

# INSPECTION REPORT

**KING'S HEATH BOYS' SCHOOL**

**King's Heath, Birmingham**

**LEA area: Birmingham**

**Unique reference number: 103486**

**Headteacher: Mr S Calvin**

Reporting inspector: Philip J H O'Neill  
3162

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 249104

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Boys

School address: Hollybank Road  
King's Heath  
Birmingham

Postcode: B13 0RJ

Telephone number: 0121 464 4454

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs B Smith

Date of previous inspection: March 2001

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3162	Philip J H O'Neill	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12775	Judith Goodchild	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	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?
20119	Tony Bell	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Citizenship Special educational needs	
4697	Robert Black	Team inspector	Music	
32173	Barbara Brown	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	
32209	Jane Burnett	Team inspector	Geography	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
23393	Brian Dower	Team inspector	English	
32149	Nick Dry	Team inspector	Mathematics	
17156	Ted Graham	Team inspector	Design and technology	
20832	Gordon Jackson	Team inspector	Science	
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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR PUPILS?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

King's Heath Boys' School is a boys' comprehensive school located in King's Heath within the authority of Birmingham, catering for boys between the ages of 11 and 16 years. The school is oversubscribed in Years 7 and 8. Most pupils come from backgrounds of significant economic deprivation. There are now 460 pupils: this is much smaller than other secondary schools. Well over half the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly Asian or Asian British. The school has also received 12 pupils from refugee families. In the year preceding the inspection, 48 pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of admission and 38 left before the age of transfer. This represents a significant level of turbulence.

About half the pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is over three times the national average, and this percentage has been steadily increasing over the past three years. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need, at 1.5 per cent is broadly average. The percentage of pupils who do not speak English as a first language, at 22 per cent is high. Pupils join the school with levels of attainment that are well below national averages.

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

King's Heath Boys' School offers an acceptable education and is a school with many strengths and is well placed to meet its many challenges. The pupils benefit from much good and very good teaching and strongly supportive relationships in an increasingly positive learning environment: they respond positively. The leadership of the school is now fully focused on raising standards of attainment and behaviour. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

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

- There is a high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching across the subjects and pupils achieve well overall
- Pupils within the learning support base make particularly good progress in the development of good attitudes to learning and social skills, due to good teaching and very good behaviour management
- The headteacher is already making an outstanding impact in creating an environment for learning
- There is a strongly shared determination to improve and the school has the capacity to succeed
- Relationships overall are very good and support learning well
- The social and moral development of pupils is well supported, particularly through the role models offered by staff

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

- Pupils' levels of literacy are too low and depress standards of attainment overall
- Staffing is unsatisfactory in design and technology, drama, music and religious education with the consequence that standards in these subjects are far too low. Staffing is so unsatisfactory in music, that it is not currently being taught
- Attendance and punctuality to lessons are poor with the result that some pupils underachieve
- There is not enough use made of information and communication technology to support learning across the subjects
- Assessment is not always used well enough to inform the planning for pupils with special educational needs

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

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

Overall, the school has improved satisfactorily since last inspected in May 2001 following three years when it was subject to special measures. The judgement of the 2001 inspection was that the school no longer required special measures as it had made significant advances over the previous three years in raising standards of attainment and in improvements in teaching. However, there remained some weaknesses in the standards attained, in the use made of assessment and in effectiveness of the middle managers. The school has continued to raise attainment, but standards in literacy remain

too low. Assessment is now used satisfactorily and the roles of middle managers are more clearly defined and focused on the raising of standards. The new headteacher is already making an outstanding contribution to the morale of staff and to the development of a stimulating environment for learning. The governors and staff, under the dynamic leadership of the new headteacher, are in a strong position to make further significant advances on many fronts.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	D	C	A

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

In the 2001 and 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9, attainment in English was low and below average for similar schools. In mathematics, results in the 2002 tests were below the national average for all schools but above average for similar schools. In science, results were below average for all schools and well above average for similar schools. The relatively better results in science than in English and mathematics arise from very good teaching. Overall standards are improving but at a slower rate than nationally. Though results in GCSE are good overall and have improved faster than most schools nationally, there were weaknesses in double award science, English literature, French, history, information and communication technology and mathematics. The school sets and generally meets challenging, yet realistic, targets for attainment.

In lessons and in work seen, standards are average in science and geography, below average in mathematics, art, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, physical education and citizenship, and well below average in English, information and communication technology and religious education.

In relation to their earlier learning, pupils achieve well in most subjects, apart from English, geography and physical education where it is satisfactory and design and technology where it is unsatisfactory. Achievement is poor in religious education. These variations tie in with similar variations in the quality of teaching.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils value what the school offers them and show respect for its work. They are keen to learn and willing to participate in lessons and other activities. Where pupils have experienced discontinuities in teaching, they are sometimes more reluctant learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour overall is satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in lessons even when they are not fully challenged. There are some incidents of less satisfactory behaviour in lessons that disrupt learning and some boisterous behaviour around the school between lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Teachers and pupils frequently work well together and most relationships are supportive and mutually respectful. Some pupils are slower to develop the listening skills and the attention spans necessary to support learning effectively.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory attendance has a negative effect on achievement. There is far too much lateness to lessons that disrupts learning.

This is a happy school where pupils appreciate the commitment and dedication of the teachers to their welfare. Beneath the surface of some challenging behaviour, pupils show a will to work and to succeed.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in English is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are taught well in mathematics and in science in Years 7 to 9. The quality of teaching in science is very good in Years 10 and 11. In other subjects, though teaching is generally good, it is very good in history, satisfactory in geography and religious education and citizenship and unsatisfactory in design and technology. Literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily across the school. The key strengths in teaching are in the teachers' knowledge of the pupils and their relationships with them. There are strengths too, in the skill with which many teachers manage lessons and in the clarity of what they set out to teach. Teachers do not use homework consistently to support learning. The school does much to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of talent or temperament, are taught in a manner that includes them in all that it offers. Pupils are good learners, apart from a few who tend to be disruptive and prefer to waste time in lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for all pupils, including a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school does not currently provide music or the subject-specific applications of information and communication technology. However, the school works hard to ensure that all pupils are included in what it provides. The requirement for the provision of a daily act of worship is not met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Teachers do not always plan appropriately to meet the needs of these pupils within lessons, although when they receive specialist support they make the same progress as their peers. What is provided within the learning support base is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Needs are assessed well and the specialist support provided within lessons is good. However, teachers are not always consistent in meeting the needs of these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The overall provision for the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. The teachers and other adults in the school are very good role models for the pupils, particularly in the calm way in which they manage pupils' behaviour and their dedication to the pupils' best interests. There are some good opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues of deep personal concern to them.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a satisfactory level of care for pupils. Procedures for ensuring the students health and safety are not good enough. Teachers know the pupils well and are committed to their welfare. However, there is a lack of systems to ensure that academic and pastoral progress is monitored rigorously or to enable intervention to take place at an early stage where difficulties are developing.

The parents trust the school to provide their children with a good education and the school works satisfactorily with them. They are given clear information about progress in learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher, well supported by some able senior colleagues, has already had an outstanding impact on the morale of staff and in creating an environment for learning. There are some weaknesses in the management of the school that are already being addressed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have started to establish a mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities that will enable them to be appropriately involved in determining the strategic needs of the school under the new headteacher. They have ensured that statutory requirements are met, other than those relating to the provision of a daily act of collective worship and that relating to reporting annually to parents on the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school takes appropriate measures to evaluate how well it is performing in relation to schools in similar circumstances.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used satisfactorily to support key developments. Information and communication technology is not used well enough to support learning across the curriculum. The learning resource centre has not yet been developed as a resource for learning.

There is an unsatisfactory range of qualified and experienced teachers to teach subjects. Staffing for music and religious education is unsatisfactory, whilst that for design and technology is very poor. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, apart from science and geography where it is unsatisfactory and in physical education where changing and showering facilities are poor. There is at least a satisfactory range of resources in all subjects, except in geography where resources are inadequate.

The school takes some effective steps to compare what it offers with what other schools provide and to measure its costs against that of other schools' locally. However, there is more to be done on this front.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are making good progress</li> <li>• They find it easy to approach the school with concerns and questions</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and do their best</li> <li>• Their children are happy at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work provided for their children to do at home</li> <li>• The behaviour of some pupils</li> <li>• The way the school works with parents</li> <li>• The information provided about their children's progress</li> </ul>

Twenty-eight parents attended the meeting that was held in advance of the inspection to gather parents' views, and 14 per cent of parents returned the questionnaire. It is the views of these parents that are represented above. The inspection findings confirm the parents' positive views of the school. They also agree with parents that there is inconsistent provision of work for children to do at home. The inspection judgement is that behaviour is variable: most pupils behave well in lessons but a small number of pupils are less well behaved and disrupt learning. The inspection judgement is that the school's work with parents to support learning is satisfactory, as is the information provided for parents about their children's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the 2001 and 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9, attainment in English was low and below average for similar schools. These results have been affected by difficulties in staffing that have continued over recent years. The school has done all it can to recruit staff of the right calibre and is now better placed to raise standards in English. In mathematics, results in the 2002 tests were below the national average for all schools but above average for similar schools. The standards of teaching in mathematics have been at the heart of these relatively good results. In science, results were below average for all schools and well above average for similar schools. The science department has formed itself into a cohesive group, working well together with the clear common purpose of raising standards. This strong department has maintained a steady course in the drive towards improving what it provides. Overall standards are improving but at a slower rate than nationally. However, there is abundant evidence to suggest that the school is now on the move and showing greater confidence in what it offers, despite the persistent difficulties in recruiting staff.
2. The good results in GCSE are witness to the fruits of the school's recent work in the earlier years. Standards in the GCSE examinations are improving more rapidly than in most other schools. This arises from a growing commitment to setting appropriate and challenging targets for pupils and helping them to apply themselves to their work. The weaknesses that remain in some subjects are known and understood and are the subject of some good support and in-service training. The school sets and generally meets challenging, yet realistic, targets for attainment. These are modified and adjusted on the basis of some good analysis. The differences in attainment noted in the pupils' work are mainly a result of differences in the quality of teaching, particularly in the level of the teachers' knowledge of what they teach. The extent of the pupils' achievement is closely tied to the extent to which they are challenged in their work in lessons.
3. A distinctive feature of standards in art is the good level of the pupils' grasp of the basic skills of drawing and painting, emphasised in all teaching. The lack of appropriately qualified staff in design and technology lies at the heart of the weaknesses in this subject. The shortage of resources in geography tends to depress standards. Attainment in information and communication technology is improving with the arrival of new equipment. The quality of staffing and resources in modern foreign languages supports good progress and generates enthusiasm for languages. A significant loss to the school is the absence of music from the curriculum as a result of a failure to recruit staff. Recent difficulties in staffing have affected standards adversely in physical education and in religious education.
4. Pupils achieve well in many subjects in relation to their earlier learning. This is the result of much good teaching, particularly the teachers' skill in identifying the learning needs of individual pupils and responding to them appropriately. Achievement is satisfactory in English, geography and physical education. Pupils do not achieve well enough in design and technology and religious education as a result of difficulties in staffing and consequent weaknesses in teaching.
5. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is generally good. Progress is better in the learning support base, where pupils have more targeted work, specific to their individual needs. Most pupils in this base have additional behaviour difficulties. Pupils in the learning support base and some other pupils with particular behaviour

problems are actively involved in setting their own behaviour targets and assessing their progress towards these targets. This is very effective in improving attitudes and standards of behaviour. Progress is less consistent in other lessons. It is good in some lessons, where the teachers' planning takes account of individual needs, but only satisfactory where staff do not make reference to individual learning programmes. Progress towards targets in individual education programmes is not clear since there are no systems in place to record and monitor effectively, progress over time. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress in relation to their higher levels of attainment.

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

6. The attitudes of pupils towards school are good. They are keen to learn and value education highly. Most demonstrate a good work ethic and a determination to succeed. They sustain their concentration well and persevere with difficult tasks when their attention is engaged through good teaching. Pupils' attitudes to learning are less than satisfactory in lessons where teaching does not relate to their interests. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. A strength of the school is the mutual respect evident between the teachers and pupils. Teaching staff value pupils for their individuality and help them to achieve their potential in as many ways as possible. Pupils respond positively to this and develop during their time at school into confident young people. They are happy to approach members of staff if they are experiencing difficulties with their academic work or have personal problems. They are tolerant of views and opinions of their peer group that may differ from their own.
7. The standard of behaviour within the school is satisfactory. The school is a socially harmonious community. Behaviour in lessons is rarely less than satisfactory and on occasions very good. In a few lessons seen, behaviour was considered unsatisfactory. This was often related to an unsatisfactory teaching. Only one student was excluded for a fixed term and one permanently excluded during the previous academic year. This is very low compared with all schools nationally. It reflects the school's commitment to inclusion of all pupils. Pupils state that bullying, when reported to staff, is always dealt with effectively. The school encourages pupils to accept responsibility for their actions, and treat everyone with respect. The majority of pupils respond to this approach very positively.
8. There are a significant number of pupils, many of whom joined the school in Year 9, who have difficulties in managing their behaviour. The school manages these pupils well. The learning support base currently is catering for a group of 12 boys from Year 8 and a promising start has been made with helping pupils who have difficulties keeping focused on their work. The learning mentor has been successful in supporting these pupils. She already has a high caseload and not enough time to cope with the number of pupils requiring her help.
9. The development of pupils' initiative and personal responsibility is good. By the time they reach the end of Year 11 most pupils are confident and articulate young people who express their feelings and concerns in a logical manner. The "Theme for the Week", during the inspection was the Holocaust. This provoked some very thoughtful debates during morning tutorial periods that extended pupils' thinking about the consequences of oppression in society. During lunch and break times pupils organise themselves with minimal supervision by adults. The school council provides an effective forum for pupils to air their views. Their suggestions are, taken seriously by the school and they have been instrumental in the introduction of vending machines and new cricket nets. A prefect system for Year 11 pupils is currently under consideration at their suggestion. Members have represented the school on the Birmingham Youth Parliament.

10. The overall attendance level of pupils in 2001/2002 was below average. The rate of unauthorised absence was above the national average. The irregular attendance of pupils still remains a serious concern, as does the rate on unpunctuality. These low levels of attendance ultimately affect the ability of the poor attenders to achieve their potential in external examinations. Low attendance mainly results from holidays taken in term-time.
11. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy and appreciate the special help they receive, demonstrating good attitudes and behaviour in the learning support base and in lessons. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties usually behave well, though less consistently than others. Most pupils want to learn and to co-operate with the teacher or assistant, for example, when reading a passage aloud or working on a computer. They concentrate well on their work and are eager to succeed. Work in the learning support base makes a very effective contribution to the improvement of the behaviour and attitudes of pupils who have difficulties managing their behaviour.

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

12. The overall quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen, teaching was excellent in around one in 12, very good in one in five, good in one third of lessons, satisfactory in another third and less than satisfactory in one tenth. There was a broadly similar pattern to the quality of teaching across the years.
13. The most striking feature of many lessons is the quality of the relationships between the pupils and the teachers. There are strong bonds of mutual respect that give the pupils the assurance that, even when they stray from the path of perfection, they are forgiven and supported in mending their ways. The quality of the teachers' preparation and their skill in providing a progressively challenging range of activities in lessons is another key strength. This shows itself particularly in the crisp start to many lessons and the stimulating recapitulation of what has been learned. The sharing of the objectives of lessons with the pupils is very effective, in many lessons, in helping pupils to see the point of what they learn. The pattern of questioning strengthens many lessons. The teachers do not focus just on the most earnest few but engage all the pupils, insisting that they all take the risk of answering. This leads all the pupils to value themselves as thinkers and encourages them to be adventurous with their ideas. Many teachers are particularly adept at managing classrooms in such a way that routines and expectations for behaviour are consistently maintained. The quality of support for individuals, particularly for those who struggle with some of the more demanding ideas, is a real strength in many lessons. The pupils respond by seeking help in order to improve their work. The sincere use of praise and encouragement helps even the more reluctant learners to engage productively with their work.
14. Where lessons are unsatisfactory, the crucial weakness reveals itself at the start of lessons. On these occasions the teacher allows latecomers into the lesson unchecked, starts the lesson in a fragmented way and attempts to teach across the disorder that ensues. A further weakness in some lessons is the lack of conviction behind what is taught, with the consequence that the pupils do not see the point of the proceedings and settle for their own agenda. The lack of challenge occasionally weakens lessons and encourages pupils to set their own modest pace to their work. What gets in the way of effective teaching in most cases, however, is the teacher's failure to manage lessons in a way that deals appropriately with unacceptable behaviour. There are missed opportunities to use homework to best effect in supporting independent learning.

15. Pupils are generally good learners and are eager to succeed. Most overcome the pressures from some of their less committed peers to waste time in lessons and indulge in disruptive behaviour. Pupils take their targets for attainment very seriously and are eager to improve on them. Learning is particularly good in history where the teachers fire the minds of the pupils with interest and enthusiasm for the subject as a result of the liveliness of lessons and the imaginative use of resources. Fluent, confident and stimulating teaching and keen learning were pervasive features of a lesson in Year 8 on the English Civil War. In this lesson pupils were involved in a range of stimulating activities, creating an atmosphere charged with enthusiasm and leading to very significant gains in knowledge. Above all, the lesson brought history to life for these pupils. This imaginative approach to capturing the interest of the pupils was also a key feature of a lesson in Year 7 on the contenders to the English throne in 1066. This relatively low-attaining group were eased into the topic through stimulating use of resources, particularly through the inventive use of tape recordings. The pupils were given every possible encouragement to frame their judgements: all participated and made considerable gains in knowledge.
16. Literacy is generally taught satisfactorily across subjects. Teachers often do well in helping pupils overcome the poor literacy skills they show on joining the school. The pupils whose mother tongue is not English are helped to become fluent and confident users of English. In this respect, there is much good work, for example, in history, mathematics and science. Numeracy is also taught satisfactorily, though much good work in mathematics provides the pupils with an adequate level of numeracy to support work in other subjects.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall, despite some weaknesses in assessment. It is better in the learning support base. Often these pupils make good and sometimes excellent progress. For example in one high quality lesson, despite its timing at the end of the day, pupils were highly motivated, totally focused, behaved impeccably and developed an excellent understanding of spreadsheets. Where planning takes account of individual needs and good use is made of support staff, pupils are enthusiastic learners and make good progress. However, where teachers do not take account of individual needs or make no reference to individual education programmes, progress is at best only satisfactory. Well informed, and effective teacher assistants play a key role in enabling pupils to learn well.

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

18. Curriculum provision is satisfactory overall, with some good aspects. For example, there is a good range of extra-curricular activities and a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils are included in what the school provides. The school also supports well the personal social and health education of the pupils, provides good advice on careers, and facilitates the community contribution to pupils' education. There are some weaknesses in provision, for example, in religious education, music, drama and information and communication technology.
19. The school provides a curriculum that supports the needs of the pupils satisfactorily. It implements adequately the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. An appropriate programme of citizenship is in place for all pupils as required by law since September 2002. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was failing to meet legal requirements for the teaching of music, information and communication technology, design and technology and science. The situation has improved but under current arrangements the school continues to fail to meet legal requirements for the teaching of music in Years 7, 8 and 9. The school does not meet its statutory obligation to provide

a daily act of worship for all pupils. Not all subjects use information and communication technology to support learning. Pupils identified as having special educational needs have access to the full curriculum. The curricular needs of pupils with statements of educational needs are met satisfactorily. The choice of subjects for pupils in Year 10 and 11 has been extended to include a number of vocational subjects. This has made the curriculum more relevant to the needs of pupils aged 14 and over.

20. The teaching week is 25 hours for all pupils, which is in line with that of most secondary schools. With the exception of music, the time allocation in each subject area is adequate. Information and communication technology is now covered effectively in specialist lessons, but not well enough integrated across other subjects.
21. Pupils benefit from a broad and relevant curriculum between Years 7 and 9. Apart from music and drama, where the curriculum is unsatisfactory, what is offered is good, in science, art, history, personal, social and health education, including citizenship, and physical education. In all other areas of the curriculum, provision is satisfactory. Pupils are taught in a variety of different teaching bands and sets depending on the year group that they are in. This arrangement allows for support for pupils' individual needs. All pupils in Years 7, 8, and 9 take a modern foreign language. Pupils for whom English is additional language are enabled to study the same range of subjects as all other pupils and this supports their learning well.
22. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils continue with their studies in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education, religious education and a modern foreign language. To make the curriculum more relevant to the career aspirations of the pupils the choice of subjects available has been broadened. Pupils can now choose from a range of academic and vocational subjects. The majority of pupils continue studying a modern language unless they opt to follow a course in life skills available for a small group of pupils in Years 10 and 11.
23. There are a few areas of weakness in the planned curriculum within subject areas. The most widespread is the limited use of information and communication technology in most subjects across the curriculum. To some extent, this results from a lack of planning for the use of information and communication technology by individual departments. There is also a shortage of computers within subjects. Because of a failure to recruit a music specialist the governors have decided to abandon the teaching of music until an appropriate appointment is made. As a consequence, the performing arts are poorly represented in the school.
24. The range of activities available for pupils outside lessons is good. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities, including opportunities for study support, are good in most subjects.
25. The school supports careers and vocational guidance well. Pupils in Years 9 and 10 receive most of their guidance through the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils in Year 11 have discrete careers lessons, which are taught at specific times of the year. The school also uses the local careers service through which individual careers interviews for pupils are arranged. These arrangements work well.
26. Good work has been done to develop activities outside the curriculum for gifted and talented pupils. Many of these activities provide interesting and stimulating experiences for pupils, such as a summer school and local educational visits. However, work to support these pupils is unevenly developed across departments. Learning support assistants have a good knowledge of pupils' targets and in lessons work towards helping them achieve their goals. A good, comprehensive guidance programme covers

all the relevant aspects of this area of pupils' personal development such as sex and drug education and study skills.

27. Creative and innovative activities, involving industry, such as the project with Carlton TV, prepare pupils well for both post 16 choices and the world of work. Pupils in Year 10 have a well organised period of work experience. Good use is made of the community to support the work of the classroom. A range of speakers visits the school and involves pupils in community initiatives such as St Basil's Homeless Project. Very good links with industry enrich the careers programmes. Specialists from the community are used well to support this aspect of pupils' education.
28. The overall provision for the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Most subjects have a policy that identifies opportunities throughout the curriculum to meet this aspect of pupils' education. However, opportunities are often missed through a lack of specific planning to ensure this aspect is consistently addressed in all lessons.
29. The school supports the spiritual development of the pupils satisfactorily, particularly through school assemblies. Currently, religious education makes little contribution to this aspect of pupils' education. Some tutorial sessions have an element of reflection, but this is not consistent across the school. All religious festivals, which are celebrated by pupils are honoured by the school and an understanding of what they mean to pupils belonging to that faith is emphasised appropriately. A prayer room is available for Muslim pupils.
30. The school caters well for pupils' moral development. It actively encourages pupils to understand the impact of their actions on others. The theme of assemblies is often thought provoking. Many tutors explore and further develop these themes in tutor group discussions. This gives pupils the opportunity to share their views with their peer group. A recent discussion on asylum seekers, for example, changed the views of some Year 8 pupils. During the week of the inspection the Holocaust, and its effect on the lives of ordinary people, provoked lively debate. In a science lesson pupils considered the cost of producing organic food and its inaccessibility to those with a low income.
31. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of living in a community. Citizenship lessons make a significant contribution to this aspect of pupils' education. Pupils in Year 10, for example, organised a day of activities, such as football and cricket tournaments, for pupils from local primary schools. The school council is an elected body and is able to bring issues to the attention of the headteacher and governing body. Awareness of those less fortunate than themselves is promoted through the school's charity work. Recently, pupils in Years 10 and 11 have been working with St Basil' Homeless Charity.
32. What the school does to support the cultural development of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils recently took part in a young peoples' debate on the value of books as opposed to films. A Commonwealth Day helped pupils to gain an in-depth understanding of other countries. Through subjects such as history, religious education, art and geography, some good opportunities are given for pupils to study cultures different from their own. In citizenship lessons, for example, attitudes towards finance in different cultures are, explored by pupils in Year 8. Pupils benefit from visits in this country, but currently do not have the opportunity to travel overseas.
33. In the school as a whole, work within the special needs area makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social education. Staff set high standards of behaviour and encourage good relationships amongst pupils. The learning support base and the work

with the older pupils gives good attention to helping pupils develop appropriate social skills.

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

34. The very good relationships between staff and pupils make a significant contribution towards the quality of support that pupils receive.
35. The educational and personal support and guidance that pupils receive is good. Care is given to the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school. Year 7 tutor groups are located on the top floor and pupils are mainly taught in that area. This small community provides a secure base for pupils and helps them integrate into the larger school community with ease. Very good relationships are established between tutors and their groups. However, tutors change groups annually and this restricts the tutor's ability to build constructive working partnership with pupils over time. The use of tutorial time varies between groups from very good to less than satisfactory. Currently heads of year and some senior managers also act as form tutors and therefore are not in a position to monitor these sessions for consistency.
36. Under the Excellence in Cities initiative, pupils at the end of the academic year meet with a staff mentor to discuss progress and set targets for improvement. These arrangements work well. Pupils identified as either gifted or talented have benefited well from a stimulating range of enrichment activities such as a science club after school for Year 7 pupils, and specialist cricket coaching for all age groups. Assessment is used satisfactorily to adjust and adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of pupils. It is used well to help pupils come to understand how they are progressing with their work and what they need to do to improve.
37. Careers education prepares pupils well for making appropriate choices when deciding which subjects to study at GCSE, further education options or their involvement in the world of work. The personal, social and health education provided is of a high standard. Health service professionals are used well to teach specialist topics. They also run a popular babysitting course after school for boys in Year 10.
38. Though attendance levels are below average, the procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are generally satisfactory. The computerised attendance recording system provides accurate data and helps the school to monitor attendance effectively. The school gives rewards for high levels of attendance as well as for improved attendance. It has recently introduced weekly competitions between tutor groups. These measures have a positive impact on attendance but there are a number of pupils whose attendance is persistently unsatisfactory. Promising plans to implement a new system for recording attendance at every lesson are in place for September.
39. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils know and understand what constitutes acceptable behaviour. The merit system is valued by pupils. A range of strategies, such as daily reports and pastoral support plans, are in place to support pupils. The current system of recording incidents of unacceptable behaviour is unwieldy and makes it difficult for heads of year and senior management to have an overview of the frequency of these. The behaviour of some pupils is a cause for concern. Strategies for the early identification of these pupils, and support systems to ensure they remain in mainstream education, are not in place. The management of these pupils, though often effective, is reactive and time-consuming. There has not been effective use of specific funds, such as that available through Excellence in Cities, to provide for these pupils. The learning support base is developing the learning skills and self-discipline of 12 pupils in Year 8.



40. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. This is borne out by pupils who felt that if incidents occurred the procedures ensured they were effectively dealt with. The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are generally satisfactory. The arrangements for child protection are satisfactory, in that the nominated person has received training and all the appropriate procedures are in place. However, staff, have not received any training that raises their awareness of child protection issues. The day-to-day care of pupils, such as first aid arrangements, is good. Health and safety procedures are unsatisfactory, in that toilets are not cleaned appropriately and risk assessments have not been conducted. Additionally, the showering arrangements for physical education are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient systems in place to monitor and record the effectiveness of this area of the school's work.
41. Arrangements for the annual review of pupils with statements of special educational need are in place and provision is appropriately specified in the statements, though barely adequate. However, significant improvements have been made since the appointment of the current co-ordinator, with very good help from the learning support services. Pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly and shared appropriately with the pupils themselves and their parents. As a result, pupils know what they have to do to improve and parental help with learning is developing. Assessment is used well to inform the writing of these individual education plans and to help when setting individual targets. These plans give useful guidance on strategies to help pupils to meet individual targets. However, there are no systems in place to track attainment and progress over time, to identify underachieving pupils or to measure progress towards individual targets.

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

42. The parents' views of the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves are good. Twenty-eight parents attended the meeting prior to the inspection and 14 per cent of parents completed the questionnaire on parent's views.
43. The parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting felt their child was happy at school, was expected to work hard, and was making good progress. They feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have any concerns. The concerns they expressed were about the amount of homework that children received, the information they received about their child's progress, the ability of the school to work closely with its parents and the behaviour of some pupils.
44. Inspectors agreed with parents' positive comments. The team judged that the setting of homework was satisfactory and extended pupils' learning and the development of independent learning skills, but there were some inconsistencies in the way it is provided. The behaviour of some pupils does disrupt the learning of others and affects progress in some lessons.
45. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about the progress of their child, is good. Parents receive a clear termly progress review and an informative annual report. Annual reports ensure that parent see, what their children has studied, what they have learned and what they need to do to improve their work further. Targets set for pupils generally identify clearly how pupils can improve their standard of work. Appropriate letters are sent home to parents when concerns arise about such things as attendance or behaviour, as well as letters of congratulation when pupils have achieved well. The weekly newsletter keeps parents well informed about the daily life of the school and its achievements. Though, the governors annual report to parents does not

contain all the information required, overall, it is informative. The school prospectus is attractively presented and contains all the information required.

46. The contribution of parents to children's learning is satisfactory. Both the academic review and parents' consultation evenings are well supported. Interpreters are available at these evenings and at other times when required. A Friends of the School Association has recently been set up to encourage parents to become more involved with the school. However, there are a significant number of parents who do not ensure that their child attends school regularly. This reduces the effectiveness of the school in ensuring that these pupils achieve to the full extent of their capabilities.

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

47. What is most striking about this school is the positive impact the new headteacher is already having on the morale of staff. He has injected new life into the school and his influence already shows itself in the desire to succeed and excel. He has already set a clear course towards building a cohesive high-performing community of staff. He leads by example, particularly through his presence in the school as a respected figure of authority. As one student commented 'he seems to pop up everywhere'. His leadership is excellent and seen as such by the staff.
48. The headteacher is supported well by some able senior colleagues, who share his vision and work together as a team. There are weaknesses in the management of the school, which the headteacher has already begun to address. Roles and responsibilities of heads of faculty and leaders of subjects are not clearly enough defined to ensure that the work of departments is monitored well enough. The senior management team meets regularly and works efficiently from an agenda that focuses on essential needs.
49. The governors are beginning to organise themselves more effectively with the school in spelling out what needs to be done to raise standards of attainment further. They work through an appropriate range of well-managed committees. They have been more closely involved in the management of finance than in relating budgeting to planning and ensuring that specific funds are fully used for the allocated purposes. They have ensured that statutory requirements are met apart from those relating to the teaching of music to Years 7 to 9, the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and the requirement to report annually to parents on the school's policy for provision for pupils with special educational needs.
50. The school has benefited well through its involvement in the Excellence in Cities initiative. The work of the learning mentor has helped to focus on counselling pupils in order to encourage them in learning. Her case load is high and she is unable to meet all the needs identified by the school.
51. The headteacher, in collaboration with the governors, has begun to look in a more refined way at the school's needs and how to address them. However, difficulties in recruiting staff of the right calibre remain an abiding concern. Despite these difficulties the school is unwavering in its determination to provide all pupils with the best possible education and the attitudes they need in order to succeed.
52. The school's aims are clearly focused on the inclusion of all pupils to the full extent of their capabilities in all that it provides. These aims come to life particularly in the quality of relationships between the teachers and the pupils. The teachers know the pupils well

and know their foibles. The culture of mutual respect is a very distinctive feature of the school.

53. The local education authority supports the school well in comparing its performance with that of other schools and in measuring the progress pupils make in different subjects. The school's priorities are, satisfactorily supported by sound financial planning. There are some anomalies in the way different sources of funding are spent but these are being rectified. Best use has not been made of funds from the Excellence in Cities initiative to provide for pupils with behaviour difficulties. The high carry over in the budget is clearly targeted on an impending building programme.
54. The work of the school is, very well supported by a committed team of administrative staff. Daily routines are clearly established and maintained, particularly those relating to the care of pupils who are ill. The management of lunchtime is very efficient and senior managers work hard to create a calm environment in which pupils can relax.
55. The leadership and management of departments are good overall. Mathematics and history are very well led. Science, art and design, geography, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and physical education are well led. English is satisfactorily led and managed, but leadership and management are unsatisfactory in religious education and poor in design and technology. The vocational courses are satisfactorily led, with some weaknesses in the management of leisure and tourism.
56. The monitoring and support for teachers is satisfactory. Although senior managers have observed lessons and identified strengths and areas for improvement to good effect, leaders of subjects are just beginning to monitor teaching and learning effectively. There are clear plans afoot to remedy this. The system of appraisal and performance management works effectively to the advantage of teachers but it has been disrupted by the high turnover of staff in recent years. Many teachers work far beyond the call of duty in supporting and encouraging pupils. Teachers new to the school do not always get the right level of support needed to manage the pupils' behaviour.
57. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff, are committed to providing the best support they can to the pupils in their care. The learning support services from the local educational authority provide invaluable additional support to the co-ordinator and learning support staff. Though considerable progress has been made since this support began, documentation is out of date and the governors' report to parents does not meet the requirements of current legislation.
58. Although the staffing of many subjects is satisfactory or better, in some other specific areas there are major difficulties in recruiting specialist staff. This seriously affects the pupils' achievement. There is currently no head of department for religious education, drama or music. The prolonged absence of the head of department of design and technology, and the subsequent effect upon the teaching and learning in this area, is also a cause for concern. Because of the difficulty in recruitment there is no class teaching of music whatsoever and the teaching of, religious education, drama and design and technology is undertaken by supply teachers without the appropriate specialist qualifications. Consequently, curriculum development in these areas has not been possible and overall the requirements of the National Curriculum are not being met.

59. The staffing situation has been unstable for some time. Over the past four years there has been a very large turnover of staff, with approximately 70 per cent of staff having been appointed since 2000. Because of this instability in the staffing structure the senior management decided, a year ago, to introduce a new performance management programme. Good procedures are now in place, and well accepted by the staff. The school management sees the programme as a means of raising the quality of teaching and also as a structured way to meet teachers' professional and personal needs. Training opportunities are well advertised in the school and teachers are encouraged to apply where the training offered meets their needs, as identified in the performance review, the priorities of the school development plan or national requirements. Overall the school's provision for the professional development of staff and the induction of newly-qualified teachers is satisfactory. However, teachers new to the school do not always get the right level of support in the management of the students' behaviour.
60. Accommodation is at least satisfactory in all subjects apart from drama, where it is poor and geography where it is unsatisfactory. The use of display in corridors and central areas is limited. Some decoration and refurbishment is needed in most areas. The resource centre does not provide a stimulating environment for learning. The outside environment is pleasant and reasonably well cared for. Most of the internal cleaning is unsatisfactory, including the cleaning of the toilets.
61. Learning resources across the school are satisfactory overall. There is at present, a very poor learning resource area but there are clear plans for development for a new area in the autumn. In the meantime, with the exception of drama and geography, departments ensure that pupils have access to adequate materials and learning resources.

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

Raise levels of literacy by:

identifying and building on the good practice that already exists;

developing policies and practices that support pupils' use of language in all subjects, encouraging the use of subject-specific vocabulary and patterns of language;

teaching pupils correct spelling, punctuation and the use of grammatical conventions;

encouraging more discussion, exchange and justification of ideas;

building more systematically on pupils' informal language;

teaching pupils to listen and respond to one another's ideas;

encouraging reading by developing the learning resource centre as a more stimulating resource for learning.

(paragraphs 63, 67, 71-72, 108, 110 and 146)

Continue to address weaknesses in staffing in design and technology, performing arts and religious education in order to meet fully the National Curriculum requirements in all these subjects.

(paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 58-9, 63, 85, 102, 104, 138, 140, 145 and 148)

Take measures to address the unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality to lessons  
(paragraphs 10, 14 and 38)

Make greater use of information and communication technology to support learning across  
the curriculum

(paragraphs 18 - 20, 23, 79, 93, 100, 122, 129, 133 and 148)

Improve the use of assessment in planning the curriculum for pupils with special educational  
needs

(paragraphs 5, 17, 26, 41, 50-51, 57 and 120)

Other matters for the attention of the governors:

The learning resource centre does not provide a stimulating environment for learning.

(paragraphs 61 and 68)

Teachers new to the school are not always given enough support in the management of behaviour.

(paragraph 59)

There are some inconsistencies in the way homework is used to support learning.

(paragraphs 14, 44, 132-33 and 142)

The roles of some middle managers are not yet clearly defined.

(paragraphs 35, 55 and 59)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	118
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	65

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	23	36	38	6	5	0
Percentage	8	19	30	33	5	5	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

	Y7 – Y11
Pupils on the school's roll	
Number of pupils on the school's roll	460
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	238

	Y7 – Y11
Special educational needs	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	165

	No of pupils
English as an additional language	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	163

	No of pupils
Student mobility in the last school year	
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	38

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	8.3	School data	2.2
National comparative data	7.8	National comparative data	1.2

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 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	63	0	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	17	29	31
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	17	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	27 (26)	46 (40)	49 (37)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	6 (10)	19 (16)	10 (13)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	22	31	27
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	22	31	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	35 (22)	49 (40)	43 (34)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	8 (9)	21 (19)	16 (10)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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
	2002	62	0	62

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	17	57	63
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	17	57	63
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	27 (24)	92 (94)	100 (99)
	National	50 (48)	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 student	School	37.9 (33.5)
	National	39.8 (38.4)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
188	1	0
0	0	0
25	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
25	0	0
131	0	0
14	0	0
0	0	0
24	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
28	0	0
22	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)	27.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	286

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	68.3
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	27.6
Key Stage 4	18.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	1,372,422
Total expenditure	1,179,792
Expenditure per student	3,208
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,815
Balance carried forward to next year	192,630



### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	20.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15.9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

14%

Number of questionnaires sent out

460

Number of questionnaires returned

64

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	39	13	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	31	56	8	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	31	19	17	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	42	22	14	3
The teaching is good.	34	43	5	9	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	38	16	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	23	8	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	33	8	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	27	43	13	11	6
The school is well led and managed.	22	37	13	11	17
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	41	11	9	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	50	8	6	11

Other issues raised by parents

There were no other issues raised.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Overall, the quality of provision in English is satisfactory.

#### **Strengths**

- The very good relationships between pupils and teachers contribute significantly to pupils' learning.
- Teachers' inclusive approach to their work ensures that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs learn well in lessons.
- Teachers' commitment to continued professional development has increased their confidence and expertise in the classroom.

#### **Areas for development**

- Standards attained in the national tests at the end of Year 9 are not high enough.
- Pupils are not being taught to write for different purposes nor in a range of styles.
- Information on pupils' performance is not being used to monitor their progress over time to show how well they are achieving.

62. The proportion of pupils obtaining a grade in the A\*-C range in the 2002 English Language and English Literature examinations was well below the national average for boys. Achievement was satisfactory, however, when account is taken of their low prior attainment on entry to the school. In terms of the number of pupils obtaining a GCSE grade in the full A\*-G range, results in English Language were a little below the national average. There is evidence of an improving trend at GCSE with the 2002 English Language results being higher than those attained in 2001.
63. In 2002 the results attained in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were very low in relation to national averages and below average compared to similar schools. This was also the case in 2001. The results were not as good as those in mathematics and science because of the significant literacy problems faced by many of the pupils. There has been a steady decline in English standards in the national tests in recent years because of the subject's staffing difficulties and the turbulence caused by increasing numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school after the Year 7 starting date. Achievement is satisfactory when account is taken of these difficulties, and the pupils' low levels of attainment when they joined the school.
64. The standards of work seen over time, by the end of Year 9 and then by the end of Year 11, are well below average and reflect the standards attained in the national tests and examinations. Levels of achievement are also comparable to the progress made in those tests and examinations. Such standards and rates of progress apply also to the work of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Overall, the quality of the pupils' learning in the lessons seen during the course of the inspection is good because of the increasing expertise and confidence of the non-specialist teachers, the pupils' positive attitudes to their work and their good behaviour in class. This is further testimony to an improving trend, which was seen in the 2002 English Language GCSE examinations.
65. Pupils in Year 9 write well about the plot and the portrayal of characters in the books they read. This was seen in their work on the Shakespeare text where they linked the unfolding narrative to Macbeth's hopes and fears for the future. They showed insight into the relationship between him and Lady Macbeth and understood the extent of her

ruthless ambition. By the end of Year 11, pupils' extended critical writing on the set texts is of a good standard and they have well developed analytical skills. In one lesson seen they explained clearly how rhythm and rhyme affected the reader of Liz Lockhead's poetry and how she used imagery to dramatic effect. What pupils are not doing, however, is writing for different purposes in a range of styles. Although reading standards are below average by the end of Year 11, pupils with a very low level of competency at the start of Year 7, make significant improvements in reading as they progress through the school. Pupils with English as an additional language and with special educational needs become increasingly confident when reading aloud and vary tone and emphasis to convey meaning. Standards of speaking and listening are higher and close to national averages. However, there are many pupils who are not confident in their use of Standard English and few have sufficiently developed discussion skills to enable them to participate in whole-class debate. They are confident in smaller groups, however, where they readily exchange ideas and listen with interest to what others have to say. The one area for development in listening is to teach pupils how to infer meaning when it is not readily apparent.

66. Pupils learn well in lessons because of the quality of the teaching, which is never less than satisfactory and often good. Instances were seen of very good and outstanding practice. Overall, the standard of teaching seen in Years 7, 8 and 9 was satisfactory and that seen in Years 10 and 11 was good. Teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning because of the very good relationships the teachers have built with the pupils, and their inclusive approach to their work, which engages all groups. In a Year 11 lesson, for instance, pupils with English as an additional language used either formal language or colloquial English as the context demanded. This was because the lesson had been carefully planned and support effectively targeted to meet their needs. Another strength in the teaching is the commitment of the non-specialist team to its own professional development. The result is increasing competence resulting in significant learning gains for all pupils. Teachers develop resources well to support learning. They use homework effectively to extend or consolidate the learning undertaken in class. Marking is regular and supportive and clear guidance is given to pupils on how to improve the quality of their work.
67. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to participate in drama activities or to evaluate their own and others' contributions. Pupils are not always encouraged enough to use computers to raise the standard of work and to help them present it in a variety of ways. In the very good and outstanding teaching, questioning techniques are rigorous and the questions themselves intellectually demanding. However, such commendable practice is not consistently applied. There is also inconsistency in the approach to raising standards of literacy. Teachers provide frameworks to enable pupils to structure their writing and word lists, which are appropriate to the theme being studied and this strategy works well. However, opportunities are missed in some lessons to address pupils' language needs.
68. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory because of the commitment of the staff to ensuring that provision remains effective in the absence of a head of department. Teachers' ability to work well as a team has generated a sense of direction and common purpose and their mutually supportive approach to their work has created a positive learning environment for the pupils. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in improving the quality of teaching and improving standards at GCSE but the analysis and interpretation of data to monitor pupils' progress over time and to demonstrate the extent to which standards are rising remains underused. The learning resource centre is inadequate as a support for the department's work. The lack of a school library deprives pupils of the means to broaden and enrich their understanding of writing in all its forms.

69. The department is staffed by, non-specialists who are very capable teachers. Their commitment to the pupils and to their own professional development means that the capacity for improving the quality of provision is very good.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

70. Pupils enter the school with very poor literacy skills. Although standards overall remain below average by the end of Year 11, satisfactory progress is made in raising literacy standards because of the school's commitment to an inclusive approach in teaching. The proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is believed not to be English is high. The number of pupils with special educational needs is well above the national average. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of these groups and adapt their teaching to ensure that such pupils are able to benefit fully from the school's curriculum. There are many instances of such good practice being used effectively.

71. Much is done in modern foreign languages to improve standards of literacy by using frameworks to help pupils to write at length, by encouraging class discussion and by developing the range of pupils' vocabulary. Pupils are given good opportunities for discussion in history. For example, pupils in a Year 8 lesson on the English Civil War argued and debated at length when they had to match given statements to the various protagonists. They had to justify each match they made and their decisions were challenged by their fellow pupils as well as by the teacher. Some good attention is given to speaking and listening skills in mathematics when pupils have to explain mathematical concepts clearly and at length. Teachers in mathematics are particularly effective in giving language support to pupils who have English as an additional language. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud to the whole class in science and to develop their note-taking skills on specific topics. Most write up their practical activities largely unaided apart from side heading prompts. Pupils at all levels of attainment are given a good range of opportunities in geography to develop their reading skills and as a result their use of specialist vocabulary is good. In English, pupils are presented with increasingly difficult texts to read and they respond well to that challenge. Not all subjects, however, accord priority in their teaching to the raising of standards of literacy.

72. The school does not yet have a co-ordinated approach to the teaching of literacy across the curriculum. The services of the education authority's literacy co-ordinator have been used extensively to raise the profile of literacy teaching but the school needs to do far more.

### **DRAMA**

Overall, the quality of provision for drama is poor.

#### **Strengths**

- There are no significant strengths.

#### **Areas for development**

- Curriculum, staffing, accommodation and resources are all unsatisfactory.

73. Currently, drama is taught in Years 7 and 8 for one period a week by a temporary supply teacher who was appointed at the start of this term. The subject appears on the curriculum in place of a single period of music because the music teacher left at the end of the 2002 autumn term and could not be replaced. As a matter of expediency, the decision was taken to use the vacated period for drama teaching. Pupils, therefore,

have not been schooled in basic drama disciplines and the standards seen during the course of the inspection were very low indeed. No suitable resources have been made available and there is no specialist accommodation.

74. The teaching seen in Years 7 and 8 was satisfactory. Planning has taken account of the difficulties already described. Some little progress has been made over the first three weeks of the subject's existence in developing pupils' understanding of costume and set design in the theatre. The school is not meeting their needs in this subject, and is providing the pupils with a very negative experience overall.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Overall, the provision for mathematics is good.

### **Strengths**

- The management of the department is very good.
- Pupils are set high expectations, and have positive attitudes to their work.
- Pupils experience a majority of good or very good teaching, and teaching is never less than satisfactory.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The range of approaches to learning, especially the use of practical and discussion activities, limits students' progress in some lessons.

75. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average in 2002, but above average when compared with similar schools. Standards observed in lessons are closer to, but still below, the national average.
76. In 2002, the proportion of pupils in Year 11 gaining GCSE A\*-C grades was well below the national average. Standards seen in lessons are closer to, but still below, the national average. Compared with similar schools, pupils make good progress that has not yet been reflected in the school's results at GCSE. Results have improved year on year since 2000 at a faster rate than they have nationally.
77. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress as a result of effective support through the use of keywords and reinforcement of the accurate use of English. Pupils with special educational needs similarly make good progress. Low-attaining pupils are taught in small groups and these arrangements work well. Progress made by able pupils in the top sets is good and is supported well by the provision of lunchtime clubs. The department has made considerable advances in recent years in the drive to raise standards.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Despite a high proportion of non-specialists, teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils set themselves challenging targets for attainment. This results in good attitudes to the subject. Behaviour in lessons is good, and pupils are proud of their work. Pupils understand the need to work hard, and respond to the challenge set for them. In Years 7, 8 and 9, tasks are well matched to pupils' levels of attainment and they are provided with sufficient challenge to complete good work successfully. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 9 calculate mentally the square of numbers. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 8 identify and obtain the information to solve a problem, check their results, and record their findings using mathematical language. In Year 11, lower-attaining pupils continue number patterns involving doubling or squaring. Higher-attaining pupils have a good understanding of algebra, and factorise quadratic equations, understanding the basic principles involved.

79. The department has brought about consistency in teaching and learning, based on the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy. Every lesson has clear learning objectives, which are made explicit to pupils at the outset. Lessons begin with mental and oral starters, which ensure pupils develop good basic number skills. Lessons are usually rounded off by a plenary session that helps pupils to consolidate their understanding. Some good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning, including the use of an interactive whiteboard and graphical calculators. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology in every lesson. Progress is sometimes hindered by an over-reliance on board work and the limited use of practical activities and group discussion.
80. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department leads by example, setting high teaching standards and supporting teachers well in managing behaviour and raising expectations. Teaching and learning are monitored well through lesson observation, and non-specialists receive effective training to ensure they teach the full range of the curriculum. This has brought about an improvement in standards, despite a shortage of specialist staff.
81. The department has developed a good system of tracking pupils' progress, using assessment data collected termly. This has made it easier to enter pupils at the right level for GCSE examinations in Year 11, and to ensure that pupils in other years are correctly placed in attainment groups. Pupils are given clear feedback about their achievement and given challenging targets to help them achieve the desired grades. This commitment to including all pupils in all lessons to the full extent of their competence is a strong feature of the work of the department.

## **Numeracy**

82. Standards of numeracy across the school are satisfactory overall. Teachers in all curriculum areas have undertaken recent relevant training on numeracy in their subjects. This is reflected in some areas of the curriculum, as well as mathematics. Pupils have satisfactory basic number skills, particularly in handling data. They interpret statistical information in history and geography accurately, and exhibit a good range of number skills in science. Pupils show good progress from Year 7 to 11 in their application of number. By Year 10 they possess the necessary numeracy skills to support the science curriculum. Levels of accuracy increase as pupils mature. In some lessons, teachers have a limited understanding of pupils' skill in the use of number when planning their lessons. This is evident, for example in information and communication technology when pupils are required to use formulae.

## SCIENCE

Overall, the provision in science is good.

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good for Years 10 and 11 and good for Years 7 to 9; with lessons that are very well prepared and with a wide variety of teaching styles.
- The progress and attainment of the pupils compared to similar schools is good.
- The teachers demonstrate a real enthusiasm, dedication to their subject, and have a good knowledge of what they teach.
- Teachers and pupils work well together.
- The department is well led and managed and well organised.

### Areas for improvement

- There are not enough textbooks and reference books for use outside lessons.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning.
- Strategies for managing the disruptive behaviour of a minority of pupils are not yet effective.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

83. Pupils' attainment on joining the school is well below national standards. Although pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average, they were well above those for similar schools and better than those attained in mathematics and English. These test results show a steady rise in performance over recent years and at a faster rate than the national trend. However, the proportion of grades at the higher Level 6 or above is still very low. Teachers' assessment of progress is close to the actual final test results, although slightly optimistic for Level 6.
84. Work of pupils currently in Years 7 to 9 is average overall and at times good and reflects the rising standards revealed in the results of the national tests. Good teaching in these years has enabled pupils to make good gains in understanding in relation to their prior attainment. For example in Year 7, middle-attaining pupils understand well the principles of current flow and voltage values for parallel circuits. In a top Year 9 set, the principles of heat transfer were understood and some pupils discussed with the teacher the position of infra-red radiation in the electro-magnetic spectrum in relation to thermal radiation. This is a high level of attainment for this year.
85. Standards of work of pupils at the end of Year 11 are below the national average. However, apart from in 2002, the proportion of passes at A\*-C grades has risen dramatically since 1999. In 2002, most pupils entered for GCSE took double science certification. Their examination results were significantly below the national average and compared badly with other subjects in the school. This was a total reversal of the previous years when science results were amongst the best in the school. The fall in standards was caused partly by staffing difficulties but also by the decision to enter the pupils for a single certification at the end of Year 10, prior to completing the full course in Year 11. In single science results, the proportion of A\*-C grades was very close to the national average, but the average points score of each pupil was well below the national average. Overall, the level of performance was average compared to similar schools.
86. In lessons and work seen, the attainment of pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 is average. Year 11 pupils show a very good understanding of electron shell structure in atoms. In a Year 10 class, pupils showed confidence in using chemical formulae and equations to explain the thermal decomposition of carbonates. By the end of Year 11,



many pupils conduct scientific investigations with minimal help in the design and planning stage and perform the experiments safely and accurately. The coursework already assessed points to good progress since Year 9 and several candidates are likely to achieve at least a grade C at GCSE.

87. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. There is a significant proportion of very good and at times excellent teaching. The quality of teaching is reflected in pupils' learning. The teachers in the department have high expectations. They are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed to the aim of raising the attainment of the pupils. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and supported by very comprehensive schemes of work, fully meeting the examination requirements for each year group, and matched to the needs of the pupils. The teachers incorporate many techniques identified nationally as good practice. The start and ending of lessons are sharply organised, with the consequence that pupils settle down quickly to their work and finish the lesson in an orderly way. Only one lesson out of 15 seen was unsatisfactory. This was mainly the result of a slow pace to the lesson, poor attention and behaviour shown by a minority of pupils in the class and ineffective class control.
88. There is a good relationship between the pupils and staff in lessons. Most pupils behave very well and work hard in science. Pupils are keen to answer questions, to enter into class discussions and develop language skills. They work in a safe and enthusiastic manner when performing practical work. This was shown by a Year 10 chemistry lesson investigating exothermic reactions and in a lower-attaining Year 7 lesson on the structure of flowers. As a result they develop a good range of practical skills. Pupils in all years produce work that is complete and well presented.
89. As classes are taught in sets for science, the pace of lessons and lesson activities are adjusted according to the pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in science lessons. This is partly because of the valuable support provided in some lessons by additional teacher assistants, but also because of additional attention given to these pupils by the class teachers. As a result they progress well. Gifted pupils are also adequately supported and extended, by teachers asking searching questions. As a result all pupils improve their scientific knowledge and understanding, as well as motivation and self-confidence, and make appropriate progress. Homework is used well as a means of reinforcing learning.
90. A special feature of many lessons observed was the deliberate inclusion of activities designed to improve and contribute to the development of literacy and mathematical skills, both in written work and class discussions. Examples of the former relate to the many opportunities for independent writing, and pupils being asked to read out aloud both their own work and from texts. Basic mathematical skills were also encouraged in addition to the standard completion of tables of results and production of graphs, which many pupils could do with minimal help. Topics relating to the study of citizenship were promoted and taught well. An example for this was a debate in a Year 8 lesson relating to the advantages and disadvantages of growing organic foods. Social skills and the enhancement of self-esteem were also actively encouraged through group work.
91. The assessment of pupils' progress and attainment is good. Work is well marked by staff and includes clear suggestions for improvement. Pupils are aware of their progress from assessments made of end of topic tests and from targets, which are set. Teachers' mark books are used efficiently to measure the pupils' progress and to identify areas of weakness in pupils' learning.
92. The school has three laboratories, one is in need of refurbishment and the provision of isolation switches for the mains services. At the present time, because of inadequate

laboratory provision, some science teaching occurs in ordinary classrooms, limiting the quantity of practical work undertaken. The department is well supported by a technician with many years of experience in the school. The teachers have worked hard to provide a bright and stimulating environment to enhance the teaching and learning. This has been achieved through bright wall displays consisting of pupils' work, posters and word displays, which are regularly changed.

93. The department is well led. Planning for effective teaching and learning is a strength, despite the fact that the head of department, and other colleagues, also have major school management roles to fulfil. A very professional and dedicated approach by all staff involved has ensured that the department continues to be at the forefront of the school in its recent development. Although the department has an interactive white board, which is effectively used for teaching, the use of information and communication technology is still not widespread in science. Resources are only just adequate for practical work. There is also a scarcity of textbooks and other reference material.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- There is consistently good teaching, with the needs of the individual given a high priority.
- Teachers and pupils work well together and the pupils have good attitudes to their work.
- Planning caters for the full range of attainment and for the diverse cultural backgrounds of the pupils.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and achieve well.

### Areas for improvement

- Assessment is not used well enough to support learning, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning.

94. Standards are improving, with pupils achieving well and making good progress across the years. Although attainment is slightly below the national average at the end of Year 9, much is achieved given the low skills, and knowledge base in all aspects of art demonstrated by the pupils when they join the school. Overall standards in the GCSE examinations are slightly below the national average but higher than the majority of other subjects, with A\*-C grades higher than the national average for boys.
95. The strong emphasis on the acquisition of skills in drawing and painting in Year 7 is beginning to compensate well for the low entry level and is building on prior learning and the needs of individual pupils.
96. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and design build well on earlier learning through Years 7 to 9, as does their use of a wide range of media, including graded pencils, pastels and paints. Pupils work with increasing skill and imagination and gain in confidence as they move through the school. In Year 7, pupils quickly come to understand and discuss composition, expression and pose in relation to portraits. They have a good knowledge of a wide range of artists from different cultures. They use the works of these artists well as a starting point or reference for their own designs. For example in Year 9, their understanding of the works of Toulouse Lautrec is reflected in their graphic design project in the way they use colour and shape to draw people's attention to advertisements.

97. In Years 10 and 11, pupils build well upon their varied experiences gained in their course in Years 7 to 9. The majority achieve well and make good progress but a significant minority do not have the basic drawing and painting skills needed in the first year of their GCSE course. Pupils are beginning to adapt to working in a different way when producing GCSE coursework. In the main, they develop ideas and give reason for visual decisions made. Pupils use the work of a range of artists such as Picasso, Matisse and Cézanne well and compare sensitively the ways in which colour and shape are used for different effects in paintings. The study of other artists' work gives a good cultural dimension to pupils' work.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across the years. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, attitudes and achievement. The teachers are confident in their subject and are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils, including those pupils with learning difficulties, those from different cultural backgrounds and those with English as an additional language. Lessons are carefully planned to include and involve everyone. Questioning is used to good effect to encourage individuals to talk about projects and the work of other artists in relation to their own paintings. For example, as in their project on Cubism looking at how Cézanne and Picasso use colour. There is a good balance between whole group and individual help at all levels.
99. Attitudes and behaviour are good in all years. The occasional incidents of silly behaviour are dealt with in a firm and sensitive manner. Pupils enjoy their art, they work well together in groups and there is a good interaction with the teacher. Older pupils are beginning to show initiative and an ability to organise themselves.
100. The course for pupils in Years 7 to 9 now meets National Curriculum requirements and there is a balance between two- and three-dimensional work. All pupils have the opportunity to follow a GCSE course in art and design. Effective systems of assessment and recording are in place. However assessment information is not yet used well. The use of information and communication technology is not developed enough to support learning.
101. The department is well led and managed. The recently appointed head of art is well qualified and experienced with a wide range of expertise covering all aspects of art and design. Documentation is detailed, informative and well presented. Accommodation is well used but in need of some refurbishment and decoration. Good use of displays celebrates pupils' success.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory

### Strengths

- The pupils have a real enthusiasm for designing and making and are keen to learn.
- The good range of resources supports a wide variety of designing and making activities.

### Areas for improvement

- The staffing of the subject is unsatisfactory and this is having a detrimental affect on standards of attainment, which are too low.
- There is no effective assessment system to monitor the learning and progress of pupils or to inform planning.
- The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory.
- The subject is not meeting the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum,
- The quality of accommodation is poor. The management of resources and facilities, the storage for practical work and the quality of display are unsatisfactory.

102. The design and technology department has suffered from a continual turnover in staffing during the past few years. The only permanent member of staff, the head of department, had an accident shortly before the inspection and was therefore absent from the school. At the time of the inspection, two unqualified supply teachers covered almost all the teaching in the department. Although both have good practical and technical experience they have not received any formal teacher training.

103. The teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 show the number of pupils reaching the expected level or above to be slightly above the national average. In 2002, GCSE results at the end of Year 11 were below the national average for design and technology. However, they do compare favourably with the overall results of the school. The school's results in design and technology have been inconsistent over a number of years, partly as a result of the small entry numbers.

104. On entry to the school, the standards of attainment are below the national average although pupils join Year 7 with a reasonably broad range of experience in design and technology. The current standard of work observed in lessons is unsatisfactory. This is due to poor planning and the disruption to teaching and learning caused by the staffing problems. The pupils' previous experience is not taken into account when planning the work for Years 7 to 9 to ensure progression. As pupils move through these years they gain a satisfactory understanding of the design process. However, when they reach Year 9, there is a great variation in the quality of design work, from rough sketches to good quality work using computer graphics. Very few pupils' work from completed design drawings when they reach the making stage. This affects the quality and accuracy of their practical work. Opportunities to develop numeracy are missed. Pupils in Year 9 have a basic understanding of the use of hand tools and the properties of wood and metal. However, there are many instances when pupils use tools inappropriately to cut and shape material. Pupils work in wood and metal, but not in plastic; this limits their experience in both designing and making.

105. In the best examples of work, pupils undertake research using books and the Internet, explore a range of design ideas and use freehand graphical techniques to a good standard. For example, in Year 7, a few pupils demonstrated good graphical design skills using information and communication technology drawing techniques in the development of a design for a canned drink. Pupils had undertaken relevant research on the Internet and cut and pasted examples into their design folio. They produced

several good design concepts based on different letter shapes, logos and the use of colour.

106. Very few demanding projects are undertaken to extend the learning of technological knowledge and the practical capability of pupils. Projects in Years 7 to 9 include a stamping machine using mechanisms, a pinball game using pneumatics and a motorised racing car. However, these projects are at a simple level and opportunities are missed to develop learning to a higher technological level. For example, pupils could use computer-aided design to produce a template for the body-shape of the car and link the pinball game to an electronic scoring system.
107. In Years 10 and 11 pupils have been subjected to a number of course changes as a result of the turnover in staffing. For example, at the end of Year 10, pupils on a GCSE course in electronics had changed to a resistant materials course. These changes have had a serious impact on their learning and their ability to gain the results they deserve. Some pupils are actually confused about which course they are on and what they need to do to meet examination requirements. At the current rate of progress many pupils will not finish their coursework in time to meet the deadline completion date.
108. For the majority of GCSE pupils, design folios are not following the design process. Many are poorly organised and contain unwanted research and technical information. Poor literacy is a problem for a substantial number of pupils and has a detrimental impact on attainment. There are a few instances of good coursework projects being produced in Year 11 but even these pupils urgently need clear guidance and support to complete their work successfully.
109. For example, in the GCSE graphic products course, one student has produced a very good portfolio of work relating to kitchen design and disability. A high level of information and communication technology is evident and design capability is demonstrated throughout the work using research from the Internet. There is good presentation and evaluation of ideas leading to the realistic development of final concepts. In another instance, a student following the GCSE electronic products course has produced a very good design folio to develop a security device for a laptop computer. The folio demonstrates a good level of design thinking and very good use of information and communication technology to present ideas. Practical work includes designing and making circuits for electronic components and a mock-up of a laptop computer as a simulation.
110. Overall, teaching is unsatisfactory, with a little that is satisfactory. The supply teachers have a good technical knowledge but lack the expertise to plan and manage lessons effectively. They have not received the departmental support and information required to help them undertake their work. The subject does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Technological aspects are not sufficiently covered, for example in systems and control and computer-aided manufacture, and there is no teaching of food in the curriculum. In Years 10 and 11 there is no apparent planning or information available for GCSE courses. The supply teachers, and pupils, are unclear regarding the standards to be met. The use of assessment is unsatisfactory to monitor learning and progress. Although there are general school policies in the departmental handbook, there are no strategies in place for the promotion of numeracy and literacy or for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Most pupils are interested in design and technology and keen to design and make products. However, the current situation is causing them some frustration. This can result in poor behaviour.
111. In one lesson, a teacher with a good experience of designing used his own work as exemplar material to stimulate and interest pupils. This created a good learning focus to

the lesson and enabled pupils to see the design process in action and how different presentational techniques could be used with effect. Overall, the lessons observed were not well structured to meet the demands of the current work already under way. Teachers under-estimated the problems involved in managing practical activities and most lessons lacked the advance preparation of tools and materials. The pace of lessons was misjudged and time was not allowed to clear away at the end of a session. The large classes, sometimes of 30 pupils, created additional problems of group management and also raised health and safety concerns in work areas designed for 20 pupils. Apart from a few activities involving group work, projects are not planned to provide opportunities for pupils that develop their social, moral and cultural awareness through design and technology.

112. Leadership in the department is poor and there is not a clear vision for future development. Curriculum planning is poor and there is not a comprehensive strategy for the progressive development of learning skills and knowledge for designing and making. Overall, the range of resources is good and the department is quite well equipped with machinery, tools, kits for systems and control, basic electronics and computing. Computer-aided design facilities are good with appropriate software available on the network. The lack of suitable equipment to undertake computer-aided manufacture, limits the learning and experience of pupils. The stock of consumable materials and books is limited. However, all the work areas suffer from poor maintenance, management and organisation. The visual display in each of the teaching areas is poor and provides little stimulation to support teaching as a resource or to extend the learning of pupils. This situation has a detrimental impact on the quality of teaching and learning at all levels.

113. Risk assessments have not been carried out and there are several health and safety issues with the current condition of the workshops. The part-time technician requires training to use woodworking machinery. The storage of practical work is poor and is too often damaged or lost. This situation has a negative impact on the interest and motivation of pupils. The department has not improved since the last inspection. Standards are still unsatisfactory. The current condition and management of the department is not conducive to raising standards. The development plan for design and technology produced in 1998 included many of the issues for improvement raised in this report. However, none of these issues have been addressed by the department.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is satisfactory.

### Strengths

- The head of faculty provides clear direction to the work of the department.
- The revised schemes of work support are leading to significant improvements in teaching and learning.
- The relationships between pupils and teachers are good, leading to an improvement in standards.

### Areas for improvement

- There is not always enough variation in the use of teaching and learning strategies to raise achievement for all pupils.
- The variety of resources is limited.
- Assessment data and marking are not consistently used to develop pupils' targets for learning.
- There is a limited range of fieldwork to support the development of enquiry and decision-making skills.
- There are weaknesses in the monitoring of the work of the department

114. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are well below national averages. GCSE results for grades A\*-C in 2002 were very low compared with the national average. Overall, these results showed a decline over the last two years. Passes at A\*-G were well below average, nevertheless most pupils gained a pass. In the 2002 teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9, the percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 5 or above was well below the national average. Evidence from lessons shows that pupils achieve at a satisfactory level and are now attaining more in line with the attainment of similar schools

115. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are willing to take part in discussions, listen to each other and share ideas. The pupils benefit from the rigorous setting and banding. There is good lesson planning and the detailed schemes of work tailor resources to the needs of the pupils. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on Kenya, lower-attaining pupils used photos and worksheets to develop their understanding of the differences between wealth and poverty. The open-ended nature of this exercise enabled the more able pupils to work in pairs to extend their understanding of the issues involved. The atmosphere and behaviour in most lessons is generally positive, enabling most pupils to work effectively. However, some pupils find difficulty in maintaining their motivation to the end of the lesson. For example, in a Year 9 class working on development, the learning support assistant and the teacher had to move around the room continually, to work one-to-one with pupils. This is because of a shortage of a pool of challenging resources for pupils with individual learning needs. There is a lack of variety in the teaching methods used.

116. By the end of Year 11, teaching the pupils in sets based on previous attainment has a marked positive impact on learning. In many lessons, lower attaining pupils are given good individual support from the learning support staff and the teacher, which enables them to make sound progress. In a lesson on a local shopping centre, a group of more able Year 11 pupils, worked well independently with the help of the teacher. In a Year 10 lesson on coastal erosion lower-attaining pupils, working independently, calculated accurately the differences in rates of coastal erosion and deposition. They wrote about the social and economic impact on the area, using a good range of appropriate

language. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make the same rate of progress as that of their peers, though there is no specific planning for their needs.

117. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some good and very good teaching was seen. Teachers use a good variety of worksheets and texts to take account of the different needs of pupils. For example, in a Year 8 lesson about Japan, information and communication technology and readings vividly portrayed rural life, enabling pupils to brainstorm and write about the country in more detail. The pupils' work seen during the inspection, revealed inconsistencies in the quality of marking. When marking is at its best the comments are helpful and they aid learning. However, there were many missed opportunities to show pupils how to improve their work and to acknowledge what they do well. School systems for recording pupils' progress and monitoring work over time have been introduced but are not, as yet, fully implemented by the department. Homework is set and is appropriate to the work covered in the lesson. The department has planned initiatives to provide additional challenge for gifted or talented pupils, such as a visit to a local water plant. Fieldwork experience to develop the pupils' skills of enquiry is currently limited to a local shopping survey in Year 11, and a traffic survey in Year 7.

118. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of the humanities faculty presently manages the day-to-day running of the department because there is not a current head of geography. He is a good role model for the rest of the department and has worked hard to bring about change and to introduce various good initiatives. The department has been relocated recently which has resulted in the teaching staff being isolated from each other. The new geography room is in need of considerable reorganisation.

## HISTORY

Provision for history is very good.

### Strengths

- Pupils develop historical skills rapidly from Year 7 onwards.
- There are very positive relationships in the classroom that promote very good learning.
- Teaching is very good overall and sometimes excellent.
- There is a commendable emphasis on raising standards of literacy.
- Marking is very thorough and gives all pupils a clear idea on how to improve.
- The department is led and managed very well.

### Areas for improvement

- There are not enough resources to suit the needs of lower-attaining pupils.
- There are few opportunities to visit local sites of historical interest.
- Information and communication technology is underdeveloped as a learning resource.

119. In recent years, GCSE examination results in both the A\*-C and A\*-G range have been well below national averages but there has been an upward trend. The most recent results represent good progress in terms of pupils' prior attainment. In lessons seen and work analysed during the inspection, attainment levels are below national norms. Pupils join the school with very low levels of literacy and subject knowledge. Despite this, many pupils acquire historical skills rapidly from Year 7 onwards and, as a result, they make good progress. They develop, for example, an understanding of how to use historical sources and, by the end of Year 9 higher-attaining pupils write clearly and effectively using their historical knowledge and understanding. In this context, some detailed and varied writing was seen from Year 9 pupils on the effects of the Industrial



Revolution. Low levels of literacy have a negative effect on standards generally, and many pupils find difficulty in writing clearly and in depth. The department is making commendable efforts to address this issue through an emphasis on raising standards of literacy with such strategies as historical dictionaries and writing frames.

120. Teachers' assessments in Year 9 are an accurate reflection of pupils' attainment. In Years 10 and 11, history is a very popular option subject and pupils acquire a firmer grip on historical skills and develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject well. Standards are still below the national average, but pupils make good progress, particularly in the development of essay writing techniques, as was seen in some impressive essays from Year 11 pupils on the reforms of the 1906 Liberal government in Britain. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress and have ample opportunities to develop their learning skills in depth. Lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs and those pupils for whom, English is an additional language, are given good support by teachers but need a wider range of materials to suit their individual needs.
121. The quality of teaching is very good overall and sometimes excellent. Teachers have a very secure grasp of subject knowledge and use this very well to enthuse and motivate all pupils. The promotion of very good relationships within the classroom helps teachers and pupils to explore historical issues together very effectively. This was demonstrated to the full in an excellent Year 8 lesson, during which pupils showed commendable skill and commitment in discussing the reasons for Charles 1's quarrels with parliament in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Classroom management is strong and the teachers' very high expectations ensure that all pupils are included in classroom activities through targeted questions and through a thorough understanding of individual pupil's needs. Praise and encouragement are used to excellent effect and there is a creditable emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. There is a sense of enjoyment in the pursuit of knowledge in lessons with the result that pupils are always eager to learn more. Pupils show very keen attitudes towards their work and respect their teachers. Above all, there is a sense of shared purpose in lessons and this creates a very positive learning atmosphere. This was shown to very good effect in a Year 7 lesson, in which a class of lower-attaining pupils showed considerable determination in teasing out the different claims to the English throne in 1066.
122. The department is led and managed very well. The monitoring of pupils' performance is very thorough, using portfolios of evidence and self-assessment. Teachers mark pupils' work painstakingly to give them a very clear idea of the progress they are making and setting achievable targets for improvement. There are well-judged plans for future development and the subject makes a very strong contribution to citizenship and personal development. There are visits to historical sites but this good practice needs to be extended. Information and communication technology is used well to extend pupils' historical skills in Year 7 but there are fewer opportunities in other years.
123. Overall, this is a rapidly developing department with a very strong and dedicated teaching team. History is a very popular subject and is now a strength in the school. The key challenge now is to build on this progress in order to raise standards throughout the age range and ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths:

- The department is managed well.
- There have been significant improvements in provision since the appointment of the co-ordinator.
- The quality of teaching provided by a specialist and experienced team is good.
- The pupils respond well to their lessons.
- Resources have improved significantly.

### Areas for improvement:

- The monitoring role of the head of department is not yet fully developed.
- Overall standards are well below average, particularly for Years 7 to 9, though there are signs of improvement in lessons observed.
- The behaviour of a significant minority has a negative impact on standards of attainment in some classes.

124. In the 2002 teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 pupils reached standards that were well below the national averages. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, the percentage of pupils who attained A\*-C grades was well below the national average. There has been no clear improvement in standards for the last two years.

125. Since the appointment of the head of department for information and communication technology in September, significant improvements have been made. New computer rooms have been set up, new documentation and schemes of work have been produced and new courses begun. However, these have not had sufficient time to show the effect on standards. Nevertheless, in lessons seen, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

126. The attainment of pupils on entry is low. This year is the first time that all pupils are following appropriate schemes of work, tied into the National Curriculum for information and communication technology. In work seen in Year 9, skill levels have improved significantly, though standards are still below average. However, pupils develop good communication skills. They produce documents that combine text and graphics and communicate well with the intended audience. This work helps to develop literacy skills by its emphasis on communication through the written word. Pupils successfully communicate and model information using spreadsheets, and communicate the findings with bar charts, developing their numeracy skills effectively.

127. Older pupils follow GNVQ or GCSE courses. These pose a good challenge. By Year 11, pupils have a good understanding of key concepts and good knowledge of the subject. In their project work, they demonstrate a good working knowledge of a suitable range of industry-standard software. They know enough to compare competently the features of the software and to choose the right application for specific purposes. They produce a very good running commentary on their work, explaining well why they alter drafts. They analyse the problems they tackle well and generate good performance criteria to which they work closely. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

128. Teaching is good overall, an improvement since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The majority of teaching is good or better, with one excellent lesson observed. Teaching is at its best when conducted by the specialist and

experienced teachers who impart their knowledge well, through expert demonstrations, good use of technical language and effective support as they circulate to help pupils with tasks. Preparation and planning are good and lessons have a good pace. Lessons usually begin with the teacher sharing lesson objectives and end with a review that helps pupils to understand what progress they have made. This is good practice and gives pupils a better understanding of their own learning, in line with the recommendations of the new National Key Stage 3 Strategy. In better lessons, pupils have opportunities to talk about their work, developing their use of the technical language. Non-specialist teachers are well supported by good documentation, which ensures a degree of consistency, though they lack the skills and knowledge of the specialists. Homework is set regularly: it is relevant and contributes well to progress. Relationships are good in all years. Most pupils are keen to learn. They enjoy the practical nature of the subject and are well motivated. They are keen to take advantage of access to a computer room outside lessons. However, a significant minority of pupils in some classes have poor attitudes that affect their learning and that of other pupils.

129. Management of the department is good. Rapidly developing provision includes significant improvements in the number of computer systems and software, a school intranet site and appropriate documentation, and schemes of work to support teaching and learning. The department offers examination courses in information and communication technology for all its pupils in Years 10 and 11. Assessment systems are good for the GNVQ and GCSE courses. They involve pupils in self evaluation and are well used to inform teaching programmes. Assessment systems for younger pupils are satisfactory and developing rapidly. There are numerous planned opportunities to develop both literacy and numeracy skills. However, there are missed opportunities to enhance pupils' understanding of citizenship issues in information and communication technology, for example through research on the Internet. The head of department does not have the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching, which means that opportunities to recognise and share good practice are missed. Teaching and learning of information and communication technology are well supported by a full-time technician.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is good

### **Strengths**

- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject.
- The language taught is used to good effect in lessons.
- Classroom management is good.
- The pupils show a real interest in their work.
- Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet fully developed.
- Assessment is not always used well to support learning.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning.
- There are missed opportunities to develop independent learning, particularly through homework.

130. At the end of Year 11, standards are below national expectations. This is also the case at the end of Year 9, but to a lesser extent, as there has been a clear improvement here. The trend over recent years has been variable, generally improving but showing a dip in results last year.

131. Achievement, however, is good at the end of Year 9 and very good at the end of Year 11. This is directly related to the high proportion of good and very good teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teaching observed during the inspection ranged from unsatisfactory to excellent, with the vast majority of the lessons being good or better. Pupils learned best when the teacher's command of the foreign language was evident and the use made of that language was consistent. Where teachers shared clear objectives with the class, made constant reference to them during the lesson and used them as a means of recapitulation at the end, pupils were motivated and kept interested. Teachers also used brainstorming, modelling, brisk pace and variety to keep their learners inspired. The teachers know their pupils well, plan for good use of resources and provide a range of activities well matched to the learners' needs. Their love of their subject and enthusiasm comes over clearly and is infectious among the boys.
132. Pupils learn less well when the beginnings and endings of lessons are less crisp' the lesson does not involve the pupils, there is a lack of challenge, or English is used too much or inconsistently. Pupils generally respond well. They provide mutual support, enjoy learning and are keen to participate. There is still room for improvement in the sustained concentration of some pupils, their control of fidgeting, and their poor response to homework tasks. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at a comparable rate to other pupils. Pupils who have English as an additional language have some advantage if their first language is Urdu and they study that subject. Pupils who are used to learning other languages also benefit from this experience when the foreign language is used extensively in the classroom.
133. Very good staffing, good resources and adequate accommodation provide a good range of learning opportunities in the classroom. New coursebooks and support materials enhance achievement. A successful French club runs at lunchtimes and a cross-curricular trip to France is planned. Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning. Homework is not always used well to support independent learning.
134. Marking is clear and consistent across the department. There is a comprehensive analysis of results and guidance for the implications for classroom practice. All pupils have challenging targets and are aware of their current levels of attainment. Many understand how to progress to the next level or grade. There is now a regular system of assessment across all years.
135. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department knows his staff well. He sets an excellent example of classroom practice. There are clear plans for improvement, with priorities defined and costed appropriately. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet developed across the department. The teaching of Urdu is not fully integrated into the work of the department.
136. Improvement over recent years has been good. Schemes of work are being updated and reviewed, formalised assessment is developing well and new courses and teaching styles are helping standards to improve.

## **MUSIC**

137. No class teaching of music was taking place at the time of the inspection. The last qualified music teacher left at Easter 2002. Since that time there has only been a very short time of non-specialist teaching in Years 7 and 8. There are serious difficulties in recruiting qualified teachers of music and the local education authority supply agency has been unable to give any effective help. The school is fortunate to benefit from the

services of two visiting teachers of instruments from the local authority music service. The limited amount of teaching observed was clearly of a commendably high standard. The pupils have the benefit of specialist staff supported by very good quality instruments. However, there has been considerable instability in the teaching of brass instruments. The present, very able and competent, teacher is the fourth teacher of brass instruments within this current school year. The pupils are, not unnaturally, somewhat perplexed by the rapid change of teacher. The standards of teaching are good. Despite the circumstances, the pupils show considerable enthusiasm for learning and their progress is very satisfactory.

138. There is a clear commitment on the part of the new headteacher to develop music in the school. The doubling of the available time for brass teaching, and hence the supply of instruments, is very welcome. At the time of the inspection there was a national advertisement for a new music teacher. There are also plans for specific purpose-built accommodation for music and the performing arts within the proposed new building. However, until there is a satisfactory outcome to the current staffing problem, statutory requirements are not being met.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- All pupils follow a GCSE course and many do better in physical education than they do in other subjects.
- There is a good range of activities in lessons, at lunchtime and after school.
- Many pupils are keen and enthusiastic in participating in physical activity.
- Teaching is good and is helping the development of pupils' literacy skills.
- The head of department has a very clear view of what needs to be done to improve.

### Areas for improvement

- The standard of work in Years 8 and 9 is not high enough.
- In recent years unqualified, newly-qualified or temporary staff have done too much of the teaching. This has slowed down further improvement in standards of attainment.
- Outdoor facilities are poor and cannot be used in the winter months.

139. The department has, until recently, experienced difficulties as a result of frequent changes of staff. This has affected standards. Despite these difficulties pupils performed well in their GCSE examinations in 2002. There is a full range of activities both inside and outside lessons. The poor state of the field and the hard play area is restricting the opportunities that pupils have to play outdoor games.

140. Attainment at the end of Year 9 was well below the national average in 2002. The work seen in the current Year 9 is also below what is expected. Standards in Year 7 are higher than those in Year 8 and are at least in line with, or better than, what is expected for their age. This is particularly evident in gymnastics. Most boys in Year 7 combine movements into a sequence with a good level of control. They also think about their work and the work of other pupils and suggest what is good and what could be improved. This is because some teachers are particularly good at teaching these skills. Boys in Year 8 and 9 have been most affected by the staffing problems. The standard of performance in basketball is close to what is expected and many reach a good standard by the end of Year 9, representing the school in local competitions.

141. GCSE results in 2002 were below the national average but were a great improvement on those in 2001. All pupils follow a GCSE course in physical education, which is very unusual but the arrangement works very well. The results were much better than might be expected and better than results in other subjects that involve a large proportion of the pupils. The results are some of the best in the school. Only one lesson was seen in Year 10 and none in Year 11 because of the way the timetable is organised. The standard of work seen during the inspection is in line with these results and shows good achievement by pupils.
142. Teaching overall is good and because of this pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen and willing to learn. Teachers are concentrating on re-establishing expectations, particularly of behaviour. They are doing this effectively. In the best lessons there is good lesson planning, based on a full understanding of the needs of the group. Humour is used well to encourage pupils whilst at the same time making expectations clear. In nearly all lessons teachers refer to the importance of exercise and teach pupils how to warm up and cool down. Whilst doing this, they extend pupils' understanding of simple anatomy and physiology. In most lessons, teachers make skilful assessments of pupils' work in order to identify how they might best help them improve. Teachers regularly share the aims of the lesson with pupils. However these aims are not always sufficiently focused on what pupils are intended to learn. Consequently, assessment of learning at the end of the lesson is difficult. Homework is in lesson plans but when it is set it is not written down so parents do not know how they can help.
143. In two lessons there was an excellent example of how literacy skills can be developed. The teacher simply insisted that every response be in a full sentence rather than a one-word answer. The responses from pupils were good and nearly all spoke clearly and confidently. Pupils in Year 7 and 8 were much better at listening to each other than those in Year 9. Some pupils in Year 9 are less motivated and are content to accept a low standard of work. In most lessons, relationships between pupils and their teachers, and between pupils are good. Because of this they make very good use of the time in lessons to develop and practise their skills. Teachers know the pupils who have special educational needs and those who do not have English as their home language. They ensure that they are supported but this is often not necessary because other boys are very helpful in this respect.
144. The department offers a good variety of activities in lessons and in after-school activities. There is a good range of games offered but the over-emphasis on games is at the expense of gymnastics. This limits the standards that pupils can reach. The small team of staff makes every effort to ensure that the more able sportsmen have opportunities to compete at the highest levels. There are few links with partner primary schools. Plans are in hand to improve this situation through the local sports college and through the sports strategy within Excellence in Cities. Pupils have many opportunities to work in groups and teams and to play according to the rules of a game or activity. There are also some missed opportunities with little time given to appreciating the skills and talents of others. Although praise was often used there was no evidence of other more tangible rewards. It was quite moving, for instance, to see one boy teaching his partner to go into a forward roll from a headstand. This went unnoticed. The department takes account of community perceptions of sport and is keen to reflect that diversity in what it offers. Hence, teachers are very disappointed that they cannot teach hockey and football.
145. The newly appointed head of department knows what needs to be done to return to the high standards of a few years ago. In the four weeks since the start of the term much has been done to minimise the disruption caused by the staffing difficulties of the last 18 months. He has a vision for the subject and is undeterred by the unsatisfactory outdoor

accommodation. Whilst indoor accommodation is adequate at present, if the school continues to expand there will not be enough indoor space to provide the planned curriculum. The changing rooms are far too small and the showers have been declared a health risk and closed down. The department has a development plan but it is not sufficiently focused on key priorities such as raising standards and improving teaching and learning.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is unsatisfactory.

### Strengths

- The subject makes a strong contribution to multi-faith understanding.
- Classroom resources are rich and varied.
- There are clear strategies to rectify current weaknesses.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards are well below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject in depth.
- Some pupils are inattentive and lack respect for one another and for the teachers.
- The considerable turbulence in staffing recently has had a negative effect on standards.
- There are no opportunities for enrichment activities for pupils in or out of school.

146. There have been no entries for public examinations in recent years, except in 2001 when results in the A\*-C range were well below average in the GCSE short course, but in line with national averages for the A\*-G range. In lessons seen, and work analysed during the current inspection, standards are well below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus in all years. Major contributory factors are the very low levels of literacy and subject knowledge of most pupils on entry to the school. During Years 7 and 8, some pupils acquire an adequate knowledge of Christian beliefs and those of other world religions, such as Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. However, most pupils lack awareness of the impact of religion on contemporary society. They have few opportunities to reflect on spiritual and moral issues in the light of their own feelings and beliefs. Much of their written work at this stage is poor and lacking in detail. In Years 10 and 11, higher-attaining pupils show some understanding of spiritual and moral concepts, such as the notion of a just war. Other pupils, however, have insufficient understanding of these issues and their written work lacks depth and insight. In all year groups, the low standard of written work shows evidence of a discontinuity in teaching over time.

147. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but there are elements of unsatisfactory practice. In some lessons, where teaching is stronger, pupils know precisely what to do and lessons are conducted with clear aims and objectives. In other lessons, however, unruly behaviour and increasing levels of inattention hamper progress. Failure to deal with this adequately, detracts significantly from the quality of teaching in these lessons. There is also an overdependence on textbooks and worksheets with tasks that are not fully matched to pupils' learning needs. Very little progress is made in these circumstances. In the better lessons, pupils are motivated and keen to learn. They make positive responses to teachers' questions and take a full part in class discussions. This happened, for example, in a Year 7 lesson, during which pupils showed

considerable interest and curiosity in Hindu customs and beliefs. In other lessons, however, they became restless and showed little interest in classroom activities.

148. There has been considerable turbulence in staffing in recent years and this has had a negative effect on the leadership and management of the subject. This vital issue is currently being addressed urgently. A suitable development plan is now in place to rectify this situation. There are adequate schemes of work but no subject handbook to provide details of how the subject contributes to whole school issues, such as literacy, numeracy and citizenship. Marking in exercise books is cursory with few comments to help pupils develop their knowledge and understanding. There are currently no enrichment activities, such as visits to local religious sites. Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning. Classroom resources, however, are plentiful and the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly in relation to the development of awareness of multi-faith issues

## **CITIZENSHIP**

Provision for citizenship is satisfactory.

### **Strengths:**

- The subject is well managed.
- Pupils are encouraged to become active participants in lessons.
- There is a very wide range of extra-curricular and community activities.
- There is a strong emphasis on literacy and group work skills in lessons.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Not all subjects make a good enough contribution to promoting citizenship.

149. Standards of work in lessons, and other work seen are below average. However, pupils are making satisfactory progress. Pupils show a good understanding of different aspects of society and social issues. This was demonstrated well in a lesson with 12 year-olds, discussing bullying, in which pupils reflected on types of bullying, and strategies to deal with bullying. This was enhanced by the production of a poster using computers, demonstrating their skills of communication. Throughout the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to participate in school activities and take action within the local community. Moral issues were effectively debated where 16 year-olds discussed alcohol abuse and the problems of under-age drinking. These pupils were eager to participate in debate and discussion. They showed mature attitudes and responses, developing their speaking and listening skills through active debate. A group of older pupils follow a structured citizenship course. The school has identified these pupils as having particular needs and a carefully structured programme helps to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem and provides appropriate accreditation. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and participation rates are high throughout the school. Additional speakers are brought in, for example to talk about personal finance, health and safety, baby-sitting, the law, the homeless and stress management. Pupils are also involved in charity work and take part in activities within the local community, such as music concerts and sports matches. A school council has recently been formed and meets three times a year. This provides a good forum for the exercise of responsibility for the affairs of the school.

150. In other subjects, there is insufficient emphasis on group work and participation in lessons to promote the development of social skills. Where this does occur, pupils



respond positively, as in a science lesson in Year 7, discussing organic food and how its production relates to our responsibility for the environment.

151. The provision for citizenship is managed well. A thorough review of the personal, social and health education schemes of work has been carried out in order to incorporate the new citizenship elements of the National Curriculum. These two areas have been combined effectively into a citizenship course, followed by all pupils. Detailed documentation and schemes of work, well supported by a good range of books and resources, have resulted in appropriate, well-structured teaching programmes, including a short GCSE course for older pupils. However, there has not been enough cross-linking of the citizenship elements with other subjects. Departments have not given significant thought to their potential contribution to citizenship.

152. Overall, citizenship is beginning to make an important contribution to the school curriculum and there is a commendable emphasis on the development of literacy skills.

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

Overall, the quality of provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory.

#### **Strengths**

- The support teachers have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils involved.
- The assessment of pupils and the understanding of their needs are good.
- There is a good range of resources to support learning.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- There are not enough staff to meet the needs of the pupils fully.
- Good practice is not shared enough.
- Documentation needs to be clearer to ensure consistency of practice.

153. The standards attained by those pupils who have English as an additional language are in line with all other pupils in the school, there is no difference in either their attainment or progress. This is as a result of the good in-class support they receive from the specialist teacher, and in part due to the more general support offered by subject teachers. The best examples of this positive support include clear planning, careful explanations of terms and encouraging pupils to help each other.

154. Progress is less positive when there is no specific planning or support identified, where teachers have not developed effective strategies for ensuring that everyone has understood and where the classroom teacher is simply not aware of the pupils' needs. It is this lack of consistency across departments, which will need to be addressed in the future.

155. In-class support and withdrawal lessons for pupils at an early stage of English learning, prove effective, but the fact that there is only one specialist support teacher has a detrimental effect on the rate of improvement in this area.

156. Communication with families is satisfactory. There is access to translated letters home where necessary and families are involved in the initial assessment and interview process. However, there is, as yet, no formal profile of families and languages; this analysis is done on an informal, personal basis. Analysis of attainment by ethnicity is also underdeveloped, although the support teacher is aware of, and is planning for more development to take place here. The governors' involvement in the work of the support teacher is good.

157. The assessment of pupils and of their needs is also good. There are clear testing strategies, helpful books and materials, and established ways of making progress through the levels of attainment. However, there is a need for these systems to be formalised and for further documentation to support pupils and their English language acquisition. Nevertheless, progress has been good overall