSE ICT lessons as a result of good teaching. Attainment is high. The busy working atmosphere created by teachers ensures that pupils in exam classes are well motivated and work hard, particularly in the production of a high standard of examination coursework. In Years 10 and 11, coursework is mostly very thorough and well produced. Teachers ensure that pupils are well aware of requirements and that they review their work carefully at each stage. In a Year 11 class, pupils were creating spreadsheets with confidence. These were for specific clients and

contained more advanced functions, including macros to facilitate use by their clients. Some of the software guides produced by pupils are very helpful and particularly well presented. Thorough monitoring and assessment by teachers make a significant contribution to the high standards achieved at GCSE.

136. Work is under way to develop ICT across the curriculum but, in many subjects, there is not enough opportunity for pupils to apply and develop their ICT skills in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum. In particular, many pupils do not use ICT to measure, record, respond to and automate events. This means that pupils cannot make adequate progress in all of the required aspects of ICT. However, the school has made good progress in developing ICT since the last inspection and the department is well led and managed.
137. A significant increase in the number of computers has ensured that the school now has well above the average number for a school of its size. These machines, together with the recent New Opportunities Fund for staff ICT training and the installation of broadband Internet access, now provide an environment which subject departments should exploit to make more use of ICT in order to enhance teaching and learning.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- Dedication and competence of teaching staff enhance pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures are not fully developed in Years 7 to 9.
- Support and monitoring of teaching are not fully developed.

138. Standards at age 14 are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. On joining the school in Year 7, pupils readily take up French and Spanish and quickly learn to converse in rudimentary sentences, to copy accurately and to listen carefully. There is sometimes a degree of confusion between the two languages. By the end of Year 9, a substantial gap has opened up between higher and lower attainers. The more talented linguists converse well on simple themes, while lower attainers are still struggling with basic concepts and vocabulary. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 underestimate the standards achieved by pupils.
139. Results at GCSE are at the national average, though they vary from year to year and from language to language. Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in the four areas of study – listening, speaking, reading and writing - and, in work seen, standards are in line with the average GCSE results of previous years. A greater emphasis on individual assessment and on target setting might encourage marginal candidates to achieve more highly and would further strengthen the improvements seen since the last inspection.
140. Nearly all pupils study one language at GCSE. The option system does not allow any pupil to take two languages. The school should review its policy of starting two languages in Year 7 and consider making it possible for abler linguists to add the second language at a later stage. The two-language issue is reflected in the difficulty of creating finely tuned teaching groups in Years 10 and 11, and classes there often contain a very wide range of attainment. Timetabling constraints increase the difficulty

of accurate targeting of pupils' needs. Other pupils in the school, some of them native speakers of French and Spanish, as well as native speakers of other community languages, successfully take public examinations in their mother tongue.

141. Pupils generally behave well and show enthusiasm for their language lessons, and good discipline in French and Spanish classrooms is of great value in the learning of a subject in which close attention is essential. Attitudes in the morning session are better than those after lunch, and there were occasions when less-focused teaching allowed behaviour to slip.
142. Teaching is usually good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The department has adapted well to the demands of the modern curriculum. Lessons are well planned and well taught. Where lessons fell below the highest standards, this was due to a lack of focus. There is still room for greater use of the target language in the classroom. The department is well led with a minimum of fuss, is well resourced and has good accommodation. A greater emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of pupil and staff performance would allow teachers to concentrate more closely on the precise needs of classes and of individual pupils (including those with special educational needs). There is much good practice and all staff would benefit from a wider sharing of this. French and Spanish make a good contribution to the life of the school. The department has made good progress since the last inspection.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Extra-curricular provision is good and enhances pupils' performance skills.
- Attitudes of pupils to learning are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Refine assessment procedures.
- The introduction of ICT in Years 7 to 9 to support pupils' learning.

143. Standards achieved by pupils at age 16 in GCSE examinations are average and pupils' achieve as well as might be expected. At age 14, in work seen, pupils meet national expectations. Recent Year 9 teacher assessments underestimate the attainment of pupils. Achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Pupils show satisfactory skills in performing in ensembles from written music and in composing with different sound sources. A minority can play keyboards with two hands. Knowledge of music is less well developed. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls.
144. The attitudes of all pupils are good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 enjoy the challenges offered to them. Year 11 pupils are very keen to learn and there are high levels of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils behave well.
145. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and teachers have good subject knowledge. Pupils are well managed and good use is made of resources. The range of methods and pace of teaching are satisfactory and adequate use is made of assessment to encourage pupils to review their work. Pupils are given assessments at the end of every unit. As a result of these features, pupils show a good deal of interest in their work and they know how well they are doing. Pupils progress at a

satisfactory pace. Satisfactory use is made of homework and there is sound teaching of basic skills. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those with considerable musical talent, is satisfactory.

146. In a Year 7 lesson on the elements of music, teaching effectively supported pupils' reading skills by emphasising important musical words. The challenges were appropriate and the pace of teaching was sufficient to ensure that satisfactory progress was made in improving singing skills and basic subject knowledge. Pupils made good progress in a Year 8 lesson on jazz. The aims of the lesson were well established and the lesson was well structured. As a result, pupils worked well in small groups and on their own and made sustained efforts to improve their performance. Good use was made of appraisal techniques at the end of the lesson to encourage pupils to discuss their work. In a Year 9 lesson on performance, pupils were thoroughly tested on their understanding of Pachelbel's 'Canon' at the start of the lesson. Good quality resources enabled pupils to work at their own pace through a variety of challenges. As a result, progress was good, as pupils gained in accuracy, fluency and confidence. However, there is little use made of ICT in the programmes of study in Years 7 to 9.
147. GCSE teaching is good. A Year 11 lesson was well planned and aims were clearly defined. Teaching showed good subject knowledge in giving extensive guidance to pupils preparing composition and performances. Pupils were encouraged to discuss how they might modify and improve their work. They had the advantage of high quality ICT resources for composition. As a result, pupils could describe how they might modify the structure of a composition and they showed good deal of independence in their work.
148. The head of department has, in a short time, established a clear vision for the subject and has set realistic development aims. Planning is well founded on pupils' strengths and weaknesses as well as a strong response to the school's targets. The expertise of staff is well matched. Choral work is an important feature in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities and lessons that are available. Groups perform regularly at well-attended concerts and services in and out of school. The school makes a significant contribution to the cost of instrumental lessons and there is a wide range of good quality instrumental teaching. Resources are satisfactory overall and are good for teaching ICT at GCSE. However, they are insufficient for the further development of extra-curricular work. Accommodation is good and contributes to a positive learning environment.
149. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements. These include the provision for ICT for GCSE pupils, the quality of the accommodation and improved resources for recording pupils' work.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good, with teachers setting high expectations of pupils in terms of participation and behaviour. As a result, learning and progress are good.
- Pupil-teacher relationships are very good: pupils have a positive and lively attitude towards physical education and feel valued for both effort and achievement.
- Pupils' attainment and achievement in the GCSE examination are generally good.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment information to monitor the progress of pupils and in setting targets for further progress.
- The setting of clearer and more explicit lesson outcomes so that teachers can evaluate the success of their chosen lesson activities.

150. The majority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 are attaining at the level expected nationally. They are able to copy simple skills with control and co-ordination and are beginning to understand how to improve their own performance. The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are also performing at a level which would be expected at this stage. Most perform with precision and control and work hard at improving their performance. In all year groups there is a wide spectrum of attainment but teachers accommodate this through individual support and encouragement, and, as a consequence, all pupils achieve well. Pupils have a lively, positive approach to physical education and the majority make clear progress in lessons by listening carefully to the teacher and practising conscientiously as individuals and in groups.
151. Whilst the 2001 GCSE results showed attainment below the national average in terms of A\*-C passes, the provisional results for 2002 indicated an outstanding 100 per cent pass rate, where all ten pupils achieved at least a C grade and the three female pupils all achieved an outstanding A\* grade.
152. Teaching and learning are good and a strength of the department. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and teach lessons which are well structured, use a variety of activities and are conducted at a lively pace. Teachers set high expectations of pupils in terms of both participation and behaviour and, as a consequence, pupils learn well in lessons. Further improvements to lesson planning can be made by having clear, measurable and explicit lesson outcomes linked to simple, clearly defined teaching points which are reinforced throughout all the lesson activities.
153. In an excellent Year 10 lesson on basketball, the teacher gave very clear explanations as to the correct technique and set up interesting and progressively more difficult practices. As a consequence, the majority was able to dribble and pass with fluency and control. In a good Year 10 lesson on volleyball, pupils were taught the basics of striking the ball using a variety of methods and were able to work collaboratively in small groups to perfect their skills. A good Year 9 games session made excellent use of the four full-time physical education staff to teach volleyball, basketball, football and tennis where all pupils were seen to be making good progress. There was also good use made of additional staff to teach badminton and self-defence in the Year 11 options programme. In a Year 8 rugby lesson, the teacher used a range of progressively more difficult passing drills to improve performance and, as a consequence, the majority of the class was able to pass the ball accurately.

154. Despite classes being generally lively, particularly in Years 7 and 8, pupils are generally well behaved and respond to the firm but friendly control exercised by teachers. Instances of unruly behaviour are very few and are dealt with efficiently and with a minimum of fuss. Teachers provide an environment in lessons in which all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or background, feel valued for both effort and achievement.
155. The timetabled curriculum meets statutory requirements and the many extra-curricular activities, clubs and school teams provide additional opportunities for pupils to enjoy sport and improve their skills. The newly appointed head of department is developing assessment procedures to record pupils' performance which will enable teachers to monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils more effectively and use this information to inform the planning of the physical education curriculum. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and further progress should occur by the development and implementation of policies which contribute to the whole-school development plan: for example, to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils taking physical education.