

INSPECTION REPORT

ORMESBY SCHOOL

Netherfields, Middlesbrough

LEA area: Middlesbrough

Unique reference number: 111741

Headteacher: Mr Colin V Algie

Reporting inspector: Mr R C Drew
7281

Dates of inspection: 13 - 16 January 2003

Inspection number: 249161

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
School category:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stockwith Close Netherfields Middlesbrough
Postcode:	TS3 0RG
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Adamson
Date of previous inspection:	3 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7281	R. Drew	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well the school is led and managed</p> <p>What the school should do to improve further?</p>
9710	E. Burgess	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
30899	K. Boden	Team inspector	Design and technology	
14596	A. Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Special educational needs Religious education	
15407	M. Harrison	Team inspector	Geography	
27416	T. Howard	Team inspector	Mathematics	
21785	V. Kerr	Team inspector	Educational inclusion English as an additional language Science	
11975	T. McIntosh-Clark	Team inspector	English	
19867	M. Pettitt	Team inspector	Art and design History	
31879	D. Rhodes	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
19404	L. Schubeler	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

7222	A. Watson	Team inspector	Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12972	A. Weaden	Team inspector	Citizenship Physical education	

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The Office for Standards in Education
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ormesby Comprehensive School is an 11 to 16 school, with 830 pupils on roll. It draws most of its pupils from the inner suburbs of South Middlesbrough, where levels of social and economic deprivation are high by national standards. The vast majority of pupils are white, with a tiny minority of pupils coming from several Asian ethnic groups. Five pupils have refugee status. Seven pupils use English as an additional language, of whom only three are at an early stage of language acquisition. About 45 per cent of current pupils are entitled to free school meals, although in most recent years the figure has been over 50 per cent. A small minority of pupils enter the school with high prior attainment, but each year many more have very low prior attainment. Nearly 40 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is well above national levels. Most commonly pupils have specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural needs or moderate learning difficulties. In addition, 71 pupils have formal statements of special educational needs, many for physical difficulties, some for visual impairment and a significant minority for speech or communication difficulties. Units exist for each of these categories, though pupils move easily between the specialised units and the rest of the school.

Since the previous inspection, the school has made new appointments at headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher levels. It has been very active in the local Education Action Zone programme and is strongly involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative for Middlesbrough. As a school in challenging circumstances, between 1999-2001 it received intensive support from Her Majesty's Inspectorate. It is seeking Engineering College Status for September 2003.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with rising standards of attainment. While results are well below average, pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching is good and the school has very good leadership and management. Value for money is good.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and some aspects, such as the management of pupils, the use of assessment and the high expectations teachers have of pupils, are very good. Learning is good overall.
- Pupils, including gifted and talented ones, achieve well and often make very good progress in lessons. They are helped by very good monitoring of their academic and personal progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress; excellent provision is made for those with statements. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good.
- The curriculum is good throughout the school and very good in Years 7 to 9.
- Leadership and management by the head and key staff are very good and the staff's shared commitment to succeed is excellent.
- Arrangements for child protection and the level of general care for pupils are excellent, and moral and social guidance are very good, leading to very good relationships and good attitudes and behaviour on the part of pupils.
- Overall provision is very good in physical education, art, religious education and history.

What could be improved

- GCSE results and rates of progress made are currently below the school's norms in English, mathematics, science, modern languages, geography and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Levels of absence are too high, despite the school's considerable efforts, and have a marked detrimental effect on standards in all year groups, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- ICT provision has improved significantly but is not yet satisfactory: aspects of the programmes of study are not taught and assessed and the other subjects of the curriculum do not adequately reinforce ICT skills and applications in their day-to-day teaching.
- The provision for numeracy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- Staffing arrangements are unsatisfactory for English, literacy, religious education and science, and accommodation is unsatisfactory for ICT, music and the library.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since then it has made very good improvements. It has tackled the key issues raised in 1997 very effectively and acted on guidance received from HMI during recent monitoring. As a result, literacy provision is now good and the history department is strong, and assessment, target setting and the wider range of teaching styles required are now in place. Links with parents and the work of governors have both improved noticeably.

In addition, the school has raised standards very successfully for pupils of all ages and the quality of teaching and learning is now very much better.

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				Key well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	C	

The collective results in National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science for Year 9 pupils are well below the national averages for all schools. However, they are above the average for similar schools. Given the very low levels of prior attainment most Year 7 pupils begin with, these Year 9 results indicate that they achieve well in school. Progress in the majority of lessons is good.

The test results for English in 2002 were below average for all schools while in mathematics and science they were well below average. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were well below average in science but below rather than "well below" average in English and mathematics. This confirms the improving trend shown by recent test results. In addition, compared with results for schools in the same free school meals category, English results were well above average, those for mathematics above average and those for science were average.

By Year 11 pupils are making satisfactory additional progress. The examination results are well below average for all schools but broadly in line with standards in similar schools. Standards are rising faster than nationally: not only were the 2002 results in terms of A* to C pass rates dramatically better than those for 2000, but the work observed in current Year 11 classes shows standards that are collectively just below average. While the targets set by the local education authority for 2002 were not quite met, current Year 10 and 11 pupils are working at standards that suggest they are likely to meet the targets for 2003 and 2004. In some subjects, notably history, religious education and music, GCSE results are above the average for all schools: in art, results match the national average. Results are well below average in English, mathematics, science, geography, modern languages and ICT, and this pattern is matched in mathematics and science by the standards observed during the inspection. Pupils make particularly good progress in religious education in Years 10 and 11, but their achievement is unsatisfactory in ICT.

Pupils identified as gifted or talented make good progress in all year groups. They are given challenging work on a regular basis and they respond well. Many pupils have special educational needs of different types, and the very good progress they make across Years 7 to 11 reflects both successful work by subject teachers and very well managed additional support from the special educational needs department. Because of this support, pupils with English as an additional language achieve standards that are commensurate with their abilities.

Boys under perform in test results in Year 9 and examinations in Year 11, but the gap between their standards and those of girls in the school is narrower than the national average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The vast majority of pupils are very positive about school and make the most of the opportunities it offers. A minority of pupils reveal more negative attitudes through their frequent absences.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. It is frequently very good. A minority of pupils lack the self-discipline to behave acceptably at all times: staff consistently deal well with this challenge and minimise its impact. Exclusions are high, but declining, reflecting the school's determination to insist on high standards.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Staff, led most effectively by the headteacher, demonstrate a very strong commitment to developing good relationships with pupils. They succeed and they demonstrate to pupils how they should relate to one another.
Attendance	Poor. Despite very intensive efforts by the school, attendance levels are well below average. Absences authorised by parents are too high. Lateness to school is too common, but punctuality to lessons is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning in the school are both good overall. Very good teaching and learning takes place in about one-third of lessons, and in a few lessons the quality is excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching is very rare. The most common strengths in teaching are the very good planning and the high expectations teachers build into lessons. Teachers use assessment information about their pupils very effectively and are very good at managing pupils constructively. This enables them to motivate and guide pupils with a very wide range of prior attainment and learning needs. Teachers are good at reinforcing literacy across the curriculum, but are not teaching numeracy and ICT satisfactorily. While some use homework well, it is inconsistently set and marked by others. Pupils learn well on balance and, because additional support is so well organised, pupils with special educational needs learn very well across Years 7 to 11, as do the very few using English as an additional language.

English and science are both taught well across the school, and mathematics teaching is very good, especially in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, physical education and geography teaching are particularly successful. In Years 10 and 11, modern languages teaching is satisfactory, whilst the quality is good in most other subjects. ICT teaching and learning are unsatisfactory across Years 7 to 11, largely because aspects of the subject are not taught and because the staff as a whole lacks the confidence and access to resources to use ICT in the rest of the curriculum.

Teachers are good at recognising the needs of gifted and talented pupils and these pupils learn well across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is much that is very good in the curriculum, especially the well-established blend of academic and vocational courses, the wide range of extra-curricular activities and the excellent equality of access for all pupils. However, ICT provision across Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is excellent. For the many other pupils who are also on the special educational needs register, overall provision is very good. It is very well organised, and involves effective work with the special educational needs department, when required, and within mainstream lessons, when this is appropriate.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very few pupils using English as an additional language receive very good support. Specialist help is effectively deployed and staff as a whole are alert to their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The school gives very effective guidance on moral and social matters, and there is good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The day-to-day security provided for pupils is excellent. Monitoring of their academic and personal progress is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads a closely knit senior management team that both sets effective policies and plans in motion and demonstrates what it requires of colleagues. The senior management team is highly visible around the school, showing care, firmness and interest in pupils. Leadership and management by heads of department and year heads are good overall, and in many instances very good. Accommodation, staffing and resource levels are, on balance, satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors show a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and offer equally good strategic advice and support. Most statutory duties are fulfilled, but those for ICT in Years 10 and 11 and for the daily act of worship are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school analyses its performance very perceptively and has acted on areas of weakness identified by the last inspection. It has made very good improvement since that time and is now monitoring day-to-day teaching well.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funds closely support wisely chosen educational priorities. There is very careful financial management in the school and considerable success in seeking out additional funding. All income is used in ways that provide best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>A particularly high proportion of parents are pleased with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The high expectations the school places on its pupils.• The approachable nature of the school.• The good progress their children make.• The good quality of teaching in school.• The way the school helps their children become mature and responsible.• The interesting range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school.	<p>A relatively small minority of parents would like to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Even closer links between home and school.• Better arrangements for setting and marking homework.

The inspectors fully endorse the parents' very positive views on so many aspects of the school's work. They agree with parents that homework arrangements could be improved, although these are broadly satisfactory compared with the situation in most schools. Links with parents are judged to be good in comparison with those in other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well in this school. Most start in Year 7 with prior attainment that is very low by national standards, especially in terms of literacy skills. However, in 2002 the results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, while well below average for all schools in English, mathematics and science, were above the average for similar schools.
2. Results in these three "core" subjects are rising faster than nationally, and this upward trend is confirmed by the standards of work seen during the inspection. Current Year 9 pupils are producing work in English and mathematics that is just below the national average, although in science work is still well below average.
3. In the other subjects, standards of work for Year 9 seen during the inspection were mostly below average, but in art and physical education attainment is in line with national levels. These standards reflect good overall achievement by pupils across Years 7 to 9. Pupils make very good progress in English, religious education and art, but unsatisfactory progress in ICT.
4. By the end of Year 11, pupils' results in GCSE and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) examinations are well below the national averages for all schools, but they match those for schools with a similar intake. Results are rising noticeably: the 26 per cent gaining five or more A* to C passes in 2002 compares very favourably with 16 per cent in 2000 and 9 per cent in 1998. The work of current Year 11 pupils, when examined during the inspection, was below rather than well below national averages, indicating that improvement continues. This is reinforced by the fact that current Year 10 pupils are already producing work of a higher standard than previous Year 10 and 11 pupils.
5. Results in examinations taken by Year 11 pupils vary significantly. History, music and religious education results are above national averages for these subjects, and art results broadly match national ones. Results are well below average, however, in English, mathematics, science, modern languages, geography and ICT. Overall, the standards reached by pupils in Year 11 show that they make sound progress across Years 10 and 11. Compared with their attainment on entering the school, the cumulative gains made by most pupils by the time they leave are good.
6. A large proportion of pupils has special educational needs. Because support for their specific requirements is extensive and very well organised, they make very good progress across Years 7 to 11. Pupils with special educational needs make outstanding progress in physical education.
7. Relatively few pupils use English as an additional language, but those who do also make very good progress. All subject teachers are alert to their particular requirements, and when specialist support is available it is used effectively.
8. The school is becoming increasingly successful at providing well for gifted and talented pupils. They make good progress in relation to their already strong prior attainment. Their particular skills and aptitudes are identified while they are in Year 6 or sometimes Year 5 of primary education, and a very well organised programme of additional teaching and visits is offered. The programme is strongly supported by good levels of challenge for gifted and talented pupils in most lessons.
9. Girls reach marginally higher standards than boys by the end of Year 9. This is most noticeable in English test results, but the gap is less than that found nationally. In mathematics and science, both boys and girls fall short of the national average for their gender by very similar amounts.

10. In examination results in Year 11, girls again perform better than boys, but more markedly than in Year 9. This is very much in line with the national picture, but boys in the school fall short of their gender average by a smaller margin than girls.
11. The school agreed very demanding targets with its local education authority for 2002 and 2003. It fell short of the 2002 figure by a relatively modest amount and its Year 10 and 11 pupils are currently performing at the levels required to meet 2003 targets. Test and examination results for both Year 9 and Year 11 are rising faster than national averages. The improvements are due to a range of factors: teaching has improved very significantly since the previous inspection and is now characterised by careful planning, with teachers making good use of data to set high levels of challenge for all pupils. Learning by different pupils has been analysed and their needs are much more effectively met. Pupils with English as an additional language and gifted and talented pupils benefit from recent improvements in the way their needs are met. In addition, the school's long-standing links with primary schools have been further developed, to the point where liaison is now excellent. This liaison allows pupils to arrive in Year 7 fully at home socially, and fully conversant with the school's high personal and academic expectations. It also allows staff to plan targets and programmes for learning based on their prior knowledge of pupils.
12. The net effect of these factors is to promote good progress in lessons. Achievement would be good throughout the school, if absenteeism by a minority of pupils did not impede their learning. In Years 7 to 9, achievement is good. In Years 10 and 11, where absence has a crucial impact on pupils' ability to attend revision sessions, meet coursework deadlines or complete assessed work, standards reached are depressed. Achievement is nevertheless satisfactory overall, but there is clearly scope for it to become good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Those who attend consistently contribute to lessons with enthusiasm and respond well to teachers' questions. As they mature, many pupils reach high levels of productivity; this was apparent in a Year 11 mathematics lesson. Presentation of work is usually good. Pupils take pleasure in their own and others' success.
14. Behaviour in the school is good and in lessons often very good. Movement around school is orderly and, in the rather narrow corridors, pupils display an awareness of those with mobility problems. A minority of pupils, often boys, act in a very immature way and need constant pressure from staff to concentrate on the task they are undertaking, although they rarely purposefully misbehave.
15. Exclusions for a fixed term are high, but are at a realistic level and are only used after other procedures have been tried. The majority of exclusions are of boys. Over half of pupils excluded in the past three terms have not been excluded again. None of the current Year 7 pupils has been excluded and no pupil has been permanently excluded in the current year, which shows good improvement, resulting from appropriate intervention when pupils misbehave.
16. Pupils' ability to show initiative and demonstrate personal responsibility is good. Pupils show a willingness to participate in lessons and respect the differing views of others. This was apparent in a Year 10 history lesson that compared health and medicine in ancient cultures to the modern day. Pupils appreciate the extra-curricular activities provided and many are involved in sporting or musical activities outside lessons. Many pupils have enjoyed the opportunity to act as 'buddies' to younger pupils or to visit primary schools as part of achieving a sports leader award. Pupils say the School Council is effective, although it is not used enough to involve them fully in the school's development. Year 11 pupils who are appointed as prefects take their responsibilities seriously, although they are not always clear about the benefits of their position.
17. Relationships in the school are very good. Different groups of pupils are keen to share their ideas with their peers; this was shown, for example, in a Year 7 social education lesson discussing the rights of children. In physical education, pupils show a very good response to both co-operative and competitive tasks.

18. Pupils respond well to the school's provision for personal development. They are attentive and reflective in assemblies. In a Year 8 geography lesson, pupils reflected well on disasters such as earthquakes or volcanic eruptions, and Year 10 pupils showed good personal initiative in executing individual art and design projects, reflecting on ways in which they could achieve their ideas.
19. Pupils with English as an additional language have very positive attitudes to all aspects of school life.
20. Pupils in the various special educational needs units behave very well and have excellent attitudes; they are very willing to learn and apply themselves well, with adult help. Other pupils with special educational needs respond well to the very good, and sometimes excellent, teaching they receive: their involvement and the teachers' attention to inclusion are strong. Teachers set high expectations for good behaviour and adopt a generally business-like approach to pupils' learning.
21. Attendance is poor. In the autumn term 2002, only Year 7 achieved average attendance of above 90 per cent. Across the school, 65 pupils achieved 100 per cent attendance for the term. The overall attendance level is rising slowly, but at 86 to 87 per cent it is well below the national average for secondary schools. The rate of unauthorised absence, although significantly improved since the last inspection, is still above the national average. Most of the absence is due to sickness, but the incidence of family holidays taken during term times, parent-condoned absence and absence authorised for social reasons is too high and affects the continuity of learning for a significant number of pupils.
22. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Nearly nine per cent of pupils present in school are recorded as late without good reason. Once in school, pupils are usually on time for lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching and learning in the school as a whole is good. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, 96 per cent had teaching that was at least satisfactory, and in 39 per cent of lessons the quality was at least very good. The quality of learning followed a similar pattern. In just under four per cent of lessons teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. This represents a very marked improvement on the quality recorded during the previous inspection, when 83 per cent of lessons had satisfactory or better teaching and only 10 per cent of lessons were rated as at least very good.
24. There are minimal differences between the quality of learning in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. While slightly more of the unsatisfactory teaching and learning is found in Years 7 to 9, these year groups also have a greater share than Years 10 and 11 of the excellent teaching and learning.
25. It is normal in this school to find lessons that are very well planned. They have clearly defined aims and a structure that helps pupils follow the lesson effectively. Starter activities and the consistent use of plenary sessions both make a major contribution to showing pupils where the lessons are leading and confirming what they have learnt at the end. Teachers are very good at setting high expectations for all pupils: they use data on prior attainment and the specific needs to pupils to set a wide range of tasks or to provide work that can be tackled at different levels by different pupils. While making good use of support staff and adopting an encouraging style, teachers nevertheless pitch work at a level that requires pupils to try their very best on a regular basis.
26. Teachers succeed in obtaining good work from their pupils partly because they work hard to establish very good relationships with them. They know individual pupils well and act constructively towards them. Teachers are also far more consistent than is common in using the

school's rewards and sanctions system decisively: praise can be expected for appropriate behaviour and effort; impositions or referral to senior colleagues can also be reliably expected by pupils when these are deserved.

27. Teachers are good at reinforcing literacy skills in all of their lessons, especially by the use of key words, structures to guide writing and attention to spelling and grammar. There has been less training in numeracy and ICT and the teaching of these skills is unsatisfactory. Homework is used well by some staff, but inconsistently by others: on balance, its use is broadly satisfactory.
28. As a result of so much good teaching, pupils learn well in lessons. They acquire new knowledge and skills well, and show a good awareness of the standards they are reaching and what sort of targets to aim for. Many pupils arrive at the school with quite limited study skills and little scope for retention of information and ideas, which limits their productivity and ability to work independently.
29. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good teaching and they learn as well as other pupils in the school. Both special educational needs specialists and subject teachers display very high-quality teaching skills when teaching groups dominated by pupils with special educational needs. Pupils also receive very good support in many lessons: auxiliary staff are well trained and dedicated to their pupils. Teachers and support staff know their pupils very well and understand their special needs very clearly. Pupils from the specific special educational needs units are very well integrated into lessons and teaching is generally very good, and occasionally excellent.
30. For pupils with English as an additional language, both teaching and learning in specialist lessons are very good. Pupils make rapid gains in everyday use of the language and in the more specialised vocabularies needed to access different subjects in the curriculum. They make very good progress in mainstream classes because of the skilled support given by teachers and the specialised learning support assistant. Pupils' own first languages are often used to maintain progress in subjects until their English is sufficiently developed. Particularly successful efforts to make sure that pupils with English as an additional language could participate fully were observed in mathematics lessons.
31. In general terms, the good quality of teaching and learning across the school is enabling pupils to make good progress lesson by lesson. Their achievement over a longer period is also good in Years 7 to 9. Despite absences that hinder progress, there is particularly extensive support in these years, and fewer critical deadlines. In Years 10 and 11, however, there is less support for pupils and the frequent absences of a minority of pupils seriously interrupt their learning. Absent pupils miss crucial revision sessions and other forms of examination preparation, and occasionally they miss coursework deadlines. These factors depress GCSE and GNVQ results, and partially counter the very beneficial impact of good teaching.
32. Some subjects have established particularly successful teaching and learning. Mathematics is very well taught in the school as a whole and teaching is also very good in physical education and geography in Years 7 to 9. In nearly all other subjects, the quality of both teaching and learning is good across all years. In modern languages in Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory rather than good. In ICT, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. This is because aspects of the subject are not taught, and because the staff as a whole have not had the access to equipment or the confidence to teach ICT regularly as part of their specialist subjects.
33. In some lessons, all aspects of strong teaching come together with excellent effect. In a Year 10 food technology lesson, teaching and learning were both excellent. A very brisk start was made and a strong pace was sustained throughout. Several pupils have serious specific learning needs and physical difficulties; these were planned for and supported with great care, but no concessions were made in terms of the requirement to follow practical procedures, work rapidly and participate fully. Pupils showed remarkable application to work, their concentration and perseverance being first rate.

34. A Year 11 religious education lesson with very good teaching and learning was successful partly because very positive relationships and attitudes had been established. Pupils' opinions and knowledge were valued and actively sought; good planning and use of resources helped them to go into considerable detail, and independent thinking was strongly promoted. The lesson had

a clear structure and the teacher's business-like approach conveyed the need for pupils to work efficiently and focus their contributions around the lesson's key objectives. As a result, learning for the full range of pupils was very good.

35. Very occasionally, there is less successful teaching. In a Year 9 English lesson, for example, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, largely because standard procedures were not followed closely enough. The objectives and plan of the lesson were only explained to pupils after much of the lesson had elapsed and pupils' tendency to chat was not dealt with decisively when it first developed.

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

36. Overall, the curriculum provided is very good. A very good range of learning opportunities is provided for all the pupils, including those with special educational needs. The curriculum is broad and balanced and reflects the aims of the school. Statutory requirements are met for all subjects in Years 7 to 9, but not fully met in Years 10 to 11, due to the pupils' limited access to computers. Overall, this is an improvement on the previous inspection, when there were deficiencies in the history curriculum and religious education. The requirements for collective worship are not met. The curriculum is socially inclusive and effectively addresses the special needs of pupils, including those with physical disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils. Setting by attainment, and the use of a small number of single-sex classes, enable pupils to proceed at a faster pace in subjects such as English and mathematics. Changes brought about by the school's move to include a range of vocational courses are a strength of the curriculum. They have enriched overall provision, and encouraged pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning. For example, the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course has a specific focus on work-related learning, and Northern Partnership of Records of Achievement (NPRA) units are short-term motivational courses that effectively address the needs of lower-attaining pupils.
37. Links with the community and other educational establishments are very good. The strong curricular links with partner primary schools provide taster lessons in a range of subjects for Year 6 pupils, before their transfer to secondary school. For example, in physical education, during a six-week period, younger pupils are effectively taught basic skills in volleyball, table tennis, climbing and trampolining. A variety of extra-curricular activities, master classes, support classes, summer schools, gallery visits and community projects make a significant contribution to the overall curriculum. Visits to France and Spain have effectively enriched the taught curriculum.
38. Strategies for teaching literacy skills are good, but pupils' numeracy and speaking skills are not satisfactory. There is limited drama provision and the short GCSE course in physical education, conducted outside curriculum time, is unacceptable.
39. In Years 7 to 9, curricular provision is very good. Pupils are taught all the subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education and personal, social and health education. Statutory requirements are fully met. Provision in terms of equal opportunities is very good. For example, single-sex lessons address the under achievement of boys. The curriculum is socially inclusive, with a wide range of extra-curricular activities that enable pupils to enrich their experiences beyond lessons. Although all pupils study French in Years 7 to 9, only one group studies two foreign languages in Years 8 and 9. The limited time allocated to music restricts the

delivery of the programmes of study, and option arrangements limit pupils' ability to choose GCSE music. There are insufficient fieldwork opportunities in geography in Year 9, and compulsory fieldwork is limited to local areas.

40. Overall, the provision in Years 10 and 11 is good in terms of breadth and balance. As well as a core group of seven subjects, pupils can select from a wide range of options, including GCSE, vocational courses and Certificate of Achievement courses. There are high levels of disapplication in modern languages in Years 10 and 11, with pupils following vocational courses. Careers guidance is good and is effectively delivered as part of the school's pastoral programme. Work experience programmes are implemented effectively. There are strong links with Middlesborough College for the GNVQ leisure and tourism course, and art and design pupils attend life-drawing lessons there. There are links with Middlesborough Football Club, which sponsors a school-catering course. There are good links with local industry through the young enterprise scheme, involving such companies as ICI, British Steel (Corus) and Toucan Engineering. Students from Teesside University act as learning mentors in subjects such as art and design. Assessment procedures are very good and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Single-sex teaching groups in Years 10 and 11 in English is enabling pupils in this school to progress at a fast pace.
41. Pupils with English as an additional language enjoy the same opportunities as other pupils. Great care is taken to value and respect their own languages and cultures.
42. Pupils with special educational needs from the various special educational needs units have complete access to the curriculum. Suitable resources are used, including very high levels of support in classes. Physiotherapy for pupils with physical difficulties is delivered in the specialist room. Outside agencies are appropriately involved and the school uses their reports and advice very well. All other pupils on the special educational needs register also have full access to the school curriculum. Inclusion is very good and is a key feature of the school's very good provision. Special educational needs provision is outstanding in physical education, but all groups seen were very good or excellent, and in "mainstream" classes pupils with special educational needs have good support and teaching, giving good access to National Curriculum work. Differentiation is organised through the school's grouping system: all pupils work towards common objectives and cover the same topics, but these are suitably differentiated for groups of differing abilities.
43. The curriculum makes good provision for gifted and talented pupils. Arrangements are clearly identified within school and the school funds a wide variety of academic and personal development opportunities. Gifted and talented pupils are clearly identified and staff are very well aware of their potential for success. Subject departments offer a wide range of support lessons and activities: for example, the mathematics department offers GCSE statistics as an enrichment, and uses very good differentiation, even in top sets, to provide challenge for very high attainers. Additional support and master classes are provided after school, as well as Saturday master classes and study skills seminars at Teesside University.
44. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Although there is no daily act of corporate worship because of restrictions on available space, assemblies of a broadly Christian nature, in which time for reflection is included, are held regularly for all year groups. During tutor time, pupils are asked to consider the "Thought for the Week". Pupils often suggest themes, and as a result of discussing the plight of victims of the floods in Mozambique they raised over £900. This led to opportunities for thinking about other disadvantaged people, and contacts have been made in Malawi and with a school in Lesotho. The recent arrival of pupils from Iran and Sri Lanka has prompted pupils to express openly their admiration for the efforts of these pupils to come to terms with a different language and way of life. Within subjects, there are a number of opportunities for reflection: in mathematics, the value of $22/7$ to 24 trillion places was demonstrated via the Internet; in English, pupils learn to empathise with the human dilemmas facing people portrayed in narratives such as "Of Mice and Men", and are impressed by the heroism of individual soldiers in their study of war poetry. Provision for spiritual development is found, too, in art and design, music and religious education. Special services are held at Christmas and for Remembrance Day. Local churches frequently send visiting speakers.

However, there has as yet been no audit of spiritual provision within subjects to ensure its consistent development across the curriculum.

45. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, both in subject areas and in wider contexts. Pupils learn about world issues such as refugees, economic migration and the effects of pollution. They are taught to take responsibility for each other in practical subjects such as design and technology and physical education, and are considerate towards one another and towards pupils with physical handicaps as they move around congested spaces. Older pupils taking the vocational education course created a 'sensory garden' for visually impaired pupils, to a design devised by pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their achievements and their surroundings. As a result, the fabric of the school and its equipment are remarkably free of graffiti and litter. High standards of behaviour are expected, and pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, with the result that items left on display, such as prizes for a tombola stall, remain undisturbed. Teaching about sex and relationships education and the misuse of drugs is provided through the personal, health and social education course, and the quality of provision is very good.
46. There is very good provision for pupils' social development, both in class and out of lessons. In most subjects, pupils regularly work in pairs or small groups, learning to listen to one another's ideas and opinions. There is an extensive programme of visits and field trips, and groups of pupils spend extended time at the outdoor-pursuits centre. Extra-curricular activities organised by the physical education and music departments are well attended. Contacts with the world of work, the local community and other educational institutions are strong.
47. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. In a number of subjects, such as design and technology, geography, art and design and music, pupils have opportunities to learn about the cultural differences between societies. The music, physical education and modern languages departments all organise trips to continental Europe, and pupils benefit from the presence of the French language assistant. Large-scale musical productions take place from time to time: during the inspection, casting was taking place for a production of "Bugsy Malone". By being introduced to a broad range of sports, pupils learn tolerance and understanding, while maintaining their respect for local culture through good contacts with Middlesborough Football Club.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school's arrangements to ensure the welfare and safety of all groups of pupils are excellent. All members of staff are aware of their responsibilities and understand the procedures to follow if there are concerns relating to health and safety or child protection. The pastoral teams in each year group provide excellent support and guidance and are well informed by a thorough system of record keeping. Staff know pupils and their individual circumstances well, and pupils feel able to confide in an adult if they encounter problems.
49. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. An electronic registration system is used and the parents and carers of pupils who are absent without any reason are contacted on the first day of absence. Rewards to encourage good attendance have been adopted, and pupils are encouraged to help their tutor group meet its target. As a result, the number of unauthorised absences has significantly reduced, but unnecessary absence still prevents some pupils from reaching their potential. Too many pupils take too long out of school to attend a medical or dental appointment, or take holidays in term time.
50. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. There is a clear and consistently used set of procedures to track pupils with behavioural problems. Pupils' personal records are very good. Parents are involved when problems arise, but some do not understand why their children are referred to the learning support unit. There is a wide range of rewards to encourage good behaviour. Sanctions are used fairly when pupils breach the school's expectations. Assemblies and tutor times are used to help

pupils understand the basic rules that ensure a harmonious working environment, where all groups of pupils can succeed.

51. The school's assessment and monitoring of academic performance and personal development are very good. A wide range of data is collected and used effectively to determine pupil groupings, set targets and raise standards. Work done in the class and at home is clearly and consistently marked, so pupils understand how to improve. Pupils are encouraged to set their own targets, based on previous performance. Teachers and pupils pursue targets for academic achievement and personal performance that will help pupils achieve their intended goals.
52. Pupils in the special educational needs units receive very good levels of general care and specialist support. Physiotherapy resources are very good and contribute very well to overall care. Assessment procedures are effective, based initially on the special educational needs co-ordinator's visits to contributory schools; great care is taken with the transition process. Outside agencies are used very well both for assessments, reports and welfare, where necessary. Pupils with visual impairments are provided with Braille transcripts for examinations, and teachers transcribe their answers. For all other pupils on the special educational needs register, assessment and subsequent support are again very effective. Pupils' needs and potential are evaluated before they come to the school. Teachers and auxiliary staff know their pupils very well, and this is the key to their success in caring so well for these pupils. Standardised tests are administered only if necessary. Otherwise, the school's system applies and National Curriculum test are taken, in keeping with school's inclusion policy. Overall, Individual Education Plans are good; the strength of the plans lies in the well-chosen, specific suggestions for auxiliary staff to follow when supporting pupils in class.
53. Pupils with English as an additional language are fully integrated into the school's very effective pastoral system and given additional support whenever needed. Their progress is very well monitored.
54. Since the last inspection, procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic and personal performance have improved significantly. The use of tutor periods has improved. Overall support for all groups of pupils is excellent.
55. A good range of additional opportunities contributes well to pupils' personal development and learning. These include good opportunities for additional study and very good opportunities for residential education. All Year 7 pupils have three days' experience at Baldersdale Centre in the summer term, and some Year 9 pupils spend a week at Lanehead Outdoor Centre. Residential weekends at Baldersdale Centre are organised by the physical education, geography and English departments. The modern languages department organises annual visits to northern France, and pupils are offered opportunities to have pen friends. In 2001, a choir of 35 pupils, accompanied by two teachers, visited Barcelona. The design and technology department runs visits to hotels, industrial centres, the CAD/CAM centre in Middlesbrough and national fashion shows. There are museum visits run by the art and design department, and pupils have participated in a range of community projects for which they have designed carnival floats and murals. The mathematics department has links with Teesside University: pupils have attended lectures and National Curriculum tests master classes, and students of the university act as mentors for some pupils. Music offers extra enrichment: there is an active choir, a ceilidh band and a percussion ensemble. In 2002, the school was awarded the "Silver Artsmark" for work in developing the arts within the school. There is a flourishing, well-attended chess club. A wide range of sports activities is provided by the physical education department, including a sailing course, a skiing trip, a trampoline club, a volleyball club and a fitness club. In addition, all subject departments offer further support to pupils by providing revision or "master classes" during lunchtimes or after school. The school also provides facilities for pupils to do their homework on the premises. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to shared extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. Parents and carers express positive views about the school. The inspectors agree with them that the school has high expectations for their children, is approachable, provides an interesting range of activities outside school, is well led and managed and has good teachers. A few parents expressed some concerns about the amount of homework set. The team considered that, in general, homework arrangements are satisfactory, but the homework planner is not used well by staff or pupils to ensure that it is always correctly recorded. A minority of parents have reservations about the information they receive on their child's progress and the strength of the partnership with parents. The inspectors felt that the annual profiles could be improved to be more consistent across subjects and that areas for improvement could be expressed more clearly, but they nevertheless found these reports to be of a satisfactory quality.
57. Overall, the school has good and effective links with parents. They are well informed about the general nature of the school, through the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. Parents are invited into school regularly to share their children's achievements, and to discuss progress or concerns. Postcards and letters home are used well to inform them of successes and concerns. Parents are not always aware of why their children are referred to the learning support unit. There is no regular newsletter, but parents are informed of events by letter as necessary.
58. The school maintains particularly close relationships with the parents of pupils with English as an additional language. There is a great deal of personal contact, particularly during the first few months after admission.
59. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory. There is no formal parent association, but several parents help on an individual basis, for example by providing a breakfast service before school. When the school requests a consultation with parents, most respond well. The majority attend productions and encourage their children to become involved in extra-curricular sporting and musical activities. There is good liaison between the school and parents of children with special educational needs. The school keeps in touch with parents through an "open door" policy, planners, letters, and telephone and personal contact, as well as the formal open and consultation evenings.
60. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained effective links with parents and carers, and seeks to involve them in many ways in their child's education. However it remains the case that too many parents choose not to become involved in their child's education, do not attend consultation evenings or other meetings arranged for them and do not recognise the need for good attendance.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The school is very well led and managed. This has a major beneficial impact on all aspects of the school's work, but especially in terms of the high expectations that prevail and the good progress made by pupils as a result.
62. Pupils' needs are very varied and in many cases quite profound, and the senior managers have set about meeting these needs through their vision and systematic planning. The headteacher gives excellent leadership, promoting the school's mission statement at every opportunity. The staff, pupils, parents and visitors are left in no doubt that at this school "everyone matters and everyone can succeed". The written statement is present in virtually all rooms, all displays and all documents. It is demonstrated by the headteacher's dealings with pupils in corridors and classrooms and on formal occasions such as assemblies. It is evident in his relationships with teaching and support staff on a day-to-day basis, as well as through established procedures for reviewing their work. His very visible presence around school and detailed personal knowledge of pupils and staff enable him to demonstrate the tone he expects others to adopt. Senior colleagues provide very good support for the headteacher in promoting these core values

consistently. Collectively, the senior management team has gained the willing commitment of the rest of the staff in its determination to provide the best for pupils and expect the most of pupils, whatever their potential or their needs. This is a major success for leaders and managers at every level, and the shared commitment to implementing beneficial change is now excellent, with complacency at any level conspicuous by its absence.

63. The school is very good at analysing its own performance and putting in place realistic plans to bring about improvement. At the time of the previous inspection, monitoring of teaching and the work of middle managers was limited, but this is now good. It has contributed to a marked rise in teaching quality. It has also ensured that year heads and heads of department operate effectively. Indeed, the quality of leadership and management in mathematics, art, religious education, design and technology, history and physical education is now very good. Only in ICT are arrangements unsatisfactory, and senior managers have taken steps to rectify this deficiency.
64. The provision for pupils with special educational needs benefits from strong leadership by a very competent special educational needs co-ordinator. With so many pupils and staff, this is a very demanding post. The special educational needs co-ordinator heads a very strong team and leads very clearly and effectively. She meets regularly with her team, when pupils are discussed extensively and organisational issues dealt with efficiently. The key features of successful management are in-depth work with contributory schools; the perceptive deployment of support staff and specialist teachers; and the special educational needs co-ordinator's deep knowledge of pupils and their needs and the way such information is disseminated. A commitment to maximising the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in the life of the school as a whole is a particular strength of the special educational needs co-ordinator's philosophy and organisation. The specialist units for pupils with visual impairment, physical difficulties and speech and language difficulties are all very well led. The physical education department's co-ordination of work with pupils with physical difficulties is outstanding.
65. Financial management in the school is now very good. The school is adept at bidding for additional funds to support its educational aims, and it monitors its budget very carefully. As a result, its support for pupils with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils and pupils with English as an additional language, as well as its very heavy commitment to liaison with primary schools, have flourished. Pupils have benefited enormously, as is shown by the progress they are making.
66. The governing body is very effective. Because its committee structure and meetings schedule involve large numbers of governors regularly, information about the school is thoroughly documented. Sufficient governors are in school often enough for them to gain a reliable first-hand picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Good-quality reports are given regularly by the headteacher, but governors also deal directly with other members of staff, and several are heavily involved in shaping plans and pursuing projects, such as the new sports complex and links between the school and local businesses. As a result of this very good knowledge of the school, the governing body provides valuable strategic advice and support. It fulfils all of its statutory duties well.
67. Value for money is good. While spending per pupil is well above average, this reflects the high cost of providing appropriately for pupils with a wide range of needs, some requiring highly specialised support. Funds are used well, with very good leadership, good teaching and good achievement by pupils.

Staffing

68. The provision of staff to match the curriculum is satisfactory overall. However, provision is unsatisfactory within the English department. The English department is in a period of uncertainty, which has led to some unsatisfactory teaching. Almost half of its teachers are on temporary contracts, and there is a newly qualified teacher. The post of co-ordinator for literacy remains vacant. Illness within the science department has required further appointments of temporary staff to cover the shortfall, reducing the quality of provision, which is also judged to be

unsatisfactory overall. In all other subject areas, provision is good or better. There is a good balance of experienced staff and younger teachers, and a balanced representation of men and women in middle and senior management positions, providing good role models for pupils.

69. The school provides good support for the training and continued development of all staff, both for individual professional development and to meet curricular needs. The school has linked its very good induction procedures for teachers new to the school to its provision for teachers in training on the newly developed Graduate Registered Teacher Programme. Combined with trainees' experiences in other schools and universities, the school provides very high quality training for current and potential members of staff.
70. Members of the classroom support staff are well supported in their training to develop appropriate skills and to enhance their knowledge and understanding of subjects and pupils' needs. Consequently, they make a very good and positive contribution to the work of the school. The amount of technician support is satisfactory. The specialist teaching and number of support staff for pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are fully adequate.

Accommodation

71. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. There is a very good learning support unit, and very good provision for physical education and mathematics. For science and ICT, accommodation is unsatisfactory, and for English and music there are significant weaknesses. Laboratory space is inadequate and in consequence some science lessons have to be taught in non-specialist rooms; ICT rooms are crowded and the space is too small for effective teaching of the subject. English lessons are taught in a variety of places including some rooms that are too small for the numbers in the class. Music provision has insufficient storage, and the single practice room is a cluttered space. The five mobile classrooms are well used and attractively decorated inside, but they are old and occupy a lot of space. There is good or satisfactory provision for all other subjects. The school buildings are clean, maintained to a high standard and in good decorative order internally. Corridor and classroom displays are excellent and create an attractive and welcoming learning environment. The library has recently moved to a former gym. There is potential for development as a learning resource centre, but at present it is under-used and under-resourced, and the present allocated space is inadequate.
72. Accommodation for specialist teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory.

Resources

73. The provision of learning resources is, on balance, satisfactory. Learning resources in most subject areas are good. Provision for physical education and for pupils with special needs is very good. The use and provision for ICT in subject areas are very variable, and for security reasons ICT equipment is not readily available in the five mobile classrooms. Provision for ICT is unsatisfactory in science, religious education, modern foreign languages, design and technology and in the learning resource centre. It is unsatisfactory in geography, mathematics and English. There are problems of access and distribution for most subjects. The learning resource centre is too small and is under resourced in terms of numbers of books, but those available are of good quality and suitable for the age range. The new librarian provides good access to the centre and its use is improving for Years 7 and 8. The centre provision of networked computers is inadequate, but there is loan system for laptops; there is also a video loan system. The school's plans for improvements in ICT provision and for the learning resource centre are fully approved and funded.
74. There are sufficient learning resources to meet the needs of pupils with English as an additional language.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to continue the school's strong improving trend the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) Focus attention on raising standards in those subjects where recent GCSE results and achievement in Year 10 and 11 have been lower than in the rest of the school, namely: English, mathematics, science, geography, modern languages and ICT.
(See paragraphs 5, 32, 78, 79, 90, 92, 96, 97, 99, 134)
 - (2) Reduce absence levels, and the disruption to learning these cause, by:
 - Ensuring existing strategies are applied even more effectively than at present.
 - Identifying new strategies for reducing exclusions and authorised absences.(See paragraphs 12, 21, 31, 49, 60, 81, 100, 117, 130, 172)
 - (3) Support and monitor the work of the new head of ICT to ensure that:
 - Schemes of work are extended to cover all aspects of the subject.
 - The other subjects of the curriculum all make full use of opportunities for learning through ICT.
 - All day-to-day teaching reinforces basic ICT skills regularly.(See paragraphs 3, 5, 27, 32, 38, 83, 94, 124, 128, 134, 142, 145, 147, 160, 152, 161, 170, 182)

- (4) Implement as a matter of urgency existing plans for numeracy teaching across the whole curriculum.
(See paragraphs 27, 68, 78, 82, 91, 96, 104, 110, 114, 117, 119, 136, 139, 149, 159, 161, 172)
- (5) Take all possible steps to ensure those aspects of staffing and accommodation which are currently unsatisfactory are improved to secure levels, notably:
- The staffing arrangements for English, literacy, religious education and science.
 - The small size of ICT rooms, shortage of laboratories, lack of music practice rooms and small size of the library.
- (See paragraphs 83, 106, 151, 153, 154, 170)*
- (6) Increase the opportunities for speaking and listening skills to be developed in day-to-day teaching across all subjects.
(See paragraphs 38, 78, 88, 104)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	163
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	59

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	49	72	29	6	0	0
Percentage	4.2	30.1	44.2	17.8	3.7	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	830
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	373

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	71
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	230

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	12.1
National comparative data	4.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	94	64	158

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	47	38	29
	Girls	46	31	25
	Total	93	69	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	59 (39)	44 (34)	34 (34)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	16 (13)	27 (17)	10 (13)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	25	36	30
	Girls	21	33	23
	Total	46	69	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	29 (48)	44 (31)	33 (34)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	10 (16)	15 (12)	11 (13)
	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	73	71	144

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	12	46	65
	Girls	25	53	65
	Total	37	99	130
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	26 (20)	69 (66)	90 (83)
	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	School	27.3

per pupil	National	39.8
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	105	92
	National		83

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	827	171	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	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: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	55
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	38
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1087

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	71.9
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21.6
Key Stage 4	17.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	3,259,264
Total expenditure	3,232,252
Expenditure per pupil	4,066
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,352
Balance carried forward to next year	83,364

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	22.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	28.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	830
Number of questionnaires returned	181

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	49	4	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	47	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	43	6	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	46	16	4	2
The teaching is good.	49	45	2	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	39	10	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	2	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	26	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	42	12	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	49	41	1	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	46	4	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	41	1	1	6

Other issues raised by parents

- A minority of parents with pupils with physical difficulties would prefer that the same auxiliary be attached to their children on a permanent basis rather than their children receiving support from a range of auxiliaries.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Examination results in national tests have improved.
- The attainment of boys is improving well, at a rate faster than the national trend.
- The quality of teaching in all years is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of speaking and listening are too low.
- Poor attendance by some pupils in Year 11 depresses their achievement.
- ICT is not used effectively to promote learning.
- Poor continuity in staffing adversely affects the continuity of learning for some pupils.

76. In 2002, results in national tests in English for pupils at the end of Year 9 were below average in comparison with all schools, but were excellent when compared to those of schools with a similar intake. This represents very good improvement over previous years, when results were well below the national average, and well below those of similar schools. The attainment of boys at this stage has risen faster than the national trend, and, although their results are lower than those of girls of the same age, they are closer to the national average for boys than the girls' results are to the national average for girls. Pupils' results in English were better than those in mathematics and science.
77. Results in GCSE examinations in 2002 were well below the national average and are currently subject to appeal. Both boys and girls did less well in both English and English literature than in other subjects. These figures do not reflect the trend over recent years: English results had been erratic, but there had been marked improvement in English literature, with results matching the national average in 2001.
78. In work seen during the inspection, standards of attainment of pupils in Year 9 were below average, reflecting the most recent test results. Given the very low standards of attainment in English shown by pupils when they enter the school, this represents very good achievement. By adopting a closely structured approach to the teaching of literacy skills and by focusing efforts on raising the attainment of boys, the department has enabled pupils to make very good progress. A particular strength is pupils' writing in response to literature. At all levels of attainment, pupils are able to identify with characters and situations, and higher- and average-attaining pupils produce thoughtful, perceptive writing. Spelling is reasonably accurate, but pupils do not check their work for errors sufficiently carefully. Standards of punctuation are variable. Higher-attaining pupils write well-organised sentences, using varied constructions to provide interest for the reader, but lower- and average-attaining pupils often adopt a random, poorly punctuated style. All pupils use a varied vocabulary; boys in particular write vividly and expressively. Most pupils read and understand a wide range of texts, and readily support their impressions and opinions by reference to appropriate quotations. Speaking and listening skills are weak. Although pupils have a good range of vocabulary they rarely compose extended answers. Younger pupils have particularly poor listening skills, and do not understand that listening to the ideas and suggestions of other pupils is an important method of learning.
79. Standards of attainment in Year 11 are below average; however, most pupils achieve well at this stage. Higher-attaining pupils maintain a consistent quality of writing in a wide range of work: their personal writing is often powerful and descriptive, and their response to literature is scholarly, with some indications of independent research. Their understanding of the historical and social contexts of situations, as seen in writing about the conventions of society in Verona for "Romeo

and Juliet”, complements their insight into fictional characters. Both the vocabulary and the forms of construction they use are becoming increasingly stylish and, by drafting and redrafting, most craft their writing to a high standard. Average-attaining pupils are developing habits of good scholarship, with useful note-making and annotation of text. Work written by boys demonstrated their enjoyment of the story of Steinbeck’s “Of Mice and Men”, as well as their ability to identify with the principal characters, and their analyses of the structure and imagery in Tennyson’s “The Charge of The Light Brigade” showed perceptive thinking. However, much of their work, even at final draft stage, is still beset with technical inaccuracies and unintentional errors. Girls’ standards of accuracy are higher than those of boys. Boys’ writing in response to literature is generally more lively and expressive than that of girls, but girls’ persuasive writing is more logically presented. Lower-attaining pupils, most of whom have special educational needs, work systematically and produce properly organised narrative. Their enjoyment of story-telling was demonstrated in attractively illustrated books for young children and their writing is reasonably accurate. However, their style is not well extended and their observations frequently lack depth of perception. Nevertheless, these pupils make very good progress. All are entered for the GCSE examination, and very few fail to obtain a grade.

80. Pupils who are gifted or talented make good progress in English. The department has introduced a system of teaching its more able pupils in separate groups, permitting them to work in greater depth and at a faster pace. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported elsewhere in the school and make good progress in English.
81. At all stages, pupils’ attitudes are good. Levels of motivation are high, and most pupils come prepared to work hard. Many are inclined to be easily discouraged, but are well supported by the positive atmosphere in class, and very few fail to complete work. They take pride in their achievements. The achievement of a significant minority of pupils in Year 11, however, is seriously hindered by poor punctuality and attendance. Relationships are very good. Pupils are tolerant of the opinions of others, courteous to adults, and considerate when moving around congested spaces, showing high levels of care and responsibility towards pupils with physical difficulties.
82. The quality of teaching is almost always good or better, and is rarely less than satisfactory. Teachers are highly committed to raising both pupils’ attainment and their aspirations, and have rightly put great emphasis on pupils’ acquisition of secure literacy skills. They have, nevertheless, recognised the importance of sharing their own enjoyment of the subject and, by maintaining a lively pace, successfully engage pupils’ enthusiasm for a wide variety of tasks. As a result, pupils learn well, and enjoy using their knowledge to increase their insight and understanding. This was observed in a lesson on Romantic poetry, where both boys and girls readily identified various figures of speech, and appreciated their impact. Frequently, very good questioning further develops pupils’ confidence in expressing their opinions; a group of higher-attaining girls very quickly understood the enormity of the catastrophe of war, and the heroism of soldiers, through their study of war poetry. Lessons are well planned, with clear long-term objectives for pupils’ learning underpinning day-to-day activities. Most teachers manage classes well, and relationships are positive. Inadequate time is allocated to developing pupils’ speaking and listening skills; in particular, average- and lower-attaining pupils are not encouraged to think ahead, so that they express their ideas in complete sentences. Pupils’ individual needs are not always met when classes are apparently of broadly similar ability. The few incidences of unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection generally resulted from insufficient knowledge of pupils’ abilities, where staff had only recently joined the department, or from lack of sufficient competence with new equipment.
83. The department is well managed and very well led. Retention of staff has been a long-term problem and many staff, including the co-ordinator for literacy, have moved to promoted posts. In spite of the frequent changes that have resulted in almost half of this department of eleven teachers being virtual newcomers, including two who are unqualified as teachers, the head of department has created a team which has a clear educational vision, high professional and personal standards and a strong determination to equip its pupils with the best possible opportunities for learning. Procedures such as data analysis and assessment of pupils’ work

contribute very effectively to the continuing drive to raise attainment, and are now beginning to show results. Pupils' efforts are well supported by careful marking of their work, with constructive comments for further improvement, and by discussions on an individual basis. The volatile staffing situation has demanded much of the head of department's time, with the result that there has been insufficient monitoring of teaching to support newly appointed staff and make sure that the teaching is consistently of high quality. The curriculum has been carefully constructed to ensure that pupils of all abilities are able to cope with the requirements of examinations, and to make sure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their educational career. At present not enough use is made of drama as a means of increasing pupils' competence in verbal and non-verbal communication. Pupils' independence in taking responsibility for their own learning, through greater use of library resources and ICT, is not well developed. Accommodation, spread over two floors and including some rooms that are too small, is not satisfactory. Some technical equipment is in poor working order.

84. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, with most of the recommendations from the previous report now implemented. Standards of attainment have risen steadily, particularly amongst boys.

Literacy

85. Standards of literacy are below average in Years 7 to 9, and are well below average, although improving, in Years 10 and 11. The school has identified this as a priority area for improvement. The post of co-ordinator for literacy was created and a policy to raise standards of literacy in all subjects has been implemented. Teachers have been given training in the promotion of literacy skills. However, the post of literacy co-ordinator had not been filled at the time of the inspection, with the result that there is currently no monitoring of consistency of approach across all subjects.
86. The annual summer school provides "catch-up" opportunities for pupils from Years 6 and 7 whose attainment in English is below Level 3 of the National Curriculum. These are well attended. Lesson planning for Years 7 to 9 pupils closely follow the national Key Stage 3 Strategy, having built successfully on earlier good practice in local primary schools and thus ensuring continuity of approach.
87. Good practice was observed in all departments. Pupils' vocabulary is increased by familiarity with technical terms that are used in context, displayed around rooms and listed in pupils' exercise books. Pupils are often asked to spell words aloud, and there is frequent testing for accuracy. In modern language lessons, pupils are encouraged to think about the development of language, and, both here and in English, grammatical terms are used. Writing frames and cloze procedures support pupils' efforts to compose extended prose. Higher-attaining pupils are expected to organise their work into paragraphs, while lower-attaining pupils may construct single-sentence answers. Written work is marked with particular attention to the correct spelling of all words, but punctuation is not consistently marked.
88. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are weak in all subjects. Opportunities for pupils to expand their answers are frequently missed, although in design and technology lessons pupils are expected to answer in complete sentences. Although pupils often work in pairs or in small groups, they are not encouraged sufficiently to express themselves coherently and succinctly. Very rarely are pupils given opportunities for reading aloud. Reading habits are generally under developed: although the library is a popular and accessible area, it is poorly equipped, and borrowing rates for personal reading are low.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The department is very well led and managed.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Teachers are committed to supporting pupils' learning, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
- Standards in national tests in Year 9 are improving.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are well below average overall.
- There are inconsistencies in the provision of ICT for all pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- There is a lack of mathematical rigour in pupils' work.

89. Pupils enter the school with poor ability in mathematics.
90. In 2002, results in tests in Year 9 were well below average overall, but were below average for those attaining the highest levels. This continues a rising trend in results over the past three years. Pupils reached their expected targets, overall, and the number of pupils attaining the highest grades was almost double the target set by the school. When compared to those in similar schools, these results were average overall, and above average for the percentage gaining the higher Levels. Pupils' performance in mathematics was below that in English but above science. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
91. Standards of work in Year 9, as observed during the inspection, were below average, rather than well below average, reflecting the rising trend in attainment in Years 7 to 9. This is due to improved teaching since the last inspection and the growing enthusiasm of pupils for the subject. The highest-attaining pupils are few in number compared to the general ability levels in the school, but pupils at all levels of attainment strive hard to do their best. The general level of competence in numeracy is very low and for many pupils with severe learning difficulties this often hinders the pace at which learning takes place. For example, in one lesson, lower-attaining pupils grasped the concept of inverse operations, but were unable to complete many examples due to poor number skills. However, pupils' achievement across Years 7 to 9 is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are represented in all sets and they achieve well, in line with their mathematical ability.
92. Results in GCSE examinations in Year 11 are well below average. However, the percentage achieving A* to C grades is in line with that in schools with similar point scores at the end of Year 9. Pupils' achievement across Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Over the past three years the school has entered an increasing number of pupils for GCSE, and in 2002 it entered 92 per cent of all Year 11 pupils. This has been matched by a rise in the average point score for pupils. There were no significant differences in the results of boys and girls. High-quality teaching and the very good relationships between pupils and staff have engendered an enthusiasm for learning that is being reflected in an improving application to work by pupils.
93. Standards in Year 11, as observed during the inspection, were well below average, with only about one-third of the top set being entered for the higher-tier GCSE examinations. Nevertheless, across Years 10 and 11 pupils make good progress in lessons due to very good support. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on calculating percentage gains and reductions, pupils with physical and emotional special needs were well supported by auxiliary assistants and by the teacher, allowing them to make similar progress to others in the class. In the same class, gifted pupils, including pupils with English as an additional language, were given work on a more advanced topic to extend their learning.
94. Teaching is very good. The high quality of teachers' subject knowledge and their understanding of pupils' needs ensure that new concepts are imparted to pupils successfully. Pupils' presentation of their work is of a high standard. However, much of their written work lacks mathematical rigour, which hinders understanding and revision. Very good pupil-teacher relationships within the classroom, and the willingness of teachers to assist pupils at any time, develop confidence and interest in learning. Regular assessment of pupils' work and clear target setting are helping pupils to become more aware of their own progress. Very good provision of work for pupils of differing levels of attainment ensures that all pupils are learning at an appropriate level that maintains their interest. During an excellent lesson in a Year 7 mixed-ability class with many pupils with SEN, pupils worked in groups and as individuals on topics that presented a range of demands, from plotting points in all four quadrants to simple number recognition. Teachers care for their pupils and provide many extra-curricular activities that support their academic development. For example, teachers provide master classes for the gifted mathematicians,

revision classes for those who need them, statistics GCSE, a maths club

and a variety of visits related to mathematics. However, access to the use of ICT is restricted and, in Years 10 and 11, provision of ICT is not consistent for all pupils. This has been identified in the departments' development plan as an area for improvement.

95. The department is very well led and managed, with the full support of all members of the department. The head of department has clear objectives for future developments and plans are in place to continue the current trends of improvement. Staffing is good. Despite some staff movement, there is a full complement of teachers and continuity of learning has been maintained. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and the department has the capacity to take this improvement further.

Numeracy

96. The provision for developing numeracy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school has held school training on the development of numeracy in all subjects on two occasions, and the numeracy co-ordinator has held training sessions for the auxiliary staff. The school numeracy policy is still at a draft stage and few departments have the development of numeracy skills written into their schemes of work. The mathematics department has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy into lessons in Years 7 and 8, which has produced an improvement in pupils' basic skills. However, the general level of numeracy within the school remains well below average. Departments that use, or make a contribution to, pupils' numeracy skills include geography, science and design and technology. For example, in science lessons, there is a focus on measuring skills, in order to advance pupils' learning and reduce the impact of their poor number skills. However, there is a tendency in science to wait for pupils to be taught skills in mathematics lessons before using them. In design and technology subjects, pupils use a variety of units for measuring lengths, weights and volumes, although the level of numeric application in their work is at a low level. The geography department provides many opportunities for development of pupils' numeracy and use of graphs, and there is close liaison with the mathematics department on styles of presentation. Numeracy is also used in a limited way in history and modern languages. Pupils were observed doing simple arithmetic in French and there is good use of time-lines and graphs in history. Departments do not always recognise opportunities for developing pupils' numeracy skills, and no school policy is in place to co-ordinate the contributions made by all subject areas.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Very good leadership and management are now resulting in improvements to all aspects of the provision.
- Good teaching results in good learning and improving standards.
- Very good relationships are leading to better-motivated and harder-working pupils.

Areas for improvement

- There are not enough permanently contracted, specialist teachers to meet all the needs of the curriculum.
- Lack of laboratories limits learning opportunities for a significant number of pupils.

97. Results achieved in the tests taken in Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average. The results matched those in similar schools, but were below those of mathematics and English. As these pupils entered the school with very low standards in science, this represents good achievement. Over recent years, there has been a slow but steady improvement up to 2001, but a slight decline in 2002. The attainment of boys has been slightly better than that of girls.

98. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that standards are again rising: although they are still well below the national average, there is improvement. If the present rate of progress is maintained, results in 2003 will exceed the best so far achieved. Many pupils enter the school with poor classroom and experimental skills. Many also have weak literacy and numeracy skills and their scientific knowledge is very limited. Year 7 pupils, studying the states of matter, had great difficulty in recognising that "melting" is not the same as "dissolving", and confused "heating" an object with "lighting" (igniting) it. As pupils move through the early years, these weaknesses are addressed and improved. For example, Year 9 pupils could give the equation for photosynthesis, using correct terminology with ease. Pupils in the Year 9 top set accurately completed an experiment on the diffraction of light, and their explanations of the work showed a good grasp of the properties of light.
99. Results gained in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were well below the national average and below the standards achieved by pupils who were of a similar standard at Year 9, but the results were close to those in similar schools. Boys and girls share this satisfactory achievement. Over the last five years, standards improved up to 2001, but stayed at a similar level in 2002.
100. Observation of standards during the inspection indicates that the upward trend is now continuing. Pupils' books all contained careful accounts of work done and test results confirm better progress. However, in some pupils' books, the effects of absence from school were evident, and this limited attainment. The standard of work being done in observed lessons was always at an appropriate level of difficulty. Year 11 pupils in the top set were learning about the effect of heat on the rate of chemical reactions. All, including pupils with special educational needs, could explain the phenomenon with the level of understanding needed for a higher-grade (A* to C) GCSE pass. Pupils in a much lower set were slowly beginning to grasp the differences between human characteristics that are inherited and those that are affected by the environment. If progress continues at the rate observed, results in 2003 will exceed those of 2002, with a further rise in 2004.
101. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, and achieve standards that are higher than those indicated by their attainment on entry. Pupils identified as being particularly talented and those for whom English is an additional language achieve standards that are commensurate with their abilities.
102. Teaching and learning are good. More than 70 per cent of the lessons seen were good or better; some excellent teaching was observed and very little was unsatisfactory. Teaching is based on an extremely thorough understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. This results in lessons that are carefully designed to be difficult, but not overwhelming. Planning is also imaginative and adventurous. Many pupils are not natural scholars, and some quickly become bored if not stimulated by frequent changes in activity. A Year 8 lesson on fossil fuels, a potentially somewhat "dry" topic, was enlivened by the use of small whiteboards that allowed all pupils to answer questions simultaneously, effective use of audio-visual equipment and a well-structured work sheet that facilitated note-taking. Year 7 pupils, learning about states of matter, were entranced by the practical work provided and consequently made good gains in knowledge. The top set in Year 10 gained a secure understanding of the functions of parts of the blood, because of the unusual and thought-provoking way they were required to make their notes. There is little passive copying of material from textbooks and teachers work hard to ensure that pupils understand what they are recording.
103. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils underlie the work of the department. Pupils are treated with respect; shortcomings are dealt with sensitively and in ways that do not damage self-confidence. Teachers are always available and give a great deal of their own time to provide after-school revision classes and clubs. Pupils recognise this commitment and respond by giving their best.
104. Teaching of literacy within science lessons is good, and every lesson includes activities that will improve pupils' mastery of technical terminology; however, there is insufficient attention to the

quality of oral work. Pupils' weaknesses in numeracy are dealt with satisfactorily, but number work across different subjects is not co-ordinated. The use of ICT is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient equipment.

105. Teaching of classes for pupils with special educational needs is always at least very good, and often excellent. Year 10 pupils with learning difficulties, who were following the Certificate of Achievement course, showed tremendous enthusiasm as they successfully measured rates of

fall using stopwatches, measuring decimal parts of seconds. Year 7 pupils, supported by the teacher and a very skilled ancillary, managed a difficult experiment on chromatography because of the exciting and organised way in which the work was presented.

106. Recent staffing problems have had a significantly negative effect on standards. Over the last eighteen months, there have been three different heads of department and a lot of staff changes. Many classes have experienced unplanned changes of teacher, and some have been taught by a succession of temporary staff. This has disrupted learning and limited progress for many children, resulting in the comparatively weak performance in 2002. One permanent appointment still has to be made. Lack of sufficient laboratories for all classes seriously limits learning opportunities for some pupils.
107. Leadership and management are now very good. The newly appointed head and second in department are rapidly bringing about improvements. The curriculum is being revised and new schemes of work are already resulting in better learning. Assessment of progress is very good and is used to set motivating targets for pupils and to monitor the effectiveness of teaching. The department is now very well organised. All staff, including the dedicated and very efficient technician, work together as a mutually supportive group, and morale is high. The support given to less experienced teachers is exemplary.
108. The department's close involvement with university research groups that are studying the way children learn is bringing a sophistication to teachers' work that is unusual and is making teaching increasingly effective.
109. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement. The rate of improvement is accelerating under the present management. Given resolution of the remaining staffing problems, there is great potential for a significant rise in standards.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in art and design in Years 7 to 11.
- GCSE results are amongst the best in the school.
- The quality of teaching is good, especially for pupils with special educational needs.
- The art and design department is very well managed.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils find evaluating their practical achievements difficult.
- Pupils have a limited understanding of the artists and styles they study.
- The opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their practical work are limited.

110. The standards of pupils' work in Year 9 are average and accord with recent teacher assessments. Pupils enter the school with very weak skills in art and design, but achieve very well across Years 7 to 9, particularly in practical work, because of the skilled, sensitive and well-planned teaching they receive. In work seen during the inspection, in work on self-portraits and a project on dreams pupils showed developing skills in observational drawing. They made bold use of colour in a

variety of media, as in imaginative work on insects, and frequently translated their ideas successfully into three-dimensional work, as when designing boxes influenced by work on the Titanic. Sketchbooks are well used to collect images, but vary widely in the range of content and the quality of presentation. Pupils are less secure in written research on artists or styles studied, often because of low levels of literacy. Many pupils are diffident when attempting to discuss and evaluate the work they produce.

111. The standards of pupils' work in Year 11 are average. Pupils achieve well in their practical work across Years 10 and 11. In the 2002 GCSE examination, the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades was just below the national average for all schools. As in the previous few years, all pupils entered for the examination were successful. For many pupils, their results reflect significant personal achievements. The results were among the best in the school. In work seen during the inspection, many pupils demonstrated very good observational drawing skills, particularly of the human figure and in projects on natural forms. Pupils show imagination when researching their ideas and many translate their ideas into a range of media with some flair, especially when using a variety of printing techniques. Work derived from the study of Japanese and African art resulted in high-quality finished products that reflected meticulous attention to detail. Work in critical studies is variable in quality, and pupils' research is often marred by weak literacy. Few pupils have sufficiently developed oral skills to enable them to discuss and evaluate their work.
112. Throughout Years 7 to 11, there are no significant differences in standards and achievement between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve very well. Pupils identified as talented in art and design show very good achievement and do very well.
113. Pupils display very good attitudes in art and design lessons. They relate well to teachers and treat resources with respect, and many develop independence and initiative when working on their individual projects.
114. The quality of teaching is good, and sometimes very good. Pupils learn effectively, because all teachers have a profound understanding of pupils' individual needs. This is reflected in their skilled lesson planning and translated into discreet encouragement in all lessons. Teachers are well-qualified specialists, who understand how art can be used to develop pupils' personal confidence. They use particularly imaginative methods to enable pupils to appreciate how technical art skills are needed in order to convey meaning and expression. In a Year 9 special needs lesson, the teacher made excellent use of story-telling, myth and drama on the subject of Medusa's head to develop pupils' observational drawing skills. Teachers possess very good class-management skills and generate a positive ethos for learning that enables pupils to develop good working habits as they proceed through the school. The many support staff further enhance pupils' learning through effective individual guidance. The curriculum is imaginatively devised; in particular, the various projects on world art make a very good contribution to pupils' cultural understanding. Pupils have a clear idea of how well they are progressing in art and design because of the good quality of teachers' oral assessment and the well-devised self-assessments provided in sketchbooks, which establish clear individual targets. Teachers pay careful attention to pupils' literacy by highlighting meanings and spellings of unfamiliar words, and giving useful guidance on the presentation of research. Insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' oral skills, especially in helping them evaluate their practical work. In a small minority of lessons, the pace of teaching is slow. A stronger focus on homework is needed at Years 10 and 11.
115. Pupils' learning is significantly enhanced by the very good quality of leadership and management in the art and design department. Teachers are highly committed and reflect a united vision for the department that strongly reinforces the schools' overall aims. The curriculum and assessment procedures are subject to regular review as a result of classroom experience and pupils' achievements. Pupils benefit considerably from the wealth of extra-curricular provision offered, including gallery visits, competitions, community projects and opportunities to work with visiting artists. Pupils are able to take pride in their efforts through the high-quality display of pupils' work in the art and design rooms and around the school. Teachers have a secure understanding of the departments' developmental needs, and recognise the need to further increase pupils' opportunities to use ICT in art and design.

116. The subject has made good improvement since the previous inspection report. In particular, the accommodation is now more effectively arranged and pupils have more opportunities for imaginative work.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been planned well and integrated with the curriculum for personal, social and health education.
- Much is attempted within the curriculum and the wider life of the school to broaden the horizons of the pupils.
- Much is done to encourage pupils to participate and take responsibility.

Areas for Improvement

- There has been no staff training in teaching the citizenship programme.
- Skills of enquiry and communication are less well developed.

117. In Years 7 to 11 standards of attainment are below average but progress in lessons is good and overall achievement satisfactory. Pupils' attainment in their work on strategies for participation and taking responsible action is good. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of what it means to be informed citizens is average, but their skills of enquiry and communication are below average. The generally low levels of both literacy and spoken English prevent pupils from reaching standards that match national expectations in debate, discussion and writing. Many find it difficult to express, justify and defend a personal viewpoint. Low levels of attendance in some instances undermine the continuity of the curriculum and result in some pupils not being able to make important links with other aspects of their learning.
118. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will become involved in school-based and community-based activities. Understanding the consequences of actions is a strong theme that runs through the planned programme, and this is reinforced in the general life of the school. In discussing illegal drug use, the majority of pupils in Year 9 showed a good awareness of the possible effects of the misuse of drugs, not only on the individual, but on other members of the community. Year 7 pupils were making good progress in the topic "understanding the rights of children". They had engaged purposefully in looking at the UN Charter, and the higher-attaining pupils were able to present a coherent case for supporting children's rights. In the GCSE religious education groups, many pupils were able to make the link between their own experiences in school and the moral and social issues covered in the study of laws and freedom.
119. Teaching is at least satisfactory overall, with much that is good or very good. The best lessons, particularly those in which citizenship is offered within other subject areas such as religious education or personal, social and health education, are characterised by good planning and clear objectives that are shared with the pupils. In these lessons, teachers work hard to draw out ideas from those pupils who are not confident conversationalists. A major strength is their knowledge of their pupils, which allows them to be sensitive to individuals when discussing difficult or controversial issues. In the majority of lessons, there is a good balance between individual tasks, small-group work and whole-class teaching. In some lessons, the use of case studies is very appropriate and allows small groups of pupils to form a view and then share and debate that view with the whole class: this approach was used in the Year 9 lesson on the consequences of taking drugs.
120. The citizenship curriculum is well structured and mapped out. Since the last inspection the programme for personal, social and health education has been completely overhauled. A careful audit of the programme has taken place, involving all staff, and the current programme ensures that specific citizenship programmes of study are embedded within it. Staff response has been positive. Resources for the programme are centrally organised and assistant heads of year then orchestrate the teaching of the programme within each year group. To date, there has been no whole-school staff training that would help to ensure programme continuity from Year 7 through to Year 11.

121. An impressive feature of the work in citizenship is the recognition of the school's role as a community within a community. This has enabled the school to ensure that citizenship is not only taught, but experienced and practised in the wider life of the school. For example, there are School Council representatives in each year group, with democratic elections for these posts. "School tidy" groups operate in Year 7. In Year 9, pupils operate as mentors to help with the integration of Year 7 pupils on entry. In Year 11, pupils who meet certain criteria are selected as prefects. Year-group and whole-school assemblies serve to underpin the citizenship programme, with an emphasis on responsibility and accountability.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching supported by well-planned courses, provides pupils with a broad and worthwhile technological experience.
- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures their full inclusion in technological activities.
- The wide range of courses and qualifications available enables all pupils to pursue a course appropriate to their needs.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use of ICT as an aid to improve standards.
- There is too little emphasis on teaching methods that improve pupils' independent learning skills.

122. Standards of work for pupils at the end of Year 9, measured by teacher assessments, are well below average, but show a rising trend. Thorough assessment procedures ensure that teachers have an accurate picture of pupils' attainment, and careful use of this information ensures that the progress of each individual is monitored.
123. GCSE results in 2002 were well below the national average, but the published figures do not include results for those pupils who gained GNVQ qualifications. When these results are taken into consideration, levels of attainment are higher, and more in line with standards seen during the inspection. The range of courses and qualifications available to pupils is a strong feature of this curriculum area, and a high proportion of pupils are entered for non-GCSE courses appropriate to their needs. This is effective in giving as many pupils as possible the opportunity to have their achievements recognised. Pupils in GNVQ intermediate hospitality and catering, for example, performed above their estimated levels: all pupils gained a pass or merit, equivalent to B and C grades at GCSE. Overall, results have shown an upward trend since the last inspection.
124. In work and lessons seen during the inspection, standards for pupils at the end of Year 9 are below average. Pupils work best in a practical situation and teachers often devise learning situations to exploit this. Some higher-attaining pupils are able to grasp the principles and terminology involved in designing and making, and apply these to solving problems. In one Year 8 electronics lesson, for example, pupils rapidly developed an understanding of systems and components, which allowed them to make good progress in devising and assembling circuits from kits. For most pupils, however, attainment is limited by low literacy skills, poor recall and lack of personal organisation. Despite many technology projects being designed to develop these skills, only some higher-attaining pupils are able to make the individual contribution to their work that will allow them to work with greater independence at a later stage. The strong structure of many design projects helps lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs to follow a good design methodology and respond to each aspect of the work. Pupils' work in textiles is colourful and imaginative, and shows evidence of simple experimentation with fabric, colour and pattern. Where ICT is used, it improves the quality and content of pupils' work, but opportunities to incorporate it more readily into lessons are missed. Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and, given their very low level of attainment on entry, their achievement is good.

125. Standards of work for pupils at the end of Year 11 are below average. Some higher-attaining pupils, for example in food technology, are able to collect research material from a variety of sources, analyse it carefully and present it to a high standard using a combination of hand-drawn and computer-generated methods. But because many pupils are not good at organising their own time and effort, much GCSE folder work lacks independent research of any depth. Close co-operation with the local college enables GNVQ hospitality and catering and engineering pupils to develop independent personal and learning skills. Lower-attaining pupils benefit from structured work materials, and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. This was evident in a group of Year 11 pupils with a wide range of profound special needs who, because of high expectations, excellent teaching and skilled support from auxiliaries, were able to display remarkable powers of perseverance and concentration to prepare sponge cake mixture. Pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress and to build on their earlier achievements.
126. Teaching is good. Most lessons seen during the inspection were good or better, and more than one-third were very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a high level of commitment from a hard-working team of teachers who know the pupils well. Thorough assessment systems provide detailed information to support this knowledge, and pupils receive constructive advice on how to improve. Teachers employ a range of appropriate teaching styles and suitably adapted materials to suit each ability level. However, systems for identifying and supporting more gifted and talented pupils are inadequate. Pupils' literacy skills are well supported in lessons by frequent emphasis on the correct use and understanding of technical vocabulary. Teachers' marking also emphasises the need for correct spelling. In one Year 11 resistant materials lesson, pupils were encouraged to read aloud from the resource materials and answer in full sentences during class discussion. As yet, the department does not have a fully formulated policy for promoting numeracy skills, although some good practice was observed in individual lessons.
127. Pupils respond well to good teaching and there is a positive and friendly atmosphere in most lessons. Good relationships enable teachers to provide good learning experiences in lessons, but, because many pupils have difficulty in consolidating the information, learning over time is less secure. Pupils are interested in technology and can work well together in groups or when sharing equipment. This level of interest enabled one group of potentially difficult pupils to participate fully in a resistant materials lesson without their behavioural difficulties proving a hindrance.
128. Very good leadership and management have provided a clear sense of direction, created a good team spirit and have focused development on improving the quality of teaching. Consequently, very good improvements have been made since the last inspection in providing a varied and appropriate curriculum. The quality of teaching has improved, as has pupils' awareness of design skills. This has resulted in improved examination results. The curriculum has been tailored to the particular needs of the school's pupils, with a wide range of courses and qualifications. Areas for development are control technology, systems and control and the increased use of ICT and computer aided design and manufacture. The dual pastoral and academic responsibilities of the head of faculty have helped to create a caring atmosphere for pupils, but will be difficult to sustain if the proposed expansion of the area takes place.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good or better in all lessons, and lessons are well planned, with a good variety of learning activities.
- Assessment is good, and the new departmental database enables pupils' progress to be tracked.
- Classroom management is very good, leading to very good attitudes, relationships between pupils and teachers, and behaviour in lessons.
- There is very good provision for literacy, good provision for numeracy and there are some good opportunities for the use of ICT.

Areas for improvement

- Results at GCSE are below the school's general standard.
- Fieldwork provision for Year 9 is unsatisfactory, as is the overall provision for fieldwork and the use of enquiry projects.
- There are too few opportunities for independent learning to help pupils develop more understanding of their work.

129. At the end of Year 9, the number of pupils gaining National Curriculum Level 5 or above is well below the national average. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' books during the inspection was below average. For lower-attaining pupils, standards of literacy are very low and, for many pupils, unsatisfactory. For higher-attaining pupils, literacy is satisfactory and there is good, detailed paragraph writing. Oral responses are satisfactory, and for all pupils, the presentation of map, graph and diagram work is good to very good. Compared to the very low standards on entry, achievement in geography by the end of Year 9 is good.
130. Results at GCSE are well below average in geography, but there are indicators of improvement. Between 2000 and 2002, results at GCSE rose from 27.5 per cent of pupils achieving grades A* to C to 34.8 per cent doing so. Those achieving grades A* to G increased from 91 per cent to 100 per cent. The standard of work seen in lessons and in books is better than the results suggest, but is below the national average. Standards of examination coursework vary widely: the judgements and conclusions reached are good for higher-attaining pupils, but satisfactory to poor for most pupils. On balance the standard of such work is below average and weakens candidates' overall performance. Literacy among higher-attaining pupils is good but for lower-attaining pupils is unsatisfactory. Numeracy is good and graphs, maps and diagrams are very well executed.
131. Teaching and learning are good or better in all lessons. Lessons have good pace and timing and a good variety of activities stimulate pupils' learning; there is also good use of well-made resources. Pupils understand what is required of them in all lessons, and resource materials to support learning by both special-needs and higher-attaining pupils are always available. Teachers pose relevant questions to develop pupils' understanding and give frequent encouragement to all responses. In a minority of lessons, the teacher may not provide sufficient time for pupils to develop their responses fully, and this affects the development of understanding. Occasionally teachers explain too much, leading to loss of pace and pupil motivation. However, in most lessons brisk questioning keeps pupils mentally alert, positive encouragement ensures wide pupil participation and the varied activities develop pupils' skills and knowledge. Pupils can demonstrate good factual and place knowledge of the topic being studied, but their understanding of the details of physical processes and case studies is less well developed. In a very good Year 8 lesson for higher-attaining pupils, the concluding task required pupils to write a diary account of the volcanic eruptions in Montserrat, from a survivor's viewpoint. This required considerable understanding, and the extended quiet time provided pupils with opportunities for reflection and creative and independent learning. In a good, mixed-ability Year 11 lesson, pupils used a data sheet, atlases and blank maps. The data was used to develop place knowledge and draw column graphs on the maps. Pupils worked steadily and took responsibility for their own work, which was completed to a high standard. In some lessons, however, there are too few opportunities for independent learning to develop pupils' understanding. There is very good provision for learning for all pupils with special educational needs, who enjoy their work and make good progress.
132. In all classes, behaviour is good. Pupils concentrate well and listen carefully. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good, and pupils work well together during small group and pair work.
133. Leadership of the department is good. Resources are well managed and displays of work and information are very good. New schemes of work for Years 7 and 8 are very good and cover all aspects of learning. Other year groups are having new schemes of work developed to improve provision for pupils' needs. All required policies and guidelines are in place. Marking is monitored and is very good for Years 10 to 11; it is understood by pupils. Assessment procedures and practice are now good and self-assessment is being piloted with Year 10 pupils. The non-

accredited geography course provided for pupils with special educational needs in Years 10-11 is very good.

134. Since the last inspection, much has been accomplished and improvement in the department is good. However, standards are still too low. Opportunities for fieldwork, enquiry-based learning and independent learning are inadequate. Provision for the use of ICT, with specific tasks for all year groups, is not explicitly identified in the subject's schemes of work clearly.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- GCSE results are above the national average.
- The quality of teachers and support staff is good.
- Pupils' moral, social and cultural education is very well developed.
- The department is very well managed.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' oral skills are weak.
- The lesson format used restricts the development of independent thought.
- Use of ICT by whole classes is not always effective.

135. The standard of pupils' work in Year 9 is below average. Work seen during the inspection confirmed the recent teacher assessments. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average, but make satisfactory achievement in Years 7 to 9. Pupils can recognise differences in conflicting historical evidence, as when analysing alternative accounts of the Gunpowder Plot, and appreciate the differences between facts and opinions. They can create effective timelines, as was shown by work on changes in coal mining. Pupils write up their findings neatly, but most struggle when producing extended sentences. Many pupils have weak literacy skills, but work hard to improve their writing. In class discussion, pupils show lively recall of work studied in their previous lesson but, individually, pupils are often confused about the wider significance of the events they have studied. A small minority of pupils demonstrate above-average standards in history.
136. The standard of pupils' work in Year 11 is average. In the 2002 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades was above the national average and all pupils entered were successful. The results were the best in the school. This reflects a rapid improvement in results over the past few years. The standards seen in lessons during the inspection were slightly below those indicated by the 2002 results, but pupils show above-average achievement. In lessons pupils demonstrate a lively enthusiasm for history and good recall of previous work. They make pertinent connections across a range of work they have studied, as in work on the history of medicine in the ancient world. The quality of their responses is often restricted by weak spoken English skills and they are given few opportunities to engage in focused debate. Pupils show developing skills in source analysis and make perceptive deductions, for example when considering the problems faced by early settlers in North America. They produce a substantial body of work in their files, reflecting diligent research, often using the Internet. Most work makes good use of pupils' word-processing skills, but many pupils fail to concentrate on key points and waste time writing up extensive extraneous material.
137. Throughout Years 7 to 11 the great majority of pupils make good achievement, including those with special educational needs. Those identified as talented in history show very good achievement.
138. Pupils display very good attitudes in history lessons. They behave very well, form constructive relationships and relate well to teachers and support staff.

139. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils learn effectively in history because teachers possess a secure understanding of pupils' individual needs. Teachers and support staff keep very detailed records of all their classes, and make sure that pupils are appropriately supported at all times and strongly encouraged to make the best of their abilities. Teachers possess very good classroom management skills, providing a friendly but well-disciplined environment in which pupils feel supported and are enabled to develop confidence in their work. Pupils make good progress in history because teachers work hard to improve standards of literacy, with a strong emphasis on grammar, sentence construction, presentation and spelling. Teachers expect GCSE pupils to word-process their work and provide good opportunities for pupils to use the Internet for homework and research. History is brought alive to pupils because teachers possess very good subject knowledge and make effective use of resources, such as the use of video in work on North American Indians. The pace of teaching is brisk and pupils are motivated to learn by the high level of challenge presented to them. Pupils are able to consolidate what they learn because teachers provide reviews of previous work and check pupils' understanding of current work in every lesson. However, the common format of all lessons through Years 7 to 11 restricts pupils' opportunities to develop independent thought. Teachers avoid direct questioning of individual pupils in most lessons, and over time this impedes the development of oral skills. There are no opportunities for pupils to develop debating skills. Most pupils have a secure understanding of how to improve their written work because teachers provide effective assessments and give clear guidance on standards expected.
140. The history department is very well led and managed. Documentation is meticulously prepared. Teachers are highly committed individuals who have a secure understanding of developmental priorities. Pupils benefit from the efficient and imaginatively arranged curriculum and assessment systems. All the equipment and resources purchased since a fire damaged the department are of good quality. Opportunities are provided for whole classes to use ICT in history, but the cramped conditions in ICT rooms limit their value at present. Insufficient consideration has been given to how best to utilise such facilities to promote learning in history, as distinct from learning in the use of ICT. The development of pupils' moral, social and cultural education through history is very good. The provision for visits to local sites and museums enriches pupils' understanding of history.
141. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. In particular, the quality of teaching, assessment, curricular planning and departmental management has significantly improved. GCSE results have substantially improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- ICT resources have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Teaching of ICT as a separate subject is satisfactory or better.

Areas for improvement

- Overall standards of attainment are below national expectations.
- National Curriculum requirements are not met in Years 10 and 11.
- Monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress in all years is insufficiently rigorous.
- Cross-curricular ICT is weak.

142. In all years, pupils are taught ICT in discrete lessons. Group sizes in all years are such that the PC/pupil ratio in all lessons in the main suite is 1:1. In Years 7 to 9, pupils follow standardised schemes of work. ICT is also an option that pupils can choose in Years 10 and 11; by opting for the subject they gain three extra lessons per week. Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection, but much remains unsatisfactory. Much is good, but there are two major problems: not all the National Curriculum programme of study for ICT is taught, and provision in cross-curricular ICT is too patchy.

143. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average. Pupils are adept at using computers for word-processing and for desktop publishing, combining words and pictures. They show a facility with the use of the network and are usually able to find appropriate information to use in their presentations. However, use of information from more than one source is rare, and in-depth analysis even more rare.
144. Standards at the end of Year 11 are also below average. The latest available figures show 36.6 per cent of pupils gaining grades A* to C at GCSE or equivalent, compared with the national average of 55.1 per cent. Pupils design their own web pages, including appropriate images and text, and establish links between pages. They understand the importance of clear presentation and consideration of their target audience. Most pupils use spreadsheets for modelling, but only a few perform more complex “what-if” analyses.
145. On entry to the school, standards are poor. Progress in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory in the separate ICT lessons, but not overall, because there is insufficient reinforcement of ICT in the rest of the curriculum.
146. Pupils with special educational needs are given well-focused assistance and make very good progress compared with their prior attainment, but their absolute standards of attainment are well below average.
147. Learning for the majority of pupils is, however, unsatisfactory. Too little learning in the rest of the curriculum and the absence of computer control and data-logging from the schemes of work in Years 10 and 11 make an overall unsatisfactory judgement inevitable. National Curriculum requirements are not being met. Learning of ICT skills and knowledge and understanding in discrete ICT lessons are satisfactory and occasionally good, but even there, frequent absence and poor retention hamper achievement.
148. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, although examples of good teaching were seen in several lessons, and very good teaching in one lesson. In the timetabled ICT lessons, teaching is satisfactory overall and occasionally good or very good, but teaching of ICT across the rest of the curriculum is too limited and is too often unsatisfactory in quality. Where practice is good, teachers plan carefully, review progress and communicate learning objectives. Occasionally, an objective is too ambitious for any of the pupils to reach. In Years 7 to 9, tasks are often very tightly structured and do not allow for differentiation. Pupils in general are well-motivated and keen, and relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils are good. Attitudes and behaviour are generally good. Monitoring and assessment of ICT, both in the separate lessons and across the curriculum, are not sufficiently developed.
149. There is much good practice in support of literacy – key technical vocabulary is prominently displayed in all ICT rooms, and hints are given on correct spelling. There are very few instances of speaking and listening skills practice, and such opportunities for reinforcing numeracy that arise are not taken.
150. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects varies from nothing at all to quite extensive use. Pupils are able to access learning resources, for example, the Internet, and use ICT facilities to prepare work in other subjects. Access to the computer suites out of hours is encouraged, and there is a loan scheme whereby pupils can borrow laptop computers to enhance the presentation of their work.
151. The present management arrangements are unsatisfactory because of the failure to deliver the full ICT curriculum, and because the arrangements have failed to ensure that all staff are secure in their knowledge and use of ICT. There have been staffing problems. However, the one remaining full-time member of the department is now acting head of department and has the skills and determination to remedy the problems. The supply teachers engaged are both appropriately qualified and skilled, but monitoring and support for them is not adequate. There is good

classroom support from graduate trainees, learning support assistants and the World of Work co-ordinator.

152. The schemes of work are not satisfactory and procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' work are not sufficiently rigorous to facilitate proper target setting. Curriculum coverage does not ensure the delivery of the cross-curricular aspects of ICT.

153. The ICT department is based in four rooms, a suite of three adjacent rooms and a single room in another part of the school. These rooms are all very cramped and provide an unsatisfactory working environment for pupils, who do not have sufficient space to work other than at the

keyboard. Plans to remedy this situation by the inclusion of a substantial ICT facility in the proposed new Engineering/ICT block are well developed. There are adequate printing facilities in each room and peripheral devices such as scanners and digital cameras are available.

154. The school now has a curriculum network, with good, up-to-date equipment. There is a wide range of software available on the network and Internet access is provided at all stations and to all pupils. Access to the Internet is carefully controlled to ensure that, as far as possible, unsuitable sites are blocked. Pupils are required to sign responsible-use agreements before access is granted, and privileges are withdrawn in cases of abuse. There are some technical problems with the network, notably the unreliability of the wireless connections, but overall the network is extremely well managed by the network manager and the ICT technician, who together ensure that the resources are available to pupils almost all the time.

MODERN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- The establishment of very good relationships in the classroom helps to ensure that most pupils make good progress in lessons.
- The effective use of the French foreign language assistant and of other auxiliaries contributes to good learning.
- Good leadership of the department ensures a commitment to the improvement of standards.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results are lower than they should be.
- The development of pupils' speaking skills is unsatisfactory.
- Procedures for setting clear, specific targets for pupils are unsatisfactory.

155. Apart from a fall in 2001, GCSE results in French have followed a trend of small improvements in recent years, but the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades remains well below the national average.

156. Results in German show an uneven trend and are also well below the national average. The percentage of A* and A grades is very low in both languages.

157. The standard of work seen in lessons during the inspection was below the national average at the end of Year 9. Pupils have a good understanding of short texts of familiar language. Written work is mostly accurate and the higher-attaining pupils use past and future tenses as well as the present. Speaking skills are under developed. Pupils lack confidence in oral work. There is little use of the foreign language by pupils in everyday exchanges with one another or with their teachers. However, the gains being made by pupils from their previously very low level of language knowledge represents good achievement across Years 7 to 9.

158. The large number of pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They write accurately, using worksheets and model sentences for support. They take part successfully in short dialogues, using well-rehearsed expressions. They benefit from the effective support of auxiliary staff.
159. The standard of work of pupils following examination courses in Years 10 and 11 is below the national average. Although most pupils make advances in knowledge and understanding in individual lessons, weak recall of previous learning hinders the progress they make over longer periods of time. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress in writing skills. They broaden their knowledge of grammar and apply it well in their coursework. Again, all pupils lack confidence in speaking the foreign language, especially when asked to reply spontaneously to questions outside situations tightly controlled by the teachers in the classroom. Consequently, standards in this area of their studies are well below the national average. Pupils feel more comfortable with the written word and their understanding of the foreign language is generally good. Achievement overall is satisfactory.
160. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11 continue to make good progress over a wider range of topics. They receive well-judged help from support staff and carefully tailored work from specialist teachers. They adapt model dialogues to suit their own needs in order to take part in short exchanges with one another or with their teacher. In some cases, speaking French is a real challenge, but the pupils persevere and perform to the best of their capabilities.
161. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have a good command of their subject and provide good models for their pupils to imitate. They manage the pupils well, so that pupils behave well and work hard. Lessons have a clear focus, and consequently pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them. Teachers contribute effectively to their pupils' literacy development by encouraging them to think about language patterns and compare them to their own language. The planning of lessons is good and enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding through a wide range of appropriate activities. Because of difficulties in getting regular access to the school's facilities, not enough use is made of ICT to help pupils to learn. The French foreign language assistant makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, providing effective support to teachers in the classroom. There is not enough emphasis on pupils' use of the foreign language. It is not a regular, routine feature of lessons and, as a result, standards of speaking are low.
162. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is especially good. All of the good features mentioned above are coupled with sensitivity to the pupils' difficulties, yet teachers do not dilute the challenge to the pupils, and they respond well.
163. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department supports her colleagues well and has a strong commitment to improving the quality of learning. Comprehensive schemes of work have been devised that are well matched to the needs of all pupils. Attractive displays create a pleasant environment in which pupils can learn. Good systems of assessment are in place to track the progress of individual pupils, but they are not consistently applied by all teachers across the department. Targets are set for pupils, but clear guidance is not given on how pupils should reach them. Monitoring of teaching within the department is not adequate to allow strategies for improvement in some aspects of classroom practice to be developed and used consistently.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities is making a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use is being made of ICT.
- Too few pupils are being entered for GCSE.
- Practice-room facilities are inadequate.

164. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 judge standards to be well below the national average. The three pupils entered for GCSE in 2002 all achieved grades ranging from A to C. Although the pass rate over the past three years shows a steady improvement, the number of entries has declined. However, groups are too small for valid comparisons with national figures. There is no difference between the overall attainment of boys and girls. Seven pupils in Year 10 and eight pupils in Year 11 are currently preparing for GCSE. In the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examinations in 2003, one pupil achieved grade III, two pupils achieved grade IV and two pupils achieved grade V in string, woodwind or brass. From thirteen entries (one boy and twelve girls) in the London College of Music and Drama examinations in 2002, there were five passes, five merits, and three honours.
165. Standards of work in Year 9, observed during the inspection, were below average. Pupils have a limited understanding of basic theory. They are unclear about the elements of music. The quality of singing is satisfactory. Work is well presented in notebooks but pupils have difficulty in recalling what they have written. Higher-attaining pupils are able instrumentalists who perform with growing confidence.
166. Overall achievement across Years 7 to 9 is good. Year 7 pupils are able to follow simple staff notation and clap a range of simple rhythmic patterns. The pupils in Year 8 have a satisfactory understanding of a range of musical instruments and are able to match them to their countries of origin. Year 9 pupils have a good understanding of different styles of popular music. The pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are fully integrated into all aspects of music lessons and make very good progress. Gifted and talented pupils perform with their voice or on an instrument to high levels of competence. There is no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls.
167. Standards of work in Year 11 observed during the inspection are average. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the fundamentals of music. Listening skills are satisfactory and composition and performance skills are average. Gifted and talented pupils attain to a high level of performance with voice or instruments.
168. Achievement across Years 10 and 11 is good. The pupils in Year 10 have a satisfactory understanding of the pavane and effectively compose an eight-bar rhythm, to which they add a simple melody. Year 11 pupils prepare their individual coursework compositions and effectively appraise their own work. They make good progress in their understanding of minimalism. Boys and girls perform equally well and the pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language perform well. Higher-attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented instrumentalists make very good progress.
169. The pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a satisfactory attitude to music. The substantial majority enjoy lessons and are keen to learn. Older pupils have a good attitude to the subject and to learning. They learn well as a class and in small group activities, and relationships between pupils and teachers are mature and productive. Musical activities are inclusive, involving boys and girls of all abilities. They show respect for their own and one another's performances and handle the instruments they use with care.
170. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teachers and the visiting instrumentalists and vocalist have a secure knowledge of the subject and are able performers. A range of teaching styles helps to sustain the pupils' interest. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and very effectively supported by teachers and auxiliaries. Pupils' work is effectively assessed as the lesson proceeds. Assessment and marking procedures are good, but work is occasionally over-praised. Teaching makes an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development. Opportunities are being missed for singing and musical contributions in assemblies. Pupils effectively study a range of musical styles, including jazz, blues, reggae, Indian and African music. A range of extra-curricular music and productions such as “Bugsy Malone” and “Oliver” make an important contribution to the pupils’ musical knowledge and performance skills. ICT skills are inadequate and there is no use of computer technology. Teaching is least effective when lessons lack content and pace. Teaching is most effective when pupils are given a variety of tasks to be completed within a given time period The seven visiting instrumentalists and vocalist give high-quality teaching to 61 pupils. Issues raised in the previous inspection have been fully addressed and the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met. There is a shortage of practice rooms. The department is well led and managed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Achievement across Years 7 to 11 is good
- The teaching is good and often very good; positive relationships are supported by high but realistic expectations.
- The inclusion and development of pupils with severe movement difficulties are impressive features.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' understanding of the principles of play across a range of games is inadequately developed.
- There is currently no full GCSE course available to all pupils who wish to take it.

171. Standards of work seen in games, trampolining and dance in Years 7 to 9 are generally in line with age-related expectations. Pupils exhibit a range of skills in basketball, netball and hockey, often accompanied by technical accuracy when performed in isolation, although some pupils are less assured in competitive contexts. Understanding of the principles of attack and defence in invasion games is less secure. In trampolining, boys demonstrate a range of movements; while some perform with poise and control, others lack such refinement. In dance, the majority of girls lack confidence in creating their own motifs and most show limited development of the use of gesture and expression. However, certain individuals are starting to combine these with appropriate music. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 as a whole is good. Girls and boys move apparatus and equipment safely and efficiently.
172. By Year 11, standards of performance in a number of activities are in line with age-related expectations. Many boys exhibit an appropriate level of technical skill in volleying and rallying in volleyball, although their appreciation of tactical requirements is limited. In rising to the challenge of "all terrain" running, all boys show good performance in sustained running over distance. In climbing, most girls' understanding of safety, belaying and their respective responsibilities is developing appropriately. Some girls show an aptitude for climbing and succeed in a number of routes. They belay one another appropriately and have developed confidence in one another's support. A large number of pupils develop and refine their skills in the structured extra-curricular sports programme, which includes opportunities to participate in residential courses. The ability to employ a critical awareness of their own and others' performance is under developed across all years. Some pupils' low levels of attendance and limited spoken English skills and power to recall previous learning do not help them with this aspect of the subject.
173. It is rare that pupils with special educational needs can be distinguished from the rest of the group, and many make good progress in practical work as a result of a variety of tasks and challenges appropriate to their level of attainment. The achievements of pupils with profound movement difficulties are excellent. The majority are making very good progress in increasing their range of movement in dance and developing skills in short tennis. In Year 7, some pupils have developed their movement skills sufficiently to enable them to participate in mainstream sessions. Several pupils extend their learning in extra-curricular sessions, such as the wheelchair basketball club.
174. Teaching is good, with some of it very good or excellent. Across Years 7 to 11, teaching is very good where good subject knowledge is underpinned by accurate observation skills that enable pertinent feedback to be given to individuals, thus increasing challenge and pupil motivation appropriately.
175. Across Years 7 to 11 learning of practical skills is good, but there are missed opportunities to improve understanding of the "principles of play" that are common to invasion games and net games. A distinctive feature of the teaching is the reinforcement of acceptable behaviour and appropriate attitudes toward competitive or co-operative situations. The teaching of pupils with severe movement difficulties is a major strength of the department. Pupils are challenged

realistically, their integrity recognised and self-esteem enhanced by their achievements in dance, short tennis and developing “sending” and “receiving” skills.

176. The department makes the best use of the excellent indoor accommodation and the incidence of non-participation in lessons is minimal. Very good leadership and management are major factors in the success of the department. There is a clear vision for the department, which in turn has been translated into realistic aims and objectives. There is evidence of a reflective culture and a team ethos is well developed within the department. The curriculum is well thought out and shows an innovative approach, with specific sessions for pupils with movement difficulties and for Year 5 and 6 pupils from contributory primary schools. These are significant developments, and are among the many improvements in provision since the last inspection. However, the lack of a full GCSE available to all pupils is a serious shortcoming. An effective assessment system ensures that learning outcomes are monitored and in turn used to keep pupils informed of their progress, though the accuracy of the Levels identified is not always secure.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- All pupils are included, whatever their level of attainment or special need.
- There is a clear upwards trend in results and in the numbers of pupils entered for short-course GCSE.
- About 50 per cent of the pupils entered for GCSE in 2002 gained grades A* to C, and 94 per cent gained grades A* to G.
- The standing of religious education in the school has improved considerably since the last inspection.
- The provision of work that is suitable for the different levels of attainment among pupils is very good.
- Schemes of work ensure that topics are well related to pupils' own experiences.
- Teaching and support for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.

Areas for improvement

- The provision of textbooks for some lower sets is insufficient.
- The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory.

177. Analysis of the results in the GCSE short course over six years shows very good improvement, both in the numbers entered for the examinations and in the results. In 1997, eleven pupils gained A* to C grades, whereas in 2002, 54 pupils gained A* to C grades (almost 50 per cent of those entered) and 94 per cent gained A* to G grades.
178. By Year 9, pupils' oral knowledge and understanding of the topics in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, and they know many details of their topics. However, a very high proportion of pupils, almost 40 per cent, have special educational needs, and their literacy skills are well below average, which lowers their attainment overall. When this is taken into account, attainment overall is below average, and this is a similar finding to that of the last inspection. However, pupils make very good progress, including those who have special educational needs, due to the opportunities given for speaking and listening. Most pupils join in with discussions and are willing to put forward their own suggestions and opinions. For example, pupils in Year 7 were seen considering the qualities needed to be a disciple. They suggested words such as “brave”, “honest”, and “courageous”, and were full of ideas and exuberance in their discussions. There was a lively exchange among the class in Year 8 when they discussed prayer and quiet times. They thought of saying thank you, friends, illness and the loss of family members when they listed subjects for prayer.
179. Year 11 pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the examinations syllabus, and this represents very good progress and a very good improvement since the last inspection. Analysis of pupils' work shows that they have developed a deeper understanding of the topics they study.

For example, in their work about the family as a social institution, they compared Muslim attitudes with those of Christians when thinking about subjects such as co-habitation, extended families and family stability. All pupils make very good progress, including those who have special educational needs. They are able to express their own opinions very well and hold their views firmly. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils discussed the idea of looking after the environment, and talked about pollution and litter within the context of our stewardship of the world.

180. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and some is very good. This is because teachers plan well and use appropriate methods. A key feature of this good, and sometimes very good, teaching is the reference made to pupils' own experiences. This was very well exemplified in a very good Year 9 lesson about laws and freedom. The teacher talked about walking on the left in school, not dropping litter and driving within the 30 mph restriction locally. More learning was achieved when they talked about the implications for pupils in wheelchairs if everyone ignored the "keep left" rule in school. The pace and challenge in lessons are good, and teachers maintain their high expectations for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs. Activities increase pupils' motivation and interest and enable good learning. Pupils enjoy religious education. When asked why, one pupil replied that it was because "we do good things in the lessons".
181. An enthusiastic and knowledgeable head of department leads the subject very well. Schemes of work are very well planned and are a great help to the non-specialists who teach the subject. The enthusiasm and professional expertise of the head of department has enabled her to raise the standing of religious education, improve standards of attainment, and generally make very good improvements since the last inspection. A good indication of the improved standing of the subject in the school is the fact that some senior pupils are willing to meet after school in order to be able to follow the examination course.
182. Although resources in general are good, there are insufficient textbooks for some of the lower sets. There are no information and communication resources available in the religious education base, and this is unsatisfactory.
183. Overall improvement since the last inspection is very good - in particular the improvement in teaching, the standards of attainment by Year 11, and the markedly upward trend in examination results.