

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHEDRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Wakefield

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108296

Headteacher: Mr Simon Flowers

Reporting inspector: Alan Haigh
2630

Dates of inspection: 10th – 14th February 2003

Inspection number: 249133

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Thornes Road Wakefield
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Canon Richard Capper
Date of previous inspection:	24 th – 28 th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2630	Alan Haigh	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? Results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13448	Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30576	Peter Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
3758	Anthony Barringer	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
2491	Doug Beaumont	Team inspector	Design and technology	
10275	John Cosgrove	Team inspector	Religious education	
2628	Jim Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship	How well does the school care for its pupils?
8873	Charlotte Evers	Team inspector	History Equal opportunities	
12470	Brian Greasley	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	
17868	Eileen Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art	
20767	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music	
24887	Yvonne Salmons	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
3937	John Seed	Team inspector	Science	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Cathedral High School is an average sized 11 – 16 mixed, voluntary controlled Church of England comprehensive school, currently educating 980 pupils. It opened in 1993 and is growing steadily. About a quarter of all pupils are eligible for free school meals, an above average proportion. The socio-economic circumstances of the area the school serves are well below average. The proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is above average. More than nine out of ten pupils are from white United Kingdom heritage families and about one in 14 pupils is of Pakistani origin. The proportions of pupils identified as having special educational needs and those with statements of special educational needs are about average although many more have such needs. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below average, especially in terms of pupils' literacy skills. Because the school has spare places, it receives a regular flow of pupils during term time (about 60 pupils per year). Some of these are from other schools, often after being excluded, and others are asylum seekers. The school is in the category of those 'facing challenging circumstances'.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is improving quickly following the appointment of a new headteacher in April 2002. Standards are below average but pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve appropriately, responding well to the good teaching. Older pupils underachieve, largely linked to poor attendance; the teaching in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Leaderships and management are very good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in art, music and religious education, attaining standards higher than would be expected and results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were better than expected in art, drama, history, physical education and religious education, being close to the national average in most of these.
- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and well-planned and managed lessons ensure most pupils learn well and achieve standards appropriate to their ability. Many teachers manage difficult pupils very well.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and try hard to do well, showing a keen interest in their work.
- The school cares for its pupils and puts much effort into ensuring their safety and well-being. The learning inclusion unit is very effective. Provision for personal and social education including citizenship is good.
- Extra-curricular provision is good, with particular strengths in dance and music. The school makes good provision for its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The educational direction of the school is excellent. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership, with close monitoring of teaching and a particularly clear sense of purpose shared by staff.
- The accommodation is excellent, well respected and maintained and is used effectively to promote learning, particularly in dance, modern foreign languages and music.

What could be improved

- The GCSE results are too low and pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not achieve highly enough because standards of literacy are too low, much work lacks challenge, attendance and punctuality are poor, and marking is not good enough.
- Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in several subjects, especially in Years 10 and 11. The management of their needs is poor but the work of the learning support assistants is good.
- The gifted and talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress. They are not identified clearly or challenged sufficiently.
- Many parents have a negative view of the school and despite the school's genuine efforts to involve them, links are still unsatisfactory.

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

The inspectors judge the school to be underachieving.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has not made sufficient progress since the last inspection, which was in February 1997. Many significant improvements have been made, however, since the new headteacher was appointed in April 2002. Standards in external examinations are still too low and remain well below average. Pupils' attainment has not improved sufficiently although the systems in place to monitor and improve teaching and raise examination results, introduced since the new headteacher arrived, are very good. Staff absences and difficulties in finding suitable replacements are holding standards down. There have been significant improvements in teaching but there is still too much that is not good enough. The systems of assessment are now good with close monitoring of pupils' standards. Marking of pupils' work is not satisfactory. The school's provision for information and communication technology now meets statutory requirements. The school improvement plan is costed and financial planning is strong, again reflecting recent changes and the appointment of a business manager.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The results in the national tests taken by 14 year olds in summer 2002 in English, mathematics and science were well below national averages for boys and for girls. When compared with similar schools, defined as those with the same proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, they were below average in English, mathematics and science. Boys have performed relatively a little better than girls in these tests in recent years as their results have been closer to boys' national results than girls have been to their national results. The

results at this stage have remained virtually static for three years whereas the national results are moving upwards. The 'value added' measures for the 2002 group of 14 year olds show that they made slower progress than expected in the past three years.

The GCSE results, based on the average total GCSE points score per pupil, were well below the national figures in 2002. They were below those in similar schools. There has been no recent trend in the average points score whereas the national trend has been upwards although the average points score has fallen for the past two years from its peak in 2000. The longer-term trend in the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes with grades A* to C, over eight years, has been clearly upwards. The GCSE A* to C results just missed the school's target in 2002. The 'value added' measures for the 2002 group of 16 year olds show that they made much slower progress than expected in the past two years.

The strongest GCSE subjects in recent years have been drama, music, physical education and religious education. Results in science have been consistently poor and those in design and technology and modern foreign languages have not been good enough.

Standards in work seen are below average at all stages except in art and religious education where they are average and music where they are average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11. Pupils achieve appropriately in Years 7 to 9 but not well enough in Years 10 and 11. Much of the underachievement links closely to poor attendance. Pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Those at the early stage of acquiring English receive too little support and make insufficient progress although the pupils who have English as an additional language did better than other pupils in the 2002 GCSE examinations. Pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy are below average. Their standards of use of information and communication technology across the curriculum are also below average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are satisfactory and many pupils show a keen interest in after-school activities. The vast majority work hard but a significant minority, often older pupils, have unsatisfactory attitudes, hindering their and others' progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is satisfactory overall but varies from good or better in most lessons to unsatisfactory and occasionally poor. It is largely satisfactory around school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils get on well together and, in the main, get on well with their teachers. There is clear racial harmony in school. Most pupils co-operate very well in lessons. A minority of pupils, mainly boys, behave immaturely, and have too little realisation of the impact of their actions on others in and out of lessons.
Attendance	Despite the school's strenuous efforts, this still remains poor. Unauthorised absence is well above average. Punctuality at the start of school is poor.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11; it ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. One in five lessons was excellent or very good and three in five were good or better. One in eleven lessons was unsatisfactory. The teaching of English is good at all stages. That in mathematics is good for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, and science teaching is satisfactory throughout. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan lessons well and manage pupils tactfully. Marking is not good enough and too little homework is set in several subjects. Most teachers successfully ensure that the pupils know how they are getting on. Literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily. The school is not successful in providing for pupils with special educational needs. Records of progress for these pupils are poor, the policy is out of date and the work is not co-ordinated. The school does not identify gifted and talented pupils. Learning is good overall, being a little better with pupils in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Younger pupils especially show a keen interest in their work and concentrate well. Pupils respond positively to the good classroom management of the vast majority of teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	These are satisfactory overall. Careers education is good and the school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities. The requirement that all pupils attend a daily act of collective worship is not met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is poor; the policy is out of date and the work is not co-ordinated. There are too few individual education plans; those available are mostly used appropriately. Learning support assistants provide good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils did well in the GCSE examinations in 2002. There is too little support for those at an early stage of acquiring English. The available support is well organised and managed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	All aspects of this are good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is enhanced by the chaplaincy work. The discipline for learning approach supports moral development well. There are many activities successfully fostering pupils' social development and much of the school's work ensures good cultural provision.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for child protection are very good and the school is good at ensuring pupils' welfare needs are met. There is close monitoring of pupils' academic progress and procedures for improving attendance and behaviour are good. The provision for personal and social education, and citizenship, is good.

The school tries hard to work with parents but meets with too little success. Communications are of good quality but parental response is disappointing.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership provided by the new headteacher is excellent. He has a clear grasp of what is needed to raise standards and improve the quality of education. Senior staff contribute well to the very good leadership and management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide good support for the school and have a sound grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that all the statutory requirements are met with the exception of those relating to collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is now very good. Teaching is monitored rigorously and appropriate action and support result from this. Examination data is analysed providing a wealth of good quality information that is largely used effectively.
The strategic use of resources	The available finances are used appropriately. Financial difficulties, resulting in a large deficit, have arisen from poor controls in recent years but this is being addressed well. The principles of best value are now applied satisfactorily.

The accommodation is excellent, well respected and used effectively. The resources for learning are adequate. The library is poorly stocked and used. Staffing is adequate but suffers from absences.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost nine in ten parents replying feel the school expects pupils to work hard. • More than eight in ten are comfortable in approaching the school with a question or problem. • Eight in ten think their children are making good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than four in ten of those replying feel that the school does not work closely enough with them. • Four in ten do not think behaviour is good. • Nearly four in ten say they are not well enough informed of their child's progress. • One in three thinks too little homework is set. • A quarter considers the school not successful enough in helping their child become mature and responsible.

The response to the parental questionnaire, at six per cent, was very low. The inspectors agree that the school is friendly and approachable but feel that expectations could be higher for many pupils. Pupils' progress is largely satisfactory. The school tries very hard to work

closely with parents, producing some high quality publications with good information being provided on all pupils' progress. Behaviour is satisfactory. Too little homework is set. The school tries hard to help pupils become mature and the new course in citizenship has started well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Pupils' standards of attainment on arrival at the school are well below average and their levels of literacy are low. Based on the latest national data for 14 and 16 year olds the rate of progress has been too slow in recent years, and results in national tests and examinations have remained well below average. The standard of work observed was overall below that seen in most schools. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 now achieve appropriately in the main but those in Years 10 and 11 underachieve, largely because of poor attendance.

2 The results in the national tests taken by 14 year olds in summer 2002 in English, mathematics and science were well below national averages for boys and for girls. When compared with similar schools, defined as those with the same proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, they were below average in all three of these subjects. Boys have performed relatively a little better than girls in these tests in recent years as their results have been closer to boys' national results than girls' have been to their national results.

3 The results of Year 9 pupils in the national tests in English, mathematics and science have remained virtually static for three years whereas the national results are moving upwards. The 'value added' measures for the 2002 group of 14 year olds show that they made slower progress and achieved less than expected in the past three years.

4 The teachers also assess pupils' attainments at age 14 in these subjects. In 2002 their assessments indicated that pupils' standards in English were much higher than test results revealed but still below the national average. The tests were re-marked and many pupils' results were upgraded. The teachers' assessments in mathematics indicated standards a little higher than the test results but still below average. The science assessments showed standards as well below the national average and also below the test results. Pupils achieved far more highly in the tests than their science teachers had predicted.

5 Teachers also assess pupils in their other subjects at age 14. Their assessments indicated pupils' standards as above the national average in art and music and in line with those expected in religious education. They were well below the national average in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology and physical education.

6 The longer-term trend in the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes with grades A* to C has been clearly upwards. The GCSE results, based on the average total GCSE points score per pupil, were at 28.5 points, well below the national figure of 39.8 in 2002. They were below those in similar schools. There has been no recent trend in the average points score whereas the national trend has been upwards, although the average points score in the school has fallen for the past two years from its peak of 32.2 in 2000. Apart from poor rates of attendance by pupils, the rate of staff absences has been high; this has also been a significant factor contributing to low standards.

7 In 2002, 27.9 per cent of pupils achieved five or more GCSE A* to C results, below the school's target of 30 per cent. The target of 99 per cent pupils achieving one or more GCSE passes with grade G or better was not realised as only 94 per cent met this. The 'value added' measures for the 2002 group of 16 year olds show that they made much slower progress than expected in the past two years.

8 The strongest GCSE subjects in recent years have been drama, music, physical education and religious education. Pupils have achieved better results in these subjects than in most of their other subjects. Boys did well in mathematics in 2002. History was also a strong subject in 2002 but the physical education results have been declining and were a little below average. Pupils' results in English, science, design and technology and modern foreign languages were poorer than in most of their other subjects. Science results have been consistently poor for some years.

9 Standards in work seen are below the national average in all years, generally reflecting the expectations based on attainment at entry but also illustrating the impact of poor attendance. There are, however, some exceptions to this. Standards in art are in line with national averages throughout. Pupils' three-dimensional work is a strength. Standards in music are average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11. Performance skills are a strength here. The standards in religious education are average in all years and pupils are good at discussing and debating moral issues. They express opinions well and respect the views of others.

10 Pupils' work in English is below average in all years. None the less, pupils are good at answering questions, joining in discussions and making extended statements. They do not structure their writing well enough or express ideas with sufficient clarity. Standards observed in mathematics are below average in Years 7 to 9 and well below in Years 10 and 11. The younger pupils have a good facility with mental calculations. The older pupils' investigative work is of a poor standard. There is a similar pattern for standards in science to that in mathematics although science coursework is a strength of the older pupils.

11 Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in several subjects, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Their progress is unsatisfactory in all years in information and communication technology and physical education and additionally in Years 10 and 11 in mathematics, science and design and technology. The provision for them is not good enough: policy is out of date and two thirds of the pupils on the register do not have the required individual education plan. The support provided for these pupils by the special educational needs faculty is not sufficiently focused on their specific needs. The progress that pupils with special educational needs make in lessons is generally satisfactory but suffers as pupils are often absent and do not respond sufficiently positively to the support provided. The learning support assistants work well in class with individuals and small groups and on these occasions the pupils progress soundly.

12 The gifted and talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress in the main; they are not clearly identified and in many classes the most able are not extended sufficiently. The pupils who have English as an additional language did better than other pupils in the 2002 GCSE examinations but the small number at an early stage of acquiring English have too little support and make too little progress. The great majority of pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress and perform as well in national tests and examinations as do those whose mother tongue is English.

13 Pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy are below average, but generally reflect those expected from the standards when they arrive at the school. Pupils' listening skills are good in several subjects, for example English, history and modern foreign languages, but unsatisfactory in others, including science, design and technology and physical education. Speaking skills are below average and oral responses are often brief and lacking in confidence and clarity. Although pupils' reading is below average, it is adequate for them to progress satisfactorily in most of their work; occasionally poor comprehension of written texts hinders progress, as seen in history with pupils in Years 7 to 9, for example. Pupils' writing and spelling are below average in most subjects but this is an area of strength in modern

foreign languages. The application of number skills is generally below average. Standards in information and communication technology across the curriculum are also below average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14 Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour range from good or better for most, to unsatisfactory and sometimes poor in the case of a significant minority. They are satisfactory overall. Relationships throughout the school are mainly good, though some pupils show too little consideration for others. Attendance and punctuality are poor.

15 Attitudes to school vary enormously across all year groups. Many pupils enjoy school and take part enthusiastically in after-school activities. Others are reluctant to come to school and show no commitment to learning. There are examples of starkly contrasting behaviour in lessons. Many pupils are keen and eager to learn, concentrate well and willingly answer questions or take part in class discussions. They are well motivated, take pride in their work and are anxious to succeed. Good co-operation makes group work a purposeful activity and most pupils learn well, because they enjoy their lessons.

16 Conversely, a significant minority, often older pupils, seem intent on causing disruption. They show little interest in learning, do not concentrate and are easily distracted. In some lessons there is a lack of enthusiasm for work that shows itself in a persistent undercurrent of chatter. At worst, pupils show a lack of respect for the teacher; they shout out, often with irrelevant comments, and are occasionally rude and disrespectful. Such behaviour adversely affects the learning of the whole group, and often means that the offender is sent out of the classroom, thus missing important learning time.

17 Around the school, behaviour is mostly acceptable, although many pupils show a lack of consideration for others. Older pupils, particularly, are apt to barge thoughtlessly through corridors without holding doors open for those following, with the result that some younger pupils sometimes feel intimidated. This immature, careless behaviour reflects the lack of understanding that some pupils have of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils and staff agree that actual bullying is rare, and any instances are dealt with promptly and effectively.

18 The majority of pupils get on well together and have good relationships with their teachers and with the other adults that they meet in school. Non-teaching staff find most pupils polite and friendly. Pupils are at ease when talking to visitors, explaining their work and giving their opinions in a confident, lively manner. Relationships between pupils are mainly good and there is clear racial harmony in school. Pupils listened respectfully to presentations on the festival of Eid during assemblies and tutor periods and discussed different beliefs and customs with tolerance and understanding. Pupils have opportunities to accept responsibility, such as representing their class on the school council and captaining teams, and when this is the case, they respond well.

19 Because behaviour in the past has been poor, the rate of exclusions, especially fixed term, has been very high. However, since the opening of the learning inclusion unit, pupils have responded well to the additional support and special provision made for them, with the result that the number of exclusions has fallen dramatically. The school devises individual programmes to help pupils adopt a more positive approach to learning. These have proved very successful in improving attitudes to school and behaviour in lessons.

20 In spite of the school's strenuous efforts to encourage good attendance, many pupils are absent from school far too often. Attendance is well below that seen in most schools and unauthorised absence is very high. Although the figures are distorted to some extent by factors outside the school's control, too much of the unauthorised absence is still caused by the failure of some pupils and their parents to understand the importance of regular

attendance. Not only do absentees miss vital work, but when they return to school, teachers are obliged to take time helping them catch up, to the detriment of the rest of the class. This is having a real impact on the progress of all pupils. Punctuality, especially at the start of the day, is also poor, with many pupils regularly arriving late for no good reason.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21 The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11; it ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. More than one in five lessons was excellent or very good and three in five were good or better. One in eleven lessons was unsatisfactory. This profile is much better than that in the last inspection and improvements in teaching have followed the intensive monitoring and support provided for teachers by senior staff and the local education authority staff in the last two terms.

22 The teaching of English is good at all stages. That in mathematics is good for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The science teaching is satisfactory throughout. Teaching is good overall in art, citizenship, history, information and communication technology, music and religious education. It is satisfactory in geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. It is good in design and technology with pupils in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory with older pupils in this subject.

23 Subject specialists teach most lessons and teachers' subject knowledge is good. Lesson planning is good and reflects the school's recent change of policy to have three-part lessons. Most lessons begin with a brisk opening session, such as a mental arithmetic session in mathematics, move on to the main activity and conclude with a final recap. The most successful lessons followed this model. The aims of the lesson are displayed prominently and pupils are generally told clearly what they are going to learn. There is also a list of key words provided each lesson and this is supporting the teaching of literacy well.

24 Much work is sufficiently challenging for the pupils to be kept busy but they are rarely extended. The work particularly in geography in Years 7 to 9 and physical education throughout is not demanding enough for many pupils. The work with pupils in Years 7 to 9 is often quite challenging in English, mathematics, science, art, history, music and religious education. It is not hard enough in the other subjects. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are provided with hard work in English, art, history, music and religious education but the other subjects are not pushing these pupils hard enough.

25 Most teachers employ a suitable range of methods to ensure effective teaching. Many cope well with much challenging behaviour that is often the case with a significant minority of boys especially, more often in Years 10 and 11. Teachers successfully employ the positive discipline approach and use the clearly listed procedures and sanctions, displayed in all classrooms. There are very few confrontations with pupils and the support strategies organised by the school are effective in promoting good teaching. Senior staff are on call around the school throughout the day and three non-teaching behaviour managers provide teachers with valuable support.

26 Teachers use time and other resources well. Lessons begin promptly although pupils' punctuality to lessons is not satisfactory. Assessment techniques have improved much recently and teachers keep detailed records of how pupils are progressing. Most staff make very good use of the vast array of data that is now available. They successfully ensure that the pupils know how they are getting on. The quality of marking of pupils' work is not good enough. Teachers generally set too little homework, a view shared by many parents and pupils.

27 Literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily. English, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages are particularly successful in developing pupils' literacy skills although mathematics, science, art and geography do too little to develop these skills. All subjects apart from geography and physical education make suitable use of pupils' numeracy skills, and mathematics teachers develop them well. The school does not identify gifted and talented pupils or extend the most able successfully in many subjects. There is too little support for pupils who are at the early stage of acquiring English but the GCSE results in 2002 for pupils who speak English as an additional language were better than those of pupils generally in the school and illustrate the good teaching these pupils receive.

28 Learning is good overall, being a little better with pupils in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Younger pupils especially show a keen interest in their work and concentrate well. These pupils try especially hard in English, mathematics, art, history, information and communication technology, music and religious education. The pace of pupils' working is generally satisfactory but concentration is often for brief periods only. Pupils respond positively to the good classroom management of the vast majority of teachers. Many pupils are too reliant on their teachers and lack the confidence to work independently.

29 The school is not meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs satisfactorily. Central records of progress for these pupils are poor, the policy is out of date and the work is not co-ordinated. However, provision within mainstream lessons is much more effective. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the work in all subjects. Teachers set individual targets for pupils with statements of special educational needs, and most teachers have a sound variety of strategies available to match work to the needs of the pupils. Such planning results in the majority of pupils being fully involved in oral and written work, and encourages them to work independently of the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and are well motivated, keen, hard working, and well behaved when working individually or in small groups with the learning support assistants who work in the special educational needs faculty.

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

30 Overall, curricular provision is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and relevant in Years 7 to 9. In Years 8 and 9 discrete lessons in information and communication technology are taught and this now ensures that statutory requirements are met. The time allocation for history and geography in Years 8 and 9 is only just sufficient to prepare for GCSE courses. In Years 7 to 9, dance and drama are taught alternately in six-week modules. Whilst pupils cover the required content for these courses, the system hinders the natural flow of learning. In Year 9, lower attaining pupils' time for modern foreign language is reduced by two periods, these being replaced by citizenship and physical education lessons. Time spent on citizenship is used effectively, as it is throughout the school.

31 In Years 10 and 11, the only opportunity for vocational courses is for a small proportion of pupils following the work-related curriculum where they spend one day each week on work placements. These pupils are sensibly disapplied from modern foreign languages and follow a short course in each of religious education and information and communication technology. This arrangement ensures that statutory requirements are met. Music, dance and drama are combined within an expressive arts course. This has ensured that music continues to be available in some form, as numbers for GCSE music had previously been in decline. Time for physical education is insufficient for pupils not following a GCSE course in that subject, resulting in standards that are too low.

32 Careers education and guidance are of good quality. They begin in Year 9 when pupils make option choices and are part of the personal and social education programme. This includes work experience for pupils in Year 11 who are encouraged to find their own placements for a two-week period. A careers library, of satisfactory quality, is available, supported by a wide range of literature. Pupils also have access to computers and a wide range of software to help them in their choice of careers. The links with the local further education colleges to support pupils for the next stage of their education are strong. Careers advisers provide very good support for the pupils.

33 The school has used time cleverly to ensure that statutory requirements are met, including good arrangements for personal and social education, as well as introducing citizenship effectively. However, the school realises that the current banding arrangements in Years 10 and 11 do not allow all pupils to progress as they should. The gifted and talented pupils are not identified clearly enough and extra provision for them is not formalised. There is poor support for pupils with special educational needs. However, appropriate plans are in place for the next school year to meet all pupils' needs more closely, with an increase in vocational provision.

34 The school takes its commitment to equality of opportunity seriously. Considerable provision is made for study support through finances from New Opportunities funding. This has involved literacy and numeracy support for pupils in feeder primary schools as well as the school's own pupils. The school has worked hard with some success to target disaffected boys at risk of exclusion by providing a lunchtime number club. Finance is also used well for the learning inclusion unit to run clubs for pupils who return to school after long-term absence. Overall, extra-curricular provision is good, with particular strengths in sport, dance, drama and music.

35 Provision for the teaching of literacy is seen as a high priority. Overall, it is satisfactory, with key words a feature of lessons across the curriculum. The modern foreign languages faculty makes a good contribution to pupils' development in literacy. Strategies for the teaching of numeracy are good in mathematics, with a variety of short, interesting starter activities in most lessons with younger pupils. In other subjects, opportunities to enhance numeracy are satisfactory. There is currently no formal tracking of the extent to which the teaching of numeracy and literacy is successful across the school.

36 Links with primary schools are satisfactory. There are good links in both science and physical education, with joint extra-curricular provision in physical education and taster courses in science. However, the rescheduling of the school day has recently made liaison more difficult. The school works well with external agencies such as the YMCA, social services, the local community centre, the educational welfare officers and police liaison officer based at the school, particularly to help pupils at risk. Links with the community are satisfactory and are developing well. Local firms, the further education colleges and training providers enable opportunities for learning, particularly regarding work placements. Local sports clubs regularly use the school's facilities. However, the school accepts that it needs to make a concerted effort to improve its image in the eyes of the community.

37 The provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. The member of staff responsible for all these pupils manages their provision and progress very efficiently. Assessment of pupils' current levels of language acquisition is thorough. The majority of teaching takes place within mainstream classes across the curriculum, with occasional withdrawal where necessary. At the moment, there is insufficient individual specialist support in the classroom of pupils at the earliest stages of learning English, particularly those who have only been in the country for a few months.

38 Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and good in each of the separate elements. The school has a clear vision of its mission and this is firmly enshrined in a mission document that is designed to permeate all its activities inside and outside the classroom. A senior member of staff monitors the effectiveness of the policy. This policy is enhanced by the effective contribution of the chaplaincy that provides not only worship but also counselling, prayers and support for pupils and staff.

39 Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral issues in assemblies, lectures, acts of collective worship, and tutorials, although the effectiveness of the tutorials varies a good deal. There are also opportunities for reflection in several subjects, particularly so in English, drama, art, music and dance. These opportunities are particularly strong in religious education where pupils consider questions of the meaning and purpose of life. It is a feature of these lessons to have short periods of 'stillness' or quiet reflection.

40 Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils receive good moral guidance and know the difference between right and wrong. The school makes its expectations clear in terms of standards of conduct and behaviour and takes appropriate action to deal with instances of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are expected to respect the views of other people. In many subjects there are opportunities to debate moral issues, such as the Holocaust in history, the pollution of the environment in geography, and abortion and euthanasia in religious education. It is a strength of the religious education programme that pupils are given many opportunities both to express reasoned, personal view points and to respect the views of others. The personal, social and health education programme helps them to explore such social and moral issues as drug and sex education. Moral concern is well expressed in social activities such as fund-raising on 'non-uniform' and 'red-nose' days for charities and aid agencies.

41 The provision for pupils' social development is good. The school provides them with many opportunities to acquire social knowledge, skills and confidence. There are opportunities to take on responsibilities, as in the school council, which is one useful way of fostering citizenship. Pupils take on several jobs connected with the running of the school and most pupils respect the school environment well. In most lessons there are opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs or in groups. The off-site 'retreats' are good opportunities to foster social bonds as well as to reflect. There are links with the wider world of business and work. A good contribution is made by visits and by visitors from the local community such as those who come to explain the significance of Eid ul Adha or the workings of the prison service. Sporting activities encourage teamwork, playing by the rules and the celebration of success and there are many activities and clubs to further develop this aspect of the learning experiences provided by the school.

42 The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. As well as the large number of extra-curricular activities, there are visits to theatres, concerts, mosques, temples, the local cathedral and churches. There are, however, few trips abroad. Music lessons extend pupils' cultural awareness. The school itself is a harmonious multicultural unit based on respect for the individual so that all pupils are genuinely included on their own merits rather than as a legal requirement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43 The overall quality of pastoral care for pupils throughout the school is good. The tutorial system is largely effective and normally enables tutors to remain with pupils from Year 7 to Year 11. A 'Raising Achievement Manager' leads each year group, and senior staff including the headteacher undertake successfully the responsibility for co-ordinating each year group. Tutors meet with pupils on four occasions for 20 minutes at the end of each day and there is a good quality weekly assembly for each year group. Tutors do not all use the tutorial time effectively; others make good use of it.

44 Pupils' academic progress is monitored well by tutors and subject teachers, and a mentoring system has recently been introduced in Year 11. It is planned that targets will be set for individual pupils and trigger improved grades at GCSE. The pupils' planners are of good quality but they are not always used effectively by older pupils and not signed regularly by parents, despite checks made by most tutors. This opportunity to foster links with parents has not improved since the previous inspection.

45 There is a clear code of conduct and the behaviour policy includes a sensible list of rewards and sanctions. Merit awards are used to motivate pupils and the school recognises achievements in assemblies and records them in the Record of Achievement. The learning inclusion unit is increasingly effective in supporting pupils whose work, behaviour or attendance are causing concern. These pupils are regularly monitored, parents are involved and individual learning programmes are devised. The school works hard to reintroduce disaffected pupils back into school after exclusions.

46 Pupils with special educational needs generally work in lessons alongside other pupils. Subject teachers in each subject area write individual education plans for pupils with statements of special educational need. These give clear targets and are based on information provided by the special educational needs faculty. They are monitored but are not co-ordinated across subject areas so the number of targets pupils are required to meet is too large. No individual education plans are written for other pupils identified with special educational needs. No individual education plans are written by the special educational needs faculty to give a clear indication of the overall provision and support. There is too little involvement of pupils and parents in this process.

47 Learning support assistants provide good quality special educational needs support in classrooms and are attached to subject faculties. This deployment works well, but fails to provide sufficient support in all subjects, and there is no strategy to focus the support available in the areas of greatest need.

48 The support provided for pupils with severe learning difficulties is inadequate. Some additional well-structured help is provided for a small number of pupils by the learning support assistants in social skills, keyboarding skills and speech therapy. Many pupils in Year 7 benefit from the Better Reading Partnership to improve standards of reading but this programme is mainly focused on middle attaining pupils. There is no intensive, systematic and co-ordinated support to help all pupils raise their skills in literacy and numeracy. Not enough sustained use is made of information and communication technology. The learning inclusion unit gives carefully considered and effective support and guidance to those pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The special educational needs base does not provide a friendly and supportive environment at breaks or lunchtime, as it is closed. The learning support assistants organise several clubs, such as the homework club after school, and a craft and a number club, which are of much benefit to pupils' progress.

49 The initial identification and assessment of the requirements of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory due to the sound relationships the school maintains with the contributory primary schools. The analysis of assessment data is sound but the

identification of the total number of pupils in need is insecure and lacks rigour. Although a satisfactory baseline for assessing the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is available, arrangements for their ongoing assessment are poor. Little evidence, therefore, exists to monitor the overall progress made by individual pupils and with which to assess the effectiveness of the support provided. Appropriate arrangements are made to maintain records and for key members of staff to make a contribution to the annual review. Each learning support assistant maintains a diary to monitor the work of the pupils on a daily basis.

50 The procedures for child protection are very good: they are enhanced by strong support from the social services and the education welfare officer. A health and safety policy is in place. The school's arrangements for the security of its pupils are very good, and closed circuit television, magnetic security door catches and a new fence are recent additions. The Internet is monitored and protected to ensure security of access of information for pupils.

51 Whole-school assessment systems were identified as a weakness in the last report. Considerable progress has been made, much of it recently. The school now has well-established and thorough systems for monitoring academic performance, target setting, and reporting to parents and governors. Data is collected on pupils' attainment grades at the end of Year 6 in the primary schools. In Year 7, a pupil ability profile is established using objective tests from an external agency. From this data, projections are made of attainment level targets for individual pupils and the school, at the end of Year 9. Similarly, Year 9 data and further objective testing allow projections and targets to be set for GCSE courses. Further data is added from additional Year 7 and Year 8 standardised tests and from internal examination results in Year 10. The data is available to all staff through the school computer systems. It is beginning to be used well by form tutors and mentors to monitor the performance of individual pupils and to set targets for future standards of achievement.

52 All subject faculties have good systems and procedures for assessing and recording pupils' work in relation to National Curriculum levels. They pass information to the central database, building a clear picture of progression as pupils move through the school. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, attainment levels are broken down into sub-levels, thus giving teachers a more detailed picture of progress in each subject. There are good plans to extend the sub-level work, where possible, to all the other subjects. Good school-based in-service training has given all staff an understanding of how the systems and data can be used to raise standards of achievement.

53 The information obtained from objective test results clearly demonstrates the low levels of pupils' literacy skills. This data is beginning to be used by individual subjects to change teaching and learning strategies, so that pupils can be taught in a more effective way. This approach is beginning to raise standards, but there is a need for more work in this area of teaching. The data is not well used to target individual education plans for those pupils who have special educational needs.

54 Marking was also identified as an area of weakness in the previous report. In almost all subjects inspectors report that marking is still inconsistently carried out, and often fails to indicate, in precise terms, what pupils need to do next to improve. The school does not yet have a marking policy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55 The school makes every effort to work closely with parents and to provide them with high quality information about pupils' progress, school events and educational developments.

Nevertheless, parents' views of the school are negative and many show little interest in, or support for, their children's education. The school's partnership with parents is currently unsatisfactory.

56 A very small proportion of parents replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire and only a few parents attended the meeting with inspectors. Most of those who expressed a view feel that the school expects pupils to work hard and that they are making good progress, although some parents think that brighter pupils are insufficiently challenged. Parents agree that they are comfortable approaching the school with a question or problem, and some are very satisfied with the prompt and effective way the school responds to parents' concerns. Those who have a positive view of the school are particularly pleased with its new approach to tackling problems, especially in relation to behaviour and attitudes to learning.

57 Conversely, a high proportion feels that the school does not work closely enough with parents, and that they are not kept well enough informed about pupils' progress. Many parents are concerned about standards of behaviour, including instances of bullying, and some do not feel that pupils are learning to become mature and responsible. Amounts of homework, and the way it is set, are also criticised by many parents.

58 Inspectors agree with some of the positive views expressed by parents. School staff are very approachable and respond effectively to parents' queries. Teachers' expectations of pupils could be higher in many instances and parents' criticisms about amounts of homework are justified. Pupils' progress is largely satisfactory, but the behaviour of some pupils is not good enough. Bullying does exist, but staff handle instances promptly and effectively and much work is done with pupils to help them understand the importance of respect and consideration for others. The school tries very hard to work closely with parents and provides good information on pupils' progress.

59 Written information provided for parents is generally of high quality. The prospectus and half-termly newsletters are attractively presented and written in a friendly, accessible style. The school publishes a weekly newsletter that is informative and attractive. The pupils' planners provide a ready means of communication between home and school. Some parents of younger pupils make good use of these, but they become less effective as pupils move up the school.

60 There are ample opportunities for parents to find out what progress pupils are making. Subject teachers are available to talk to parents at regular consultation evenings. The newly introduced system of mentor days, when form tutors, pupils and parents review what has been achieved and jointly decide on targets for the future, is proving popular and successful. Formal school reports are mostly detailed and informative, explaining clearly what pupils know, understand and can do, and setting precise targets for improvement.

61 Contacts with parents about pastoral matters are taken very seriously by all staff. The recently reorganised pastoral system ensures that parents are notified immediately of any concerns, related to either work or behaviour. Parents value the dedication of some members of staff, who devote much of their own time to resolving difficulties. Through home visits and the involvement of parents in devising programmes to improve attitudes to learning, behaviour and attendance, the school is developing effective, practical links with parents.

62 Parental involvement in the life of the school is minimal, although the school is working hard to remedy this. Currently, only about half the parents come to parents' meetings to discuss pupils' progress, while attendance at review meetings for pupils with special educational needs is very low. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are not well enough informed of their child's progress.

63 Close links are maintained with some parents whose children are benefiting from the Better Reading Partnership scheme, many of whom participate at home. Other initiatives set up by the school to encourage parents to become involved or to interest them in educational issues have met with abject failure. For example, an information and communication technology project to help parents learn how to use computers, free of charge, did not attract a single person.

64 When individual pupils need support, parents are more interested in helping, so that the response to requests to attend pastoral support programme meetings has been good. Although a few parents are now starting to help with sports coaching, there is little other involvement. There is no parents' association, so no means of raising additional funds for the school or helping to develop a community spirit. The school makes every effort to work closely with parents, but has been disappointed by their response.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65 The school has gone through difficult times in recent years with four headteachers in as many years. The current headteacher took up his post in April 2002. He provides excellent leadership and has successfully created a high level of enthusiasm and commitment in his hard-working senior colleagues. He has a clear grasp of what is needed to raise standards and improve the quality of education. Senior staff contribute well to the very good leadership and management.

66 The excellent leadership ensures that there is very clear educational direction in the school. The mission statement is amply supported by sensible aims, and the mechanisms that are now in place are ensuring that the aims are being met. There is a renewed commitment from staff and strong leadership from the vast majority of heads of faculties and many other staff in positions of responsibility. Crucial new appointments have been made to raise attainment, improve pupils' behaviour and remove the budget deficit. The impact of all this is now beginning to show and the staff's shared commitment to and capacity for improvement are very good.

67 The governors provide good support for the school and have a sound grasp of its strengths and weaknesses, asking challenging questions and seeking explanations. They ensure that all the statutory requirements are met with the exception of those relating to collective worship. They have not ensured that the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is adequate and have not been successful in keeping a tight enough control of the budget. Their involvement in shaping the school's direction and ensuring progress is satisfactory.

68 The school's evaluation of its performance is now very good. Teaching is monitored rigorously and appropriate action and support result from this. Senior staff, supported by officers of the local education authority, have conducted a programme of lesson reviews. Information derived from this exercise is being used positively to support teachers, improve the quality of education and raise standards in all aspects of the school's work. Examination data is analysed thoroughly, providing a wealth of good quality of information that is largely used effectively. The school's strategy for performance management fully meets requirements.

69 The school's improvement planning is of excellent quality and the action being taken to secure improvements is appropriate, involving governors and the local education authority officers. Academic targets are based on securely researched evidence. Other targets clearly reflect identified priorities.

70 The leadership and management of the faculty for special educational needs are unsatisfactory. There is no sense of direction and the new Code of Practice, which became effective in January 2002, has not been implemented. The response to the criticisms in the previous report is unsatisfactory. The school's policy for pupils with special educational needs is out of date. No structure exists for liaison between subject faculties and the faculty for special educational needs, and consequently most teachers are ignorant of the recent developments in supporting pupils and the requirements of the present Code of Practice.

71 There is no systematic monitoring of the work with pupils with special educational needs in subject areas to assess the impact of the support provided. Strategic planning is weak. The system of support does not focus well enough on the strategic priorities of the school, such as raising standards of literacy, or the specific needs of the pupils. Good relationships exist within the learning inclusion unit but links between this unit and the special educational needs faculty are not sufficiently clear or thought out.

72 There are enough appropriately qualified teachers on roll to meet the demands of the curriculum. However long- and short-term absences have had adverse effects on pupils' progress and learning. Standards in English, design and technology, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education have suffered. A group in English has had numerous supply teachers over a period of two years. The small amount of teaching done by non-specialists in English and science is not adversely affecting pupils' learning.

73 Staffing reflects a good balance of gender and experience and approximately one third of the teachers have served at the school since it was opened 10 years ago. There has been a relatively high turnover of teachers in recent years, particularly of those not holding positions of responsibility. The pupil to teacher ratio is similar to that in most secondary schools of a similar size. The proportion of time which teachers spend teaching is a little lower than that in similar schools. The morale of staff has improved markedly since the arrival of the new headteacher.

74 The learning support assistants working with pupils who have special educational needs are very effective but there are not enough of them. There is adequate technical support in design and technology and science. The two assistants in modern foreign languages provide good support. The school does not have a qualified librarian and the library is consequently a poorly used resource. The clerical and administration staff provide effective support for the day-to-day running of the school.

75 The staffing structure introduced when the school was established has become fragmented. This is partly as a result of new initiatives and other changes over the years. It is not meeting the present needs of the school and steps are being taken to address this. There is now much emphasis on evaluating the performance of teachers and this is helping improve the quality of teaching. Much professional development is taking place and the needs of the school, faculties and individuals are largely met.

76 There is a comprehensive programme of induction for newly qualified teachers. It is successfully implemented and the very effective support is much appreciated by the beneficiaries. The trainee teachers from institutions of higher education are also well supported. Both groups are introducing fresh ideas and approaches. As a result of its substantial involvement in initial teacher training the school has achieved recognition as a Partnership Promotion School. In this capacity it will be actively involved in teacher training at other schools in the area.

77 Poor financial planning and inadequate budget monitoring systems in previous years have resulted in a serious budget deficit, which the school is now taking positive steps to address. The recently appointed headteacher and the even newer business manager have analysed every aspect of the school's finances and drawn up a clear strategy to achieve the educational objectives in the school improvement plan, while gradually reducing the deficit. New financial control procedures have been put in place to ensure strict monitoring of expenditure, including measures to effect immediate reductions wherever possible.

78 Specific grants are used purposefully, mainly in relation to staffing. The school's basic income is a little below that seen in similar schools nationally and it has received very little additional funding, other than a local authority grant for Schools in Challenging Circumstances. This has been used very effectively to set up the highly successful learning inclusion unit.

79 The recent audit report recognised the significant improvements that have been made in budget monitoring procedures, while the report's main recommendations concern matters that are already well in hand. Principles of best value are clearly understood and are now properly applied, to ensure that the school's resources are used appropriately to support its defined educational priorities. The school's financial situation is currently being stabilised, with clear, well thought-out plans for future development. Given the improvements that have already taken place, its low level of funding and its potential for further progress, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

80 The school has excellent accommodation. The site is pleasant, clean and well maintained. There is little litter in the buildings and grounds. There are attractive social areas, inside and outside the school, to use at breaks. The classrooms are pleasant environments and provide stimulating areas in which to learn. The installation of security fencing and closed-circuit cameras has reduced significantly the amount of damage and vandalism around the site.

81 Overall, the provision of resources for learning is satisfactory and, in some subjects, good. Financial allocations to all faculties are based upon an agreed formula. Because of general financial constraints, the amounts of money allocated to subjects have been capped. A few faculties have identified shortages. In science, for example, provision for information and communication technology is inadequate, and there are insufficient textbooks for pupils to take home in science and in modern foreign languages. Parents have to provide ingredients for pupils to use in food technology and the faculty lacks information and communication technology resources.

82 The school library is inadequate and does not provide the required support for the curriculum. There is no full-time librarian or administrative assistance. Some subject sections of the library are poor and the fiction stock does not provide a wide enough range of attractive reading suitable for the interests and varied reading levels of all pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

83 In order to sustain the recent progress and build on the strengths the school already has, the governing body and senior staff should now:

- 1 Improve the GCSE results by:
 - a. Focusing more on standards of literacy.
(See paragraphs 13, 35, 88, 89, 94, 96, 130, 134, 137, 148)
 - b. Providing more challenge in many lessons.
(See paragraphs 24, 56, 101, 140, 149, 151, 156, 193)
 - c. Improving attendance and punctuality.
(See paragraphs 14, 20, 26, 86, 110, 123, 149)
 - d. Improving the marking of pupils' work.
(See paragraphs 26, 54, 91, 116, 152, 160, 162, 193)

- 2 Improve the provision for and progress of pupils with special educational needs by:
 - a. Updating the policy to reflect the current Code of Practice and implementing the policy fully and monitoring pupils' progress more closely.
(See paragraphs 11, 29, 48, 62, 70)
 - b. Providing individual education plans for the large proportion of pupils who currently do not have them and ensuring that the plans are of good quality and are used well.
(See paragraphs 11, 46, 138)
 - c. Improving liaison between the special educational needs faculty and subject faculties and its links with the learning inclusion unit; increasing the amount of support for pupils and monitoring its use within faculties.
(See paragraphs 33, 47, 48, 49, 70, 71, 74, 103, 112, 138, 141, 168, 173, 193)

- 3 Ensure the gifted and talented pupils make better progress by:
 - a. Clearly identifying who they are.
(See paragraphs 12, 27, 33, 112, 193)
 - b. Providing challenging and stimulating work for them.
(See paragraphs 12, 101, 103, 106, 149, 156, 160, 162, 180, 193)

- 4 Extend the genuine efforts to promote a good image of the school and try to involve parents more.
(See paragraphs 36, 46, 55, 62, 64)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	161
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	75

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	32	61	48	14	0	0
Percentage	2	20	39	30	9	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	980
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	257

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	63
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	22

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	77

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	62
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	57

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

National comparative data	7.8
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National comparative data	1.2
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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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	103	104	207

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	51	60
	Girls	49	47	42
	Total	93	98	102
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	45 (44)	47 (42)	49 (42)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	11 (15)	29 (20)	14 (11)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	58	37
	Girls	63	54	30
	Total	124	112	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	60 (42)	54 (53)	32 (34)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18 (9)	29 (24)	7 (5)
	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	81	102	183

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	16	66	75
	Girls	35	92	97
	Total	51	158	172
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	28 (23)	86 (89)	94 (97)
	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 pupil	School	28.5 (30.4)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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
893	274	3
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
71	11	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
0	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: Year 7 – Year 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	57.04
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

Education support staff: Year 7 – Year 11

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	533

Deployment of teachers: Year 7 – Year 11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.0
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Average teaching group size: Year 7 – Year 11

Key Stage 3	24
Key Stage 4	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	2,917,549
Total expenditure	2,965,549
Expenditure per pupil	3091
Balance brought forward from previous year	-177,500
Balance carried forward to next year	-225,500

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	23

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	980
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	43	13	10	2
My child is making good progress in school.	34	46	11	2	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	40	17	23	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	37	18	15	3
The teaching is good.	25	53	8	2	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	33	23	15	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	28	56	10	2	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	38	7	2	5
The school works closely with parents.	19	37	34	7	3
The school is well led and managed.	19	56	10	3	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	23	45	20	5	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	42	10	0	12

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are positive.
- Leadership and management are good.

Areas for improvement

- Performance in national tests at the end of Year 9 is too low.
- Examination results in the GCSE are not good enough.
- The standard of written work of average and lower attaining pupils needs to improve.

84 The results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average. A sample of test papers was re-marked at the school's request, and all were upgraded by at least one level. However, when compared with results in similar schools, performance was still below average. Boys' performance was closer to their respective national average than girls' was to theirs. Bearing in mind pupils' general level of literacy on entry, which was well below average, they make steady progress by the age of 14 and most pupils achieve appropriately, although standards remain below the national average.

85 Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 for both English language and English literature were well below average. Girls did better than boys in both subjects. The performance of boys, especially in language, was poor. At the age of 16 pupils do not sustain the progress made at the end of Year 9.

86 Standards of attainment have been adversely affected by difficulties with staffing, irregular attendance of pupils and the fact that nearly a quarter of pupils now aged 16 joined the school after Year 7. The standard of the work of 16 year olds is below average and their achievements are not satisfactory.

87 Throughout Years 7 to 11, the quality of speaking and listening is similar to that found in most schools. Most pupils listen attentively and answer questions willingly and audibly. They work together effectively in pairs but there is too little group work. As a direct result of confidence given through very good teaching, higher attaining pupils in Year 7, for example, responded articulately to questioning and read aloud clearly and with good variation in pitch, pace and intonation. Pupils in a Year 11 class were mature and sensitive in their discussion of sexist and racial issues in a poem. They developed ideas fully and defended their opinions coherently. Only in one disaffected class in Year 10 was the level of oral work below average.

88 The general standard of pupils' reading comprehension at the age of 14 is somewhat below average. Many pupils enter the school with a reading age well below their actual age. Those having particular difficulty with reading receive intensive support and make satisfactory progress. All pupils in Year 7 benefit from the regular opportunity to read with support staff and to improve levels of comprehension. By the age of 14, all pupils read a wide range of literature and most recognise and describe successfully elements such as plot, themes and characters. Average attaining pupils in Year 9, for example, showed sound understanding of

the complex relationship of characters in the early scenes of *Twelfth Night*. Stimulated by excellent teaching, a class of higher attaining pupils in Year 10 demonstrated perceptive appreciation of different levels of meaning in their study of a contemporary love poem. The general level of attainment in reading by the age of 16, however, is below expectation because pupils tend to read for surface features of a text without grasping deeper implications.

89 The overall quality of written work throughout Years 7 to 11 is below average and, sometimes, well below. Pupils' writing is by far the weakest of the three aspects of literacy. Average and lower attaining pupils in Year 7 find it hard to build sentences properly and to express ideas precisely. Some work is carelessly presented, although there is clear improvement throughout Years 8 and 9. Pupils recognise key features of writing in their analysis of texts but do not incorporate such features accurately in their own work. Useful portfolios of pupils' work are collected but do not yet contain a wide enough range of different sorts of writing. The best-written assignments of higher attaining pupils in Year 11 are carefully planned, skilfully crafted and, in the main, accurate in detail. Much of the most lively and perceptive writing springs from the study of literature. Average and lower attaining pupils often write with enjoyment but offerings are sometimes too brief and contain frequent errors in paragraphing, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling.

90 The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9. Most lessons were at least satisfactory and two thirds were good or better. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is also good. Almost all was satisfactory and more than a half was good or better. Lessons are very well planned and prepared and teachers have good knowledge of their subject matter. There is a high concentration on teaching basic skills, especially in raising levels of reading comprehension and in helping pupils to structure their writing. Teachers use questioning skilfully to extract accurate answers and to insist upon justification of opinions.

91 The content of lessons is matched closely to pupils' level of attainment. The pace of most lessons is brisk and purposeful, although teachers occasionally talk for too long. Pupils are clear about the standards expected of them both in attainment and behaviour. Teachers are thorough in their preparation of pupils for public tests and examinations. Marking of pupils' work is consistent and conscientious, which is a clear improvement upon findings in the last report. In Years 7 and 9, however, some marking does not give enough help and pupils are rarely asked to carry out re-drafting of short extracts. An unsatisfactory lesson with Year 8 on the use of apostrophes lacked pace and did not capture the interest of the low attaining pupils. A Year 11 poetry lesson failed to secure any sustained effort from the majority of pupils.

92 Pupils' learning is generally good throughout and most make genuine efforts to do well, showing interest in their work and concentrating for good periods. Relationships are generally very positive and pupils are largely well motivated. Attitudes to learning and pupils' behaviour are generally good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress by the age of 14 but only satisfactory progress in their final two years. Those who are at an early stage of learning English make too little progress because of insufficient support.

93 After experiencing a period of difficulty with staffing the faculty is entering a time of comparative stability. Teachers share the same high expectations of standards. The faculty has played a central part in the development of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy for literacy. In addition, the head of faculty is responsible for establishing the school policy for literacy across the curriculum. Although there is clear delegation of some tasks, no individual holds the post of second in the faculty. Throughout recent challenging times the faculty has been efficiently managed and led with great energy and vision and there has been clear progress since the last inspection.

94 Work is in progress to extend knowledge and practice in literacy across the curriculum. Useful in-service training has already taken place and some faculties are now incorporating elements into their own schemes of work. Overall, however, the effectiveness of existing practice is unsatisfactory. In some subjects such as art, mathematics, drama, history and religious education pupils listen attentively, but in science and design and technology listening is variable and often poor. Pupils lack confidence in speech in many subjects and answers tend to be brief and lacking in clarity. Only in drama and religious education is group talk planned as an integral part of lessons. Reading aloud in class is encouraged in some lessons but rarely in most faculties.

95 The majority of pupils read well enough to understand textbooks and other printed materials in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties are given texts of a suitable level but in subjects where language is sometimes complex such as in mathematics, art, design and technology, and physical education a significant number of pupils struggle to comprehend fully. Book stocks in the library are inadequate to support reading for research in most subjects. The poor range of fiction limits pupils' reading for pleasure and the lack of a librarian means that few use the facility.

96 The presentation of written work is poor in all subjects and this is holding down standards and hindering progress. Careless sentence structure and imprecise expressions are common features. Spelling is a particular weakness, although key words are well displayed in many faculties. A real effort has been made to improve writing in design and technology, history, modern foreign languages and religious education but in mathematics, science, art and physical education standards remain low. Routine corrections of sentence structure, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary are lacking in most faculties. Levels of attainment in writing, which are well below average, are having an adverse effect upon test and examination results in many subjects.

Drama

97 The subject is part of the expressive arts faculty. In Years 7 to 9 drama is taught for half of each term with dance taking up the other half. Currently it contributes to the optional GCSE course in expressive arts. In 2001, when drama was entered as a separate subject for GCSE, results were above the national average and were among the best in the school. Pupils did better in drama than in most of their other subjects. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 9 are marginally above those found nationally.

98 Pupils work effectively in small groups and listen attentively to classmates and to the teacher. The best of such group work was animated, creative and purposeful. A class in Year 8 improvised extensive dialogue in imaginative role-play tasks. They responded skilfully whilst remaining in role, and used body language and gesture to reinforce character. Pupils in Year 10 were enthusiastic and committed in their drama work as part of an expressive arts assignment. Group work was productive, with articulate exchange of ideas and quick decisions made about ways forward. Behaviour was uniformly good.

99 Teaching is good. The subject is well managed, with good documentation and thorough schemes of work. Drama makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school. There are regular large-scale productions by the faculty with a strong contribution from drama.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Achievement of pupils at the end of Year 9 is better than expected, taking prior attainment into account.
- Teaching, overall, is improving. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and reflects the spirit of the National Strategy for Numeracy well.
- Attitudes are good in Years 7 to 9. They are improving in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership and management of the faculty are now very good.
- Assessment and target setting are consistently good.

Areas for development

- Achievement overall, particularly that of girls, is not high enough.
- More varied teaching strategies in Years 10 and 11 are required.
- Poor attendance and the attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 hinder progress.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11 is inadequate.
- Banding arrangements do not help the most gifted pupils to achieve their potential.

100 The 2002 results in National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average. This represents satisfactory progress from standards on entry, bearing in mind how low they are. This continued the trend of well below average results that has existed for some years. The results are below those of similar schools. The overall standard of work of current Year 9 pupils is below average. This is, however, good progress from the standards on entry and pupils are achieving well at this stage.

101 Pupils in Years 7 to 9 with special educational needs benefit from good support from learning support assistants and good individual support from teachers, and progress well during most lessons. Lower attaining pupils made very good progress when learning about rounding numbers to a suitable value. The teacher's skill in making the work relevant, by referring to football crowds and shopping bills and in targeting individual pupils' learning needs during the lesson was significant in achieving this progress. Whilst the most gifted pupils achieve satisfactorily, they are split into three different groups. Despite very good teaching in some instances, these pupils miss out on the potential benefits of increased pace and consistently high levels of challenge, possible were they all taught together.

102 In 2002, the GCSE results were well below the national average. They have not improved over recent years. However, boys achieved better results in mathematics in 2002 than in most of their other subjects. Girls did not achieve as well as boys in GCSE examinations. Standards in the current Year 11 are still well below the national average. There are significantly more boys than girls in top sets. In some lessons, girls are compliant, often speaking too quietly when answering questions orally. However, most pupils achieve appropriately at this stage, bearing in mind their prior attainment.

103 The most gifted pupils are not given the chance to progress as well as they might. This is because they are split between two groups and have to be given work separate from the majority of pupils in these classes. Average pupils make satisfactory progress. They develop satisfactory competence in data handling, equation solving and spatial work. Some lack investigative skills. A class of low attaining pupils made very good progress when calculating volumes. This was because of the teacher's commitment in preparing resources, such as mobile telephone boxes, food cartons and other real-life packaging in the shape of

rectangular blocks for pupils to measure. Pupils with special educational needs receive no in-class support from learning assistants because there are none allocated to older pupils. As a consequence most of these pupils make unsatisfactory progress.

104 Pupils' learning and attitudes are very much linked to the quality of the teaching, being good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Younger pupils tend to have good attitudes because teaching is more innovative, with interesting starter activities and better pace in lessons. Older pupils are more disaffected and attendance is poor overall, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Younger pupils also benefit generally, because the whole-school procedures for improving attitudes and behaviour have been more effective since the arrival of the new headteacher.

105 Most pupils provide their own equipment and show a respect for that provided by the school. Younger pupils are generally keener to learn, are more aware of their own attainment and have good relationships with teachers. In one Year 11 class, however, lower attaining pupils showed a very good attitude to learning, co-operated very well to share resources, persevered very well and enjoyed their work. This was because of the significant efforts of the teacher to prepare a range of activities, relevant to real life, involving calculating the volume of rectangular block shaped commercial packaging. Calculators and rulers were used sensibly and accurately because the task was meaningful.

106 Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9. They are often very good, with interesting activities for pupils to enhance their numeracy skills and to progress well in all the aspects of mathematics, including its use and application. Teachers ensure good pace in lessons, and aim work at challenging levels for almost all pupils, but sometimes gifted pupils do not receive sufficient attention. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11, although one lesson was unsatisfactory, and some were good or very good. Teaching and learning are less effective than in Years 7 to 9 because of entrenched disaffection among some pupils, and less variety in teaching styles. The use of textbooks is over-emphasised and there are few opportunities to use computer software. However, there is some good use of graphic calculators and one teacher uses self-assessment by pupils effectively. Teachers work hard at showing respect for pupils and generally have good relationships with pupils even when behaviour is unacceptable. Teachers manage pupils well in most lessons. Only very occasionally, do they not take appropriate action.

107 Despite little improvement in standards over recent years, leadership and management of the faculty are very good because there is now close monitoring of all aspects of the work of the department, directed at raising standards. Teachers have been supported very well in the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and with managing pupils generally. Medium- and long-term assessment procedures are very good, with realistic and challenging targets being set for pupils. However, the faculty appreciates that more needs to be done to raise pupils' awareness of how to improve from one level to another by offering clearer short-term objectives when marking work. Morale has been maintained at high levels during what has been a difficult time for the school in recent years. The faculty has improved since the previous inspection and is now poised to see this improvement realised with improved standards across the school.

108 The majority of pupils have standards of numeracy that are below the national average. However, this is consistent with their prior attainment and standards are sufficient to allow them to progress satisfactorily in other subjects. Pupils measure and weigh accurately in design and technology; in science they are competent with calculations and the best are good when using formulae. In all areas of the curriculum, apart from physical education, pupils are given sufficient opportunities to develop their numeracy skills. However, the use of data handling in geography is less developed than in most schools.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Attainment in the national tests for 14 year olds is improving.
- Much of the teaching is good or very good; it has improved since the last inspection.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Examination results are too low and older pupils do not achieve highly enough.
- The progress of a significant number of pupils is hindered by absence, poor attitudes to learning and underdeveloped literacy skills.
- Some marking does not have informative comments.
- There is too little sharing of good practice by teachers observing each other.

109 The results obtained in the national tests for 14 year olds in 2002 were well below the national averages. They were, however, significantly better than those of 2001. They were below the average of those in similar schools. In previous years, boys and girls have performed similarly. In 2002 the boys did better than the girls. Apart from a dip in 2001 the results have been well below average but following the nationally rising trend since 1999. The GCSE results in 2002 were well below the national averages and those in similar schools. The results were similar to those of 2001 but boys outperformed girls for the first time in recent years. Pupils performed less well in science than they did in their other subjects.

110 Attainment levels on entry were well below average for older pupils, and higher but still below average for the present Year 7 pupils. Achievement and progress are now satisfactory for younger pupils (Years 7 to 9) but not so for older ones. Many have difficulties interpreting examination questions and with sentence construction in their answers. Many also have limited powers of retention. Irregular attendance and poor attitudes to learning adversely affect the progress of a significant number of mainly middle and lower attaining older boys. By the end of Year 9 standards are below average. They are well below by the end of Year 11.

111 Pupils measure accurately as seen in a lesson with lower attaining Year 9 pupils who were measuring electrical current to one decimal place. Year 7 pupils draw simple bar charts. Skills required in investigative work are below average apart from those of manipulation and observation. Information and communication technology skills are average. Pupils in Year 9 developed their research skills well when using a computer program to find out about animal habitats. Higher attaining Year 9 pupils described metallic properties and used their knowledge to distinguish metals from other solids. Few, however, confidently use word equations. Most Year 9 pupils identify parts of the eye and know the functions of some of them. Lower attaining pupils sort living things into groups and some identify creatures from keys. Higher attaining Year 11 pupils calculate output voltages from transformers and know how sugar levels are controlled in the human body. Most Year 11 pupils know the factors affecting the rate of a chemical reaction but few can explain them in terms of particle collisions. In one lesson lower attaining Year 11 pupils matched the part of the body to its function in preventing the spread of disease.

112 Younger pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do less well and make unsatisfactory progress. Teachers are usually well aware of their difficulties and give individuals extra help when possible. When there is

additional support in lessons pupils learn well. However, support is not provided in some lessons and there is very little in Years 10 and 11. Gifted and talented pupils are not always identified. When this is done they make similar progress to that of other pupils in their year.

113 There is a wide variation in pupils' attitudes to learning. Higher attaining pupils and most of the younger ones have positive attitudes and want to succeed. They usually arrive promptly and well prepared for lessons, and settle quickly. They concentrate well. However, a significant number of lower and middle attaining pupils, mainly older boys, show little interest and do not listen carefully. They need frequent reminders to keep on task and do not complete or show pride in their written work. These pupils' attitudes to homework are poor. Standards of presentation are below average throughout. Girls take much greater care with their work than boys. Pupils throughout co-operate well in groups. They handle equipment carefully and work safely.

114 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Much of the teaching is good and some is very good but a significant minority is unsatisfactory. The proportion of better teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. In a small number of lessons the quality of learning does not match that of teaching. Teachers spend time helping individuals catch up on work missed through absence and the rate of learning of the whole group is diminished.

115 A major factor that helps successful teaching and learning to take place is the high quality of pupil/teacher relationships. This promotes confidence in pupils and they respond well to the high expectations of behaviour and effort. Teachers know their subject well and make it comprehensible, often by using examples familiar to pupils and by relating personal experiences. In the better lessons, planning is good, catering for the needs of all. Objectives are made clear and a starter activity is often successfully used to focus pupils immediately. One teacher issues pupils with small whiteboards on which they write their answers. This ensures full participation and serves as a quick check by the teacher on the level of understanding.

116 Most lessons proceed at an appropriate pace with a range of activities in the best ones. Year 7 pupils were kept fully engaged throughout one lesson with lively exposition and questioning by the teacher, completion of short written tasks to consolidate learning and effective use of a video. The two support assistants were deployed very effectively enabling pupils with language difficulties and other particular needs to learn as well as the rest of the class. Pupils are usually managed well and practical work is orderly. In one of the unsatisfactory lessons, the pace was misjudged and pupils were moved on to the next task before completing the previous one. In another, pupils gained little from copying from the textbook. Teachers in these lessons were not exploiting their good knowledge of pupils by targeting questions to focus them and to check understanding. As a result of this, pupils in one lesson were not sure what they had to do and what they were trying to find out in their investigation. The quality of marking is not consistent. In the best examples, comments identify weaknesses and suggest ways to improve.

117 The new national strategy is being successfully implemented in Years 7 and 8. It is planned to introduce an applied science GCSE course, considered to be more suitable for some pupils. Pupils do better in coursework and there is more emphasis on this in the new course. Assessment procedures are thorough and regular. Much use is made of the information obtained and pupils have individual targets. Extra revision classes are organised out of lessons. More use is being made of information and communication technology to aid learning. However, a shortage of some equipment is restricting opportunities for pupils to gain 'hands on' experience.

118 Leadership and management are good. Much recent work is directed at monitoring, evaluating and improving practice. The classroom practice of the head of faculty is an exemplar for others to follow. There is a clear vision with a strong focus on raising attainment. The teachers are appropriately qualified, and are observed teaching. There are not enough opportunities for them to observe each other and to share good practice. The newly qualified teacher and the recently appointed one are receiving good support. The technicians work hard and provide effective support. The accommodation is excellent. Pupils are still not provided with books for use at home.

119 Since the last inspection attainment in public examinations has risen. Almost all pupils are now entered for GCSE examinations. The quality of teaching and assessment procedures are better. There are clearly planned strategies for improvement but these have not yet been implemented.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- There is good teaching that leads to good progress for all pupils.
- There is a good range of interesting work done.
- Assessment is good and is used to raise standards.
- There is good management, and the subject is a popular choice for GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- Too little use is made of information and communication technology.
- The quality of drawing skills is not good enough.
- Marking of written work is inadequate and is not raising pupils' literacy standards.

120 In 2002 teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 judged standards to be average. Results in GCSE have risen over the past three years. They were close to the national average with regard to the higher grades A* to C in 2002. The girls' results were above the national average for girls. Boys' results were much lower than boys' results nationally. Some of these pupils had non-specialist teaching. Pupils' results were as good in this subject as they were in most of their other subjects.

121 In work seen, standards are in line with the national average by the end of Year 9. This represents good progress and achievement given pupils' standards on entering the school. In Year 7, pupils create good designs based on studies of the artist Klimt. They use wax resist methods effectively to do fabric prints. In Year 8, pupils use the work of Picasso for inspiration to create light sculptures based on musical instruments. In Year 9, drawings from direct observation of mechanical images are average with regard to the use of line. Overall pupils' drawing skills are weaker than design and light sculpture. They do not use an adequate range of shading techniques to achieve tone and texture.

122 By the end of Year 11, standards are also in line with the national average. Some aspects of the work are above average, especially the construction of abstract designs in high relief. Pupils show a good awareness of positive and negative space and aesthetic balance in this work. Pupils doing self-portraits from direct observation also achieve good results. Although pupils admit that they have learned a range of mark-making techniques to achieve tone and texture in earlier years, few use these effectively. In many cases pupils' standards in research and consequent planning are hindered by poor skills in literacy. They find the sophisticated language of art criticism and art history difficult and often miss key

features of the artists' works. Their personal responses are honest but often display a lack of understanding. Standards in Year 10 are above average especially in clay modelling. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in lessons. Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11.

123 All pupils benefit from individual teacher attention in all lessons so pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented make good progress at all stages. Teachers continually assess pupils in all lessons and pupils are shown how to improve. Work is challenging for all pupils. There are significant numbers of absences in all lessons. As at the time of the previous inspection, poor attendance prevents some pupils from realising their potential.

124 The quality of teaching is good in all years. The teachers have good specialist knowledge and understanding. They give good demonstrations and illustrations of the skills and techniques required at each stage of the work. These visual displays enable all pupils, including those who have English as an additional language and those with poor skills in literacy, to understand the nature of the work being done. The teachers have very good class-management skills and create a good climate for learning. Lessons are structured in short stages and pupils make good progress within lessons.

125 Pupils' learning is good throughout. They acquire an appropriate range of skills, put a lot of effort into their work and show interest in it. Many sustain concentration well. Attitudes to the subject and behaviour in lessons are good. There is some good use of information and communications technology in the development of pupils' work in Year 7 and again by GCSE pupils who attend extra lunchtime lessons. However, this does not extend to all pupils.

126 The subject is well led and managed. Staffing has improved significantly in the past two years. Assessment is good and is used to evaluate the success of the topics studied. Planning is good and reviewed regularly. The subject maintains good links with the design and technology faculty. This is beneficial to both faculties especially in design and textiles. The number choosing art in GCSE has increased significantly, doubled in the present Year 11 and trebled in the present Year 10. There are extensive displays of pupils' work around the school. These enhance the school environment and encourage pupils.

127 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils study a wide range of art from different cultures. These include the spiritual and social elements of these art forms. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching has improved. Standards in GCSE and standards in three-dimensional work have improved. There is some improvement in the use of information and communication technology, although it is still unsatisfactory overall.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been planned well.
- Teaching is good, often very good.
- Careers education and work experience are good.

Areas for improvement

- The lower attaining pupils, in the upper school particularly, do not achieve enough.
- The attitude of pupils on the short course GCSE is not good enough.
- Staff have too little awareness of the three strands of citizenship in all subjects.

128 The standards attained by pupils at the end of Years 9 and 11 vary widely but are in line with expectations overall. Pupils achieve appropriately at all stages, taking their prior knowledge into account. In Year 9, pupils have a good knowledge of drugs and heroin particularly. In one lesson they were given the opportunity to discuss and give their opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of drugs and many demonstrated average oral skills. Some know the effect of drugs on the body but where there were low expectations of pupils by the teacher, attitudes were poor and pupils made little contribution to discussion. They understand the law relating to alcohol and tobacco well and know that shopkeepers break the law when selling cigarettes to 13 year old children.

129 Pupils in Year 11 understood the role of the free press when discussing the media. They know the different range of media, such as television, news programmes and newspapers as a form of communication and how it influences its audience. Pupils in Year 10 learned about the procedures for work experience in a careers education lesson. They were encouraged to take initiative and responsibility in obtaining a work placement for the duration of work experience. Opportunities were given for them to observe a range of vacancies in a well-prepared 'job shop' and many understood the qualities needed for an application. The standards of presentation and quality of written work are below average.

130 Teaching overall is good and some is very good; one lesson was unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, planning is good and teachers use discussion effectively to involve pupils and allow them to state their opinions. Teachers' expertise is strong, as demonstrated in a lively discussion session on drug misuse with a Year 9 group. The teacher's acting skills were used very effectively to capture and keep the pupils' attention and interest. Some lessons did not involve pupils adequately and occasionally provided insufficient challenge, using low-level tasks, such as colouring and cutting. In some lessons, pupils do little written work, the tasks being supported by a range of worksheets, and so the development of their literacy skills is too slow.

131 Most pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their lessons with attitudes being most positive in Years 9 and 10. Learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Many of the lower attaining pupils show little interest in the short course GCSE and lack concentration. Pupils in one Year 10 lesson, discussing the role of the media, were disruptive and lacked respect for the teacher. Low-level tasks do not challenge the more able pupils sufficiently although those with a special educational need make satisfactory progress because of the good quality of in-class support.

132 The curriculum has been well planned by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. It is taught as part of the personal and social education programme and in some extra discrete citizenship

units for one lesson per week. Good use is made of specialist teachers for some units and outside speakers also make a valuable contribution. A school audit has taken place and all subjects have identified areas that are relevant to the citizenship curriculum. Many teachers are not yet fully aware of the programme of study and the relevance of the three strands of citizenship.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The quality of leadership is good: the impact of the new management team is beginning to raise standards.
- The quality of teaching is good: this is beginning to improve pupils' achievements.
- The quality of the curriculum is changing positively and giving the pupils a greater depth of experience.
- Work in textiles is good. In this area the design process is most clearly established and practical outcomes are of a high standard.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11, boys' especially, are not high enough.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in the area of resistant materials are not good enough.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning, with particular gaps in computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing.

133 The standard of work in Years 7 to 9 is below the national average. The teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicated that standards were well below average in 2002 and were at similar levels in previous years. Boys' attainment was particularly poor and well below that achieved by girls. Current standards are improving across Years 7 to 9, but remain below the national average overall; pupils achieve appropriately when their prior learning is considered. However, in some of the new and more specialist courses in Year 9, standards are beginning to reach the national average. Good teaching and greater continuity of experience is enabling more pupils to achieve in line with their ability, especially in textiles and graphics.

134 Girls generally achieve more highly than boys because they are more likely to complete work accurately and display better literacy skills. A large percentage of boys do not have the basic skills or personal qualities to make sufficient progress. They rely far too heavily on the teacher to tell them what to do, at every step of the process. They are also more likely to lose concentration and become disruptive on too many occasions. Pupils are too slow in grasping the design process as they move through Years 7 to 9 and the development of drawing and presentation skills is not systematic.

135 Work in textiles provides a model of good practice. In this area of activity, the design process is most clearly understood and the quality of practical work is consistently good. In textiles very good use is made of computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM). In the graphics units of work, pupils in Years 7 to 9 experience a good range of techniques but they are not systematically transferred to other areas of the subject. Design work and practical skills are poor in the whole range of work in resistant materials. Long-term staff absences and staffing changes have resulted in low standards of work and low expectations of what should be achieved. Skills in the use of information and communication technology are

unsatisfactory. Pupils have too few opportunities to use information and communication technology as an aid to designing and making. This is due to a shortage of working computers, limited software and inadequate manufacturing equipment.

136 At GCSE level in 2002, the standard of attainment in design and technology courses was well below the national average. Girls attained higher standards than boys but were still below average. The highest standards are in textiles courses where there has been a steady improvement in standards over the last few years. In food technology and graphic products courses, standards have varied year on year. In resistant materials courses, made up predominantly of boys, standards have been consistently well below average. This is due in part to long-term staff absence, but also to low expectations of pupils and the pupils' lack of basic practical and design skills.

137 The high standard in textiles is being maintained and project work is of good quality. Good teaching and regular assessment of project folders is the main reason for this. In this area pupils are given very detailed advice about what needs to be done to reach the higher grades. Pupils are expected to respond by given dates and usually complete the required work. In graphic products there is considerable variation in the quality of work in different groups. Very different attitudes to work are displayed by pupils in these groups. In one group, attitudes, levels of interest and progress are good. As a result projects are well developed and of a high standard. In the other group, consisting mainly of boys, levels of concentration and application are low. Standards are consequently below what they should be. In both groups, pupils have inadequate levels of theoretical knowledge and understanding, and have low literacy skills. In food technology the teachers are working hard to improve attainment after changing examination board and syllabus. Pupils do not yet, however, have a clear understanding of what is expected in order to improve their grades.

138 In all year groups there are significant numbers of pupils who have special educational needs. These pupils are not achieving as well as they should because teachers and pupils do not have support from a classroom assistant due to long-term staff absence. Individual education plans for the subject are written, but teachers do not have the time to put these into full effect. The progress of these pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.

139 The subject is popular with pupils because of its practical nature and attitudes are broadly good. The standard of behaviour varies considerably within and between groups, but is satisfactory overall. Pupils often display immature qualities during lessons, and boys especially find great difficulty in working with any degree of independence. Personal development, particularly during Years 10 and 11, is unsatisfactory. Homework is a key feature of the teaching strategy, but there is considerable variation in pupils' response.

140 The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In a majority of lessons in both the upper and lower school teaching was good, with a small number of satisfactory lessons. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Most of the very good teaching observed was in Year 9, where changes in timetable organisation have allowed greater continuity in learning and consequently greater progress and higher standards. Teachers have good specialist knowledge and skills and lessons are well planned. Planning includes clear learning objectives for the subject and attention to literacy and other cross-curricular skills, using a good range of different teaching methodologies. These are effectively put into practice in lessons. Teachers have to spend too much time during lessons helping pupils who have been absent to catch up, dealing with off-task behaviour and supporting pupils with little confidence in tackling the work set. Consequently, many pupils are not sufficiently challenged and standards are slow to rise. Teachers have worked hard to make assessment a critical part of the plan to raise standards. However, there is not yet sufficient

consistency in the approach used, and inspection evidence indicates that many pupils are not clear about the standard of their current work or what they have to do to improve, especially in Years 10 and 11.

141 The quality of learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in textiles and graphics. In food technology, knowledge and practical skills are good, but there is less evidence of understanding and confidence in using the design process. In resistant materials, electronics and systems and control, learning is insecure and this leads to lower standards; pupils have little confidence in their own ability. Pupils with special educational needs do not learn effectively, in part because they have insufficient support. In Year 11, pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress.

142 Leadership and management are good. Over a number of years the head of faculty has had to cope with difficult staffing matters. These are now beginning to be overcome. There is a new management structure with clear lines of responsibility. Other teachers are now able to lead development in various aspects of the subject. The positive results of their work are beginning to emerge, and good foundations are starting to improve standards, especially in Year 9. There are good systems in place for monitoring and reviewing teaching and learning, and for monitoring pupils' progress. Good practice and outcomes are now being shared amongst teachers. The development plan is clear and focused in the right areas. Schemes of work are being re-assessed in order to introduce more demanding work by Year 9. Assessment and moderation of standards are areas for further development.

143 Changes since the last inspection are satisfactory. There has been no improvement in standards in recent years, but the quality of teaching has been stabilised and there are key teachers in post who are beginning to drive up standards. Leadership and management are now good and teachers are working well together.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teachers plan their work thoroughly.?
- Assessment accurately indicates pupils' progress.
- Teaching is monitored well and strategies for improvement are implemented effectively.

Areas for improvement

- The standards achieved and the quality of written work are low.
- Higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
- There is no fieldwork in Years 7 to 9 and information and communication technology is not used often enough.

144 Pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 9 is below average. When teachers assessed pupils' work in 2002 at the end of Year 9, results indicated that the overall standard was well below the national average. During the inspection, the overall standard of work seen was below average, and in Year 7 pupils' attainment was well below average. A small proportion of pupils produce work that is above average. Overall achievement is in line with what is expected when the pupils' prior attainment is considered.

145 By the end of Year 11, pupils' overall level of attainment is also below average. From 1999 to 2001 results in the GCSE examination improved steadily and were above the national average in 2001. Results in 2002 were significantly below the national average and pupils did much poorer in this subject than in most of their others. This decline was due to the large number of low attaining pupils who began GCSE studies, and the poor attendance of a significant minority. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 was below average. Most pupils, however, achieve appropriately.

146 By the end of Year 9 pupils have a satisfactory basic knowledge of the main features of landscapes and cities, but have difficulty in explaining why they occur. Pupils in Year 7, for instance, accurately described and named the main parts of volcanoes and earthquakes but found it difficult to explain how they were caused. Many pupils do not recall work done in the previous lesson with any degree of accuracy, and most do not retain knowledge over long periods. Higher attaining pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of geographical terms, such as 'birth rate' and 'central business district'. Overall, pupils have a poor knowledge of where places are and what they are like.

147 Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a satisfactory knowledge of how geographical phenomena such as flooding may affect people's lives, but they have difficulty in explaining how such dangers may be avoided. Pupils in Year 10, for example, were unable to suggest how the amount of water running down a bare hillside into a river might be reduced. Higher attaining pupils understand geographical models such as one showing the inputs, processes, and outputs of a farm. Most pupils' understanding, however, lacks the depth and detail required to be successful at GCSE level.

148 Throughout, the quality of written work is weak. Written answers are generally accurate, but are often brief and contain spelling errors. Handwriting is generally untidy and poorly formed. Pupils complete simple graphs accurately and analyse them correctly. They extract information successfully from a range of resource material including textbooks, photographs and maps. The higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a sound understanding of the methods of geographical enquiry. They collect and process data effectively, and draw sensible conclusions.

149 Most pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In Year 11, poor attendance slows progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because the teachers have a good understanding of their requirements, and match materials closely to their needs. Learning support assistants from the special educational needs faculty liaise closely with the class teacher and provide friendly, firm, and well-considered support when they work with pupils in the classroom. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, but are not challenged sufficiently through rigorous questioning and specifically designed materials.

150 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and some is good or very good. This ensures that learning is sound throughout. Teachers are well prepared and organised so lessons always start promptly with a suitable 'starter' activity that reviews previous work and successfully establishes a good working atmosphere. The objectives of the lesson are shared with the pupils so that they know exactly what they are doing. Teachers use their good knowledge of the subject to plan lessons very thoroughly with a variety of activities that effectively transfer information and reinforce understanding, so pupils are interested and generally keen to be involved.

151 The best lessons involve pupils in lively, purposeful activities in groups or pairs so they work hard, at a good pace and maintain concentration throughout. In one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 7 were successfully studying the effects of the volcanic eruption of

Mount Pinatubo. The teacher briskly introduced the objectives of the lesson, and the pupils quickly completed a lively matching word exercise reviewing the geographical terms learnt in the previous lesson. Then they worked in pairs through several activities, sorting cards listing the effects of the eruption, reviewed this work, and used the information to produce a poster. The teacher quickly assessed the good progress made with a lively review of the lesson. In some lessons in Years 7 to 9, however, expectations are low and exercises, such as those that involve copying, do not gain pupils' interest, or provide enough challenge to ensure pupils gain sufficient depth of understanding.

152 Teachers generally manage pupils well and, as a result, behaviour is usually good and pupils successfully maintain their focus on the work throughout. A minority of pupils, however, are very dependent on the teacher to maintain their concentration, are not fully involved, and make slow progress. In most lessons teachers ensure that pupils understand the meaning and spelling of key words and provide writing frames as necessary to help them to structure work correctly. Marking is up to date, but teachers' comments do not clearly highlight mistakes in grammar and spelling, and do not clearly inform pupils what they need to do to improve.

153 The faculty is led and managed effectively by the head of faculty. There is a clear sense of direction and changes such as the improved structure of lessons have been successfully and consistently implemented. No member of staff is designated to support the head of faculty by being responsible, for instance, for the day-to-day organisation of the geography faculty, writing schemes of work and organising fieldwork; staff undertake these responsibilities voluntarily. Examination results are analysed carefully and clear strategies for improvement have been implemented, for example to improve the quality of GCSE coursework, revision and examination techniques. The time allocated for the subject in Year 9 is insufficient to ensure study in enough depth and to prepare pupils adequately for the key stage assessment.

154 The scheme of work is well written and complies fully with national requirements. There is, however, no programme of fieldwork in Years 7 to 9 to support GCSE coursework in Years 10 and 11. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use their skills in information and communication technology. The system of assessment is good. Teaching is monitored effectively but marking is not. Accommodation is of good quality and is enhanced by lively displays of pupils' work. Provision for independent study or research in the subject in the school's library is poor. The faculty responded well to the previous report, and has the capacity to succeed in making improvements to raise standards further.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The teaching is good overall and promotes good learning.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good, so pupils learn well.
- The faculty makes a very good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy.

Areas for improvement

- Marking does not give pupils sufficient information about how to improve their work.
- There is insufficient challenge for the highest attaining pupils in some lessons.

155 By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment overall is below that expected nationally. Most pupils begin Year 7 with a level of attainment that is well below average. In 2001 and 2002 teachers assessed their pupils' work at the end of Year 9 as well below the national average. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection was below average, although a small proportion was above average. A significant proportion in Year 9 are still working at levels expected for pupils in Year 7. Pupils from ethnic minority groups attain broadly similar standards to other pupils.

156 Most pupils make good progress in learning about the past and in understanding why events have happened, and overall achievement by Year 9 is good. They make slower progress in using and evaluating historical sources. This is usually because their literacy skills are poor. The highest attainers do not always make enough progress because the work set is not sufficiently demanding. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress, although most attain well below average standards. Some pupils with English as an additional language do not make good enough progress, because they do not receive sufficient specialist support in lessons.

157 The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations was below the national average in 2002. It was well below average in 2000 and 2001. Only a very small proportion gained an A or A* grade in 2002. All pupils who took the examination, however, gained at least a pass grade. This exceeds the national average. Pupils did significantly better in this subject than in most of their other subjects. The attainment of boys in 2002 was only a little below the boys' national average, whereas that of girls was well below the girls' average. The standard of work seen during the inspection was below average overall; a small proportion was above average. Overall the standards represent good progress from those at the end of Year 9 and most achieve well. This is the result of effective teaching and the commitment of pupils to their work.

158 Most pupils in Years 7 to 9 have sound knowledge and understanding of the past, but the majority do not reach high standards in using sources to make inferences about the past, or in understanding why different views of the past exist. They explain satisfactorily the reasons for actions taken in the past. Pupils in Year 7, for instance, showed sound understanding of the reasons why William I needed to build castles after 1066. The higher attainers understood factors such as power and control. In their work on World War I, pupils in Year 9 explained several reasons why men joined up readily in 1914, and higher attainers used accurately words such as 'patriotism'. Lower attainers use simple sources adequately for information. The high attainers evaluate successfully the reliability of such historical sources, as, for example, in their work on whether the actions of suffragettes led to women obtaining the right to vote.

159 Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 have good knowledge and understanding of the topics they are studying. The majority use historical sources competently for information about the past. Only the high attainers, however, understand clearly how historians evaluate evidence in building up a picture of the past. The lower attainers often have difficulty making valid deductions without help from their teachers. In their work on medical advances in the 19th century, pupils in Year 11 successfully used a video reconstruction of an operation in the 1840s to identify the problems of surgery at that time. The higher attainers used technical terms accurately. High attaining pupils in Year 10 clearly understood the links between the growth of towns and the spread of disease. The lower attainers understood the causes of disease but did not make the links with town growth with any confidence. In a wide sample of work seen on Elizabethan England, the higher attainers' work showed good evaluation of conflicting views of the past in their work on whether Drake was a hero or a villain. In this work, and in their extended writing on the Arab-Israeli conflict, these pupils were reaching above average GCSE standards.

160 The quality of teaching is good overall. As a result most pupils learn well, and make good progress. Teachers know their subject well and communicate effectively, so that most pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding about the past. Lessons are planned well and the aims are made clear to pupils at the start of the lessons. Teachers usually set work that is appropriate for the capabilities of the pupils. In some lessons however, the work does not provide sufficient depth or challenge for the highest attainers. Teachers do not always, for instance, expect or ask pupils to give lengthy answers, and often give the pupils information instead of asking the pupils to think more deeply for themselves. The work set for the lowest attainers in Years 7 to 9 is, however, suitable, and helps them to make good progress. The faculty makes a very strong contribution to helping improve pupils' literacy through activities that develop reading and writing skills. Work is marked regularly, but the comments do not give enough help to pupils about how to improve their work.

161 Teachers manage their pupils very well, making their expectations of good behaviour very clear and creating an effective, pleasant, working atmosphere that leads to good learning. In the best lessons, a series of short activities interspersed with whole-class sessions, in which the teacher checks what pupils have learned, leads to most pupils being involved and interested. The behaviour of the vast majority is invariably very good, although that of a small number of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is poor. This means that they do not learn well themselves, and occasionally, despite the teachers' efforts, they disrupt the learning of others. The majority of pupils have a very positive attitude to their work, show interest and enthusiasm and are good learners. This is especially noteworthy in Years 10 and 11, where most pupils demonstrate a strong commitment to their learning.

162 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of faculty knows well the strengths of the team, and where they can still improve. The teaching is monitored well. The commitment to improving attainment in public examinations is meeting with some success, notably with boys. The lack of a marking system which provides pupils with ways to improve their work is a weakness, as is the lack of sufficient challenge for the highest attainers in some lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teachers' good management of pupils allows lessons to proceed with pace.
- The provision for the subject has improved recently.
- Pupils have well-established communication skills.
- Teachers' good subject expertise contributes well to pupils' progress.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The overall level of attainment is not high enough.
- Electronic mail is used insufficiently.
- Pupils' knowledge of data handling in Years 7 to 9 is not good enough.
- Pupils' understanding of the use of information and communication technology in its wider sense is too low.

163 Teachers' assessment of 14 year olds in 2002 indicated that standards were well below the national average. In the 2002 GCSE short course 24 per cent of pupils achieved A*

to C and 88 per cent achieved an A* to G grade. There are no national figures available for comparison.

164 The present Year 9 did not have the benefit of regular information communication technology lessons in Years 7 and 8. Consequently the attainment of 14 year old pupils is below the level expected. Pupils are now having regular lessons and their progress since the beginning of Year 9 has improved. However, their achievement over time is unsatisfactory. The communication element is well established and pupils use the word processor with confidence to present and edit their work. They have a good understanding of presenting information using a multimedia program. An example of this was in a Year 8 topic 'Myself'. Here pupils confidently presented information about themselves using a series of slides and techniques to move the text and animate graphics. Pupils have a sound understanding of desktop publishing techniques producing documents with added art graphics that have been adjusted to fit their publication.

165 Pupils are starting to use spreadsheets to represent real-life situations; for example, they use formulae to work out points gained by football teams and estimate the costs in tuck shop accounts. These skills, however, are at a basic level and few pupils have knowledge of more complicated formulae. Pupils' knowledge of data handling is unsatisfactory. Although pupils in Year 8 have experienced control technology using a computer program to sequence a set of traffic lights in the correct order, pupils at the age of 14 have not had the opportunity to use this program, therefore at present their knowledge is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this weakness and plan to introduce this element into future programmes of study.

166 When the pupils in the present Year 11 started the GCSE course in Year 10 their knowledge was below the level expected and their current achievements are unsatisfactory. This is due to the fact that pupils did not have the benefit of regular lessons in their earlier year therefore the overall level of attainment of 16 year old pupils is below average. Their knowledge, however, of the communication element improves further and pupils use the application with competence for their work in other subjects. Their knowledge of a spreadsheet is limited and is confined to using simple formulae for calculations. Pupils' knowledge of a database is better at this stage. They have a clear understanding of the benefits of its use, and know that the data gathered has to be entered into the correct areas to enable the user to quickly retrieve and filter the appropriate information.

167 Although pupils know about websites they have not had the opportunity to design their own site. Pupils do not have their own e-mail address at school. Pupils at both key stages use the facilities of the Internet with confidence and understand the benefits when researching information for topics and projects. Pupils' knowledge of the use of information and communication technology in its wider sense is too narrow, few being able to give examples of where it might be used.

168 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory in all years. Teachers are aware of these pupils' needs and use strategies to support them by pairing them with more confident pupils. However, there is too little additional support from learning assistants, especially for pupils with behavioural problems.

169 Pupils' attitudes to the subject are generally positive. Behaviour overall is good and pupils concentrate well when working alone on computers. They are confident to talk about their work. There is, however, in a small number of classes a significant minority who are disruptive and poorly behaved. Although teachers deal well with these pupils they demand an excessive amount of teachers' time, slowing learning for the majority.

170 The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use their expertise well to advise pupils and guide them to the next stage of learning. Teachers provide good individual support during lessons, praising good work. Pupils respond well to this approach and are confident to seek help, contributing well to their progress. Teachers manage pupils well, insisting on quiet when explaining a procedure. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with promptly and with sensitivity by teachers in most lessons, allowing lessons to proceed with pace and without interruption.

171 Good lessons start with a clear explanation of the objectives and the task. Although teachers make effective use of whole-class demonstrations, pupils are not always questioned about their understanding. This means that pupils tend to start the task without a clear understanding of what to do and time is wasted re-explaining the task to individuals. The majority of lessons conclude with a plenary session for teachers to ascertain learning. However, the lack of a projector or an interactive whiteboard for pupils to show their work to the class is hampering opportunities to develop oral skills. On the occasion when teaching was less successful the temporary teacher had not been fully briefed about the class or the work. As a consequence pupils were not fully informed of the task, a significant majority of pupils were not working, and progress was slow.

172 Information and communication technology is taught as a separate subject in Years 8 and 9. It is taught as part of other subjects in Year 7. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils follow a short course GCSE. The overall management and leadership of the subject are good. Although the head of faculty has had responsibility for the subject for a short period he has a clear vision about the future development of the subject and the need to raise standards. Although attainment has not improved, the overall improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The provision for the subject has now improved and, with the exception of Year 7, all pupils now have regular lessons taught by subject specialists contributing to pupils' progress. Long-term teacher absence is having a negative affect on the progress of some pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

173 The provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum at the last inspection was judged to be inadequate. Although there has been some improvement there are still many subjects that are not providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support learning. There is too little use of information and communication technology across the curriculum in some subjects. There is good work in modern foreign languages using the word processor with the appropriate accents on words and the use of the Internet for research. Satisfactory use was seen in mathematics using the Omnigraph program spreadsheets and Logo. However, the provision in the schemes of work lacks detail and it is not generally well used in the subject. Although the history faculty has provision in its schemes of work, use is confined to some word processing and use of the Internet, and use overall is unsatisfactory. The music faculty makes good use of the available hardware and software to support pupils' performances. The provision in science is overall satisfactory; however the lack of data logging software is preventing a 'hands on' approach. Technology is not used widely enough in art. Provision is mentioned in the programmes of work and some good examples of design were seen but the use is not extensive. When technology is used in design and technology it is effective with computer-aided design in textiles. However, some of the hardware is not compatible with the available software and use is limited. The use of information and communication technology in English is satisfactory with some word processing. In geography, overall use is satisfactory with examples of word processing and spreadsheets but this use was mainly with older pupils as part of their coursework. There was no evidence of the use of information and communication technology for pupils with special educational needs to support learning

generally. There is no provision in the schemes of work for physical education and the overall use is unsatisfactory in that subject.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in both French and German is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The leadership of the acting head of faculty is very good.
- The progress made by pupils in Years 7 and 8 in both languages is good.
- The progress pupils make in writing in French and German is good.
- The contribution the faculty makes to pupils' development in literacy is good.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE standards in French and German are too low.
- Teachers' and the pupils' make too little use of the foreign language in lessons.
- The time of the French and German assistants is not used efficiently.
- The schemes of work for French and German need revising.
- Pupils need to have their own textbooks for home study.

174 Pupils study either French or German from Year 7 and approximately two thirds of pupils continue with the one language to GCSE in Year 11. At present, no pupils study a second foreign language. Staffing problems have adversely affected continuity of learning in both languages over the past few years.

175 By the end of Year 9, standards in French and German are below national expectations, but the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. Standards in listening in Year 9 are below expectations. Pupils are heavily dependent on support sheets and teachers' guidance for understanding spoken French and German. This is because the teachers do not always use the foreign language in lessons and because the recorded extracts pupils hear do not always sufficiently challenge them. By contrast, in Years 7 and 8, pupils' standards in listening are above expectations because of challenging tasks, and because their teachers tend to use the foreign language more at this stage.

176 Standards in speaking of pupils of all abilities in Year 9 are well below expectations. Pupils lack confidence and speak with poor accents, mainly because there are few opportunities in lessons for pupils to hear and use the foreign language naturally; however, the excellent use of the foreign language by some teachers in Years 7 and 8 motivates pupils very well and provides an excellent model for them to copy. In the Year 7 German and French lessons seen, all pupils and especially the boys spoke confidently with very good accents and gained levels above those of most pupils in Year 9. Disappointingly, excellent opportunities for pupils to practise spoken language with the enthusiastic and capable foreign language assistants are often lost because teachers do not consistently give the assistants sufficient information about lessons to enable them to prepare appropriate support materials.

177 Exercise books show that many pupils make good progress in writing in both languages, despite the low start some pupils have in literacy. The teachers' clear emphasis on accuracy of spelling and grammar, and their frequent marking of pupils' work, support pupils' overall development in literacy well. By Year 9, most pupils can express themselves in short sentences or brief paragraphs in French or German and most have a sound vocabulary according to their ability, and the highest attaining pupils can use the present, past or immediate future, for example in describing holiday events and future plans. The pupils in the middle sets in Year 9 make less progress in writing; many are too dependent on support sheets and teachers do not always provide tasks appropriate for the wide range of language

learning needs in these groups. Standards in reading are below average overall. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as their literacy needs are well catered for in the low attaining sets in which they are mainly placed. One pupil with English as an additional language made good progress due to individual lesson time with the German assistant.

178 In 2002, GCSE results in both French and German were well below average. The results in French were lowered by the very poor results of the boys although boys and girls did less well in French than in most of their other subjects. Boys did as well in German as in their other subjects but girls did less well than in their other subjects. The results in 2002 continued a trend of well below average performance over the past three years and of lower results overall in French than in German. In 2002, pupils' results in French were worse than in most of their other subjects. By the end of Year 11 standards in French and German are well below average in listening, speaking, reading and writing; however, pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Most, including low attaining pupils, are working well towards their predicted grades, and all continue to make good progress in writing, and are developing confidence in speaking.

179 All pupils have good awareness of their progress because teachers clearly relate their planning to examination requirements, and refer to this in lessons. In a good Year 11 German lesson for low attaining pupils, the teacher gave very good guidance to pupils on how to phrase their language in the speaking examination. By the end of Year 11, several higher attaining pupils have progressed in both languages to above average standards in speaking and writing and all pupils have a satisfactory topic-based vocabulary appropriate for their ability. In reading, many pupils make unsatisfactory progress, due to lack of access to a range of challenging texts and vocabulary reference. Pupils in all years, but particularly in Years 10 and 11, have too few opportunities for home study and revision because they do not have their own textbooks.

180 Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, and most pupils are well behaved and co-operative in lessons. The faculty's use of information and communication technology is being developed and is satisfactory overall; colourful displays show pupils' word-processed letters and descriptions, and occasional use of language websites and the intranet in lessons develops pupils' reading and writing skills well. Gifted and talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress, as their needs are not identified or fully provided for.

181 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in both French and German, and has improved since the last inspection. Teaching in half of the lessons was good or better, and one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Most teachers structure their lessons very well and have clear objectives; they produce high quality resources using information and communication technology, which exemplify learning points very well for pupils. For example, in a very good Year 11 French lesson, the teacher used an overhead transparency very effectively, giving pupils clear examples of using the future tense through colourful images and text. Teachers do not frequently provide sufficiently challenging tasks for the learning needs of all pupils in the wide ability top and middle sets. Good examples were seen of teachers' marking and grading of pupils' written work, for example, in Years 10 and 11 German; however, the faculty's full policy on assessment is not consistently applied.

182 Leadership and management are good overall. The recently appointed acting head of faculty leads very well, giving clear direction to the faculty through her own very good teaching, and her strong commitment to raising standards. Good improvement since the last report is already evident in all faculty policies, including effective procedures for assessment, and for monitoring and evaluating teaching; and the use of information and communication

technology is now excellent in systematically recording and analysing pupils' assessment results. Improvement since the previous report is satisfactory overall.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Attainment is improving and the provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- Performance skills of the older pupils are strong.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge contributes well to pupils' achievements.
- The management of the subject is good and effective assessment procedures lead to improved attainment.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The poor information and communication technology provision for pupils in Year 7 does not support composition skills.
- Overall resources are inadequate.

183 Teachers' assessment of 14 year old pupils in 2002 indicated that standards were above the national average. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with overall below average attainment. Pupils, however, make good progress, achieve well and by the time they reach 14 they are at the expected level. Pupils make good progress with their performance skills. They identify notes on the keyboard and tuned percussion instruments and play simple melodies either from memory or reading from formal notation. Rhythmic skills are well established, as was seen a Year 9 ensemble lesson. Here pupils played a series of independent rhythms whilst successfully maintaining a steady beat. Most pupils have an understanding of different styles of music. They recognise the instruments played and use the appropriate vocabulary when describing the music, using such words as 'dynamics' and 'pitch' with understanding. Many pupils start with low levels of understanding of composition in Year 7. However, pupils do progress well and by the time they are 14 they have developed knowledge of primary chords and are beginning to use composing techniques to develop structure in their creative work. Pupils use information and communication technology programs well in Years 8 and 9 to support their composition work but this is underused in Year 7, partially due to the restricted resources.

184 The 2002 GCSE A* to C results were slightly below the national average but there has been an upward trend in recent years. The A* to G results have been consistently above the national average over the past three years. In the present Year 11, few pupils have chosen the music option as part of their expressive arts course. Judgements on attainment therefore have been made from observation of the pupils in Year 10 who have selected music as their art form. These pupils are achieving well and attainment is above average overall.

185 The performing skills of these pupils are above the level expected at this point in the course. Pupils' rhythmic skills are good. Playing a range of percussion instruments, they successfully keep a steady pulse in group compositions that have a clear structure and development. These good rhythmic skills were also evident in the samba band. Here, accompanying a dance group, pupils played a series of complex rhythms to fit with the choreography of the dance. Pupils are also developing their improvisation skills. An example of this was in the 'rock school' session, pupils improvising harmonically correct short phrases to link verses of a song. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are fully integrated into lessons and on occasions benefit with additional help from a learning support assistant.

186 Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They are very enthusiastic, enjoy the sessions and show a good level of interest. Older pupils show a good level of commitment, working independently without teacher intervention and working collaboratively in group work when discussing the development of the composition. Most pupils are confident in group performances but there is a reluctance to perform individually; in particular, girls need a lot of encouragement to contribute.

187 The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Two lessons seen were judged as very good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this knowledge is used well to demonstrate styles of music, suggesting ways pupils can improve their creative work. Teachers have good discipline, insisting on quiet when explaining a skill and when pupils are suggesting ways to improve the group composition. The planning of lessons is good, selecting styles of music to perform that have appeal to pupils, incorporating a range of resources and recorded music to motivate and add to the authenticity to ensemble performances and compositions. Good lessons always start with clear explanations, ensuring that pupils are fully aware of the task, and leading to good progress and learning. The good support by the learning assistant is contributing positively to pupils' progress, especially those with special educational needs. On the occasion when teaching was less effective the lesson lacked a variety of activities, resulting in pupils becoming restless and the rate of learning slowing. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.

188 The standard of extra-curricular music is good. The wide variety of music available contributes well to pupils' musical development. Ensembles are well supported by pupils and provide an extra challenge for gifted and talented pupils. The management of the subject is good. The subject leader has a clear vision about maintaining standards and future developments of the subject. The improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The open-house access at lunchtimes and after school significantly increases pupils' musical opportunities. The overall attainment has been raised due to the rigorous and detailed assessment of pupils' work and progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Standards in dance are high.
- Accommodation is of very good quality and promotes some good learning.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities that pupils enjoy and benefit from.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of work seen are not high enough throughout the school.
- The curriculum is not up to date.
- The amount of time in Years 10 and 11 is not adequate.
- Staff knowledge of the National Curriculum is insufficient.

189 Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were below the national average, although pupils did much better in this subject than in most of their other subjects. They have been falling over the past two years, from a level close to the national average, because of serious staffing problems. The standards of pupils following the GCSE course have been close to the

national average but are now below that. Teachers' assessments of pupils by the end of Year 9 indicated standards below the national average and matched the lessons observed.

190 Pupils enter the school with a low level of skill and experience in a range of activities. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, standards observed in lessons were below average and in some activities they were well below. Standards in gymnastics are below average in Year 7 and well below average in Year 8. Knowledge and understanding of movement are weaknesses and pupils do not link a sequence together or understand the need to use space. They cannot perform a range of rolls and the quality of balances lack control. Transfer of work onto apparatus is poor in Year 8 with a lack of movements performed to change direction. In Year 9 pupils do not play volleyball at all well as they are unable to serve or control a ball in a rally.

191 Standards are above the national average in dance for pupils in Year 7. These pupils performed a group dance with good control and joined motifs with knowledge and understanding of rhythm and timing. In Year 9, standards are below average in dance but this is a new activity for pupils; they are making good progress in lessons. Overall, pupils achieve appropriately by the end of Year 9, bearing in mind their prior learning and experiences.

192 By the end of Year 11 standards are below average in some, and well below in other, activities. The scrutiny of work at GCSE indicates below average presentation and unfinished work. In a theory lesson in Year 10, pupils produced standards that were in line with those expected nationally. Their knowledge of the principles of training was good and they understood the importance of the need to obtain information about individuals when planning a fitness programme. They knew the importance of a warm-up prior to exercise. In practical work, pupils in Year 11 maintained a rally over the net in badminton but lacked control of the shuttlecock. Many were unable to serve to begin a game and lacked the range of strokes to play competently. Knowledge and understanding of the tactics and strategies of basketball were weak. Pupils in Year 11 lacked awareness of dribbling, double dribble and travel in a basketball game, which was played at a low level. Pupils' achievements are below expectations by the end of Year 11.

193 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all years. One lesson was unsatisfactory and this was due to a lack of challenge in gymnastics. The teacher failed to work on the pupils' low level of skills before transfer on to apparatus. Lessons include learning objectives but there are no arrangements to teach the full ability range and as a result pupils with a special educational need and the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and make unsatisfactory progress. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified in classes. Teachers' subject knowledge of the activities taught is good but that of the National Curriculum is a weakness. Teachers work hard at raising the standards of below average pupils and attempt to give them the opportunity to take responsibility. The quality of learning overall is satisfactory and is good in dance, in which the teacher is particularly knowledgeable. At GCSE, marking is unsatisfactory and has not improved since the previous inspection. Grades for work are over-generous, work is unfinished and comments in marking do not give sufficient information for pupils to improve their work. There has been no systematic monitoring of teaching in the faculty.

194 The attitudes of pupils vary and are better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. They are very good in dance where enthusiastic teaching challenges pupils to perform to a high standard of work. Behaviour in GCSE classes is often immature, and in Year 11 particularly, some pupils lack interest in the subject. They do not co-operate well in groups or concentrate sufficiently in lessons where they are often disruptive. Behaviour is just satisfactory overall.

195 All members of the faculty have been appointed to the school in the last five months. There is no curriculum plan to reflect the recommendations of Curriculum 2000 and schemes of work are therefore outdated. The amount of time devoted to the subject in Years 10 and 11 is too low. There is no consistent approach to teaching in the faculty. The newly qualified teachers have settled in well and are making a positive contribution to the school. Some improvements have taken place since the last inspection. Dance is now taught to both boys and girls in the lower school but although the participation in lessons rates have increased, there are still too many pupils not taking part in lessons, particularly girls in Years 10 and 11. There is no formal inclusion of non-participants in lessons to ensure that they take some active part. Assessment of pupils does take place but it does not consistently include National Curriculum levels. Reports to parents do not indicate what pupils know, understand and can do. There are good links with the feeder schools. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils, and school teams and individual pupils have achieved success. Resources are good but the library offers little support in terms of books for basic research at GCSE. Accommodation is very good and has been made more attractive and interesting by good display, improving pupils' interest in their work. The new dance studio has helped raise standards in that aspect of the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- All the specialist teaching is good.
- The teaching of examination techniques to Years 10 and 11 is good.
- The leadership and management of the faculty are good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.
- Good handling of reflection and debates on moral issues is a strength.

Area for improvement

- The non-specialist teaching sometimes misses opportunities to pursue the required depth.

196 By the end of Year 9 the majority of pupils attain standards in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus and this represents satisfactory achievement and progress in the light of their attainment on entry to the school. By the end of Year 11 approximately half the pupils are entered for the full GCSE course and in 2002 attained grades A* to C in line with national averages. This represents satisfactory achievement and progress overall, although the girls did much better than the boys, achieving significantly better grades in this subject than in most of their other subjects. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do not follow the full GCSE course do the short version of the examination course and in 2002 under-performed; reasons can be identified to account for this. These include long-term staff illness and a succession of non-specialist supply teachers. In recent years religious education has consistently been one of the best achieving subjects in the school.

197 Pupils with special educational needs and those identified as being gifted and talented as well as those whose first language is not English attain appropriate standards with the help of a limited amount of in-class support, modified materials and appropriate teaching strategies. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development of all pupils in the school and to citizenship. Literacy skills and particularly vocabulary acquisition are satisfactorily improved.

198 The work seen in lessons and in exercise books shows that pupils in Years 7 to 9 have an increasing knowledge of the main beliefs, practices, signs and symbols and major figures of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. A strength of the faculty is that the pupils also have opportunities to reflect on such issues as a person's journey through life, rites of passage, assuming responsibility and developing relationships and values. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 show a developing understanding of Christian principles and practices, those of other faiths, the notion of God and morality, and the importance of debating such moral issues as abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment. They use evidence to arrive at and to express personal viewpoints and they show respect for the values of others. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop an understanding of what it means for many people to belong to a faith group and they gain an insight into several different faiths and cultures. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are included in the discussions and activities and encouraged to express a personal view. They are generally well behaved in class, co-operative and responsive to the good specialist teaching they receive.

199 The quality of teaching and learning is good at all stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Of the lessons observed, all but one, taught by specialists, were good. The other, taught by a non-specialist supply teacher, was competently taught but showed some missed opportunities. All the teachers have good classroom skills, clear aims, effective materials and worksheets, and make good use of artefacts and visual aids. There is good, purposeful teaching aided by good resources and accommodation in a good learning environment helped by impressive display. Relationships are good, and a strength of the teaching is the ability to conduct meaningful debates on important issues. Visits, visitors, display, and interesting new developments in information and communication technology add to the effectiveness of the teaching. Any discrepancy between good teaching and a temporary dip in examination results in last year's short GCSE course can be put down to a secondment, long-term illness and a series of non-specialist supply teachers. Current teaching of this group is sound and in Years 10 and 11 the teaching of examination techniques is one of its strong features. During inspection week the head of faculty, one teacher and one learning assistant were absent through long-term or temporary illness.

200 The current leadership and management of the faculty are good. The statutory requirements in respect of religious education are met. The school has overcome difficulties caused by long-term illness by placing it directly in the hands of a very experienced and specialist member of the leadership group so that much ground has been made up and the faculty is functioning as it traditionally has. All the expected policies are in place and there is satisfactory monitoring and evaluation of teaching, results and development plans. Religious education received a good report at the time of the previous inspection. It now has the underlying strength to continue to play an important part in the life of this church school.