

INSPECTION REPORT

PATCHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114608

Headteacher: Ms Elizabeth Fletcher

Reporting inspector: Mrs Helen Hutchings
7541

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th November 2002

Inspection number: 249185

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ladies Mile Road Brighton East Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Granville Wilcock
Date of previous inspection:	9 th December 1996

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30597	Robina Howells	Team inspector	Mathematics	
19983	Haydn Webb	Team inspector	Science	
11672	Peter Harle	Team inspector	Art and design	
1782	Andrew Lyons	Team inspector	Design and technology English as an additional language	
2069	Jenny Smith	Team inspector	Geography	
15576	David Nebesnuick	Team inspector	History Citizenship	
14522	Ian Smith	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
4426	Terry Fitchett	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
10391	Val du Plergny	Team inspector	Music Special educational needs	
2448	Alastair Mathews	Team inspector	Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
30198	Reg Chick	Team inspector	Physical education Educational inclusion and race equality	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Patcham High School is an average-sized, mixed 11 -16 comprehensive school, with 980 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and the proportion speaking English as an additional language are low. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school is below national averages and their literacy skills are well below average. A higher than average number of pupils has special educational needs, mainly with emotional and behavioural needs or specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is in line with the national average. The school has an internal education support base which provides additional learning and pastoral support for 75 pupils. The numbers who join or leave the school at times other than the normal time of entry are relatively high. About half of teachers have joined the school within the last two years and the school is fully staffed.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Patcham High School is a good and improving school. The school has many strengths, including very good care and support for pupils' personal development, so that most pupils enjoy school and behave well. Teaching is good. The standards achieved by pupils are generally below national averages, but pupils make good progress in their learning. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and enables others with responsibility to do their job well. Given the good teaching, the positive attitudes of pupils, improvements in national tests and examinations and the quality of leadership, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very well in GCSE compared to their earlier levels.
- The very high quality of leadership of the headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for the school and motivates staff and pupils.
- Pupils receive very good care and support and the majority have good attitudes to school.
- Procedures for ensuring good attendance have been very effective.
- The curriculum is planned well for the needs of pupils and uses the local community and external agencies well to improve learning opportunities, particularly for some pupils to study a work-related curriculum in Years 10 and 11. There is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support so that they sustain their efforts well and make good progress in lessons and their personal development.
- The school manages its financial resources well.

What could be improved

- Insufficient emphasis is placed in some subjects on the development of pupils' literacy skills, the involvement of pupils more in their learning and planned opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.
- School policy relating to homework, the use of assessment and performance data and monitoring teaching and learning are not implemented consistently in all departments.
- Legal requirements with respect to history in Years 7 to 9, religious education, design and technology and information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11 and the requirement for a daily act of collective worship are not met fully.
- Toilet provision is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in December 1996 improvement has been good and the school is well placed to improve further. Results in the national tests in Year 9 have improved faster than nationally and at GCSE the school has reduced the difference between the school and national

performance levels. Attendance is now in line with the national average. Learning resources have improved overall but there is still insufficient access to computers for all subjects. Time is used well in lessons and pupils are punctual. The school still does not meet statutory requirements fully for collective worship and religious education, design and technology and information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11.

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
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	E	E	D	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The achievement of pupils in GCSE and GNVQ, in relation to the levels they had achieved in Year 9 is well above average for schools with the same attainment levels in Year 9, although below average for similar schools, as measured by the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In 2001, the latest year for which full comparative data is available, the proportion of pupils who gained five or more higher grades A*-C or GNVQ equivalent was below the national average but, in 2002, this level had risen by an amount greater than the national improvement rate. The school exceeded its statutory targets for attainment in GCSE and attendance. Results in art and design are above average. Pupils are working at levels below national expectations in most subjects but standards are better in mathematics, German, music and physical education. Standards in information and communication technology are low but have been rising more rapidly than in other subjects. At GCSE, girls are performing better than boys and by a greater difference than nationally. However, the improvement trend for boys is greater than the national difference.

Boys and girls achieve similar levels in the Year 9 tests, whereas nationally girls do better than boys. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below the national average but, when compared with similar schools, results were in line the average in English and mathematics and below in science. From below average attainment when pupils join the school, pupils are working at the expected levels in art, modern foreign languages and physical education. These results represent satisfactory achievement overall and good for many pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils enjoy being in school and take part in the many activities, but the attitudes to learning of a few pupils are unsatisfactory.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory and pupils behave well in and around the school. There have been no permanent exclusions in the past 12 months and the level of short term exclusions is below the average for secondary schools.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils' relationships and the respect they show for each other and staff contribute well to a friendly and secure school ethos. There are good levels of mutual respect and an absence of racist or sexist attitudes.

Attendance	Good. The improvements over time have resulted in the school's overall attendance level now being in line with national averages and the level of unauthorised absence is below that of similar schools.
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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 is good in most subjects. Whilst a small proportion is still unsatisfactory, much teaching is good, very good or excellent. Teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school. Teaching is also good in design and technology, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. It is very good in art and design, music in Years 10 and 11 and in physical education in Years 7 to 9. In other subjects, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use effective methods, have good relationships with pupils so that they develop a sense of teamwork amongst pupils, who then learn well. Pupils concentrate well on the tasks set for them and develop a range of skills to understand their own learning. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils effectively so that pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and the gifted and talented learn well. There are good approaches to developing literacy and numeracy in some subjects but opportunities to develop literacy skills, in particular, are not always taken. In some subjects insufficient opportunities are taken to use information and communication technology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum offers a broad and inclusive programme, with the exception of those areas where it does not fully comply with statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' strengths, weaknesses and needs are well known within the school, as a result of very careful assessment and excellent relationships with all who work with the pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils receive good support from external specialist teachers so that they make good progress in learning English to enable them to learn well in other subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for personal development through theme days covers a wide range of aspects well. Spiritual provision is satisfactory, with opportunities in lessons to experience spiritual influences. However, there are missed opportunities in assemblies and the absence of collective worship. Provision for moral and cultural development is good and very good for social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. A very wide range of outside agencies work in school to support behavioural and academic development. The Warmdene Centre provides very effective support for pupils. Good attention is given to the welfare and safety of pupils but toilet amenities are unacceptable.

The school places a high priority on the care and support for pupils. Staff know pupils well and have a good understanding about their academic and personal development needs. The care and support

activities make a very good contribution to learning and progress. Teachers and learning support assistants provide very good support for pupils in the Warmdene Centre.

The school has developed and continues to develop an effective partnership with parents. Parents are kept well informed about school activities and there is close consultation when problems arise, for example, poor attendance. Contact with the school is actively encouraged and opportunities to meet and discuss pupil progress are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are very good. A clear vision motivates staff to work hard and seek success. Equality of opportunity and worth is taken very seriously and is universally recognised and widely shared by staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors support the school well and keep a careful eye on its progress, but they have not ensured that the curriculum meets statutory requirements fully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Performance is monitored and evaluated, as is teaching and learning but the latter could be further developed.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Resources are carefully deployed and best value is sought. The headteacher has a strategic approach to planning finance.

A recently enlarged and high-performing leadership team provides clear educational direction for the school. Day-to-day financial management is very good. The school is careful in the management of its resources, prioritises well and applies the principles of best value to its spending decisions, by looking carefully at the way in which spending can be most efficient in the longer term. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are not yet consistently undertaken and performance management practice is still at an early stage of development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high expectations staff have of pupils. • Pupils make good progress whilst at school. • The range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about progress. • Closer working and involvement with parents. • The quality and range of homework.

The inspection team fully endorses the positive areas identified by parents. There is an inherent belief throughout the school that every pupil can succeed and the high levels of support ensure that pupils make measurable progress in academic areas as well as personal development. The range of activities provided by the school is impressive. The team does not support two areas that a minority of parents have identified for improvement. Information about progress and involvement of parents is good. Annual progress reports and parents' meetings provide good opportunities to discuss progress. In addition, the school actively involves parents in target setting and when planning programmes of work. Parents are encouraged to contact staff if they have concerns about progress and staff respond well when contact is made. Newsletters include invitations for parents to help in school. There are inconsistencies when setting homework and not all teachers ensure that pupils have recorded details of the work set. Some teachers are not following the homework procedures.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school, as indicated by the results in the 2002 national tests in Year 6, is below national averages and their literacy skills are well below average. The entry attainment profile has improved steadily over the last five years; the attainment of pupils currently in the school was well below national averages when they joined. Fewer than average higher-attaining pupils attend the school and a high proportion of pupils have very low attainment levels when they arrive.
2. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below the national average overall but were in line with those of similar schools, as measured by the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. However, this does not take account of the additional challenge for a significant proportion of pupils entering and leaving the school at times other than the normal time of entry and who have experienced disruption to their learning. Results in English, mathematics and science were below national averages. When compared with similar schools, results were in line in English and mathematics but below in science. Over the last five years the school's improvement trend has been above the national trend and the school's results have improved at a faster rate than nationally. Results in 2002 show continued steady improvement in mathematics and there was a significant improvement in English in 2001. These results represent achievement that is satisfactory overall and good for many pupils.
3. In most of their other subjects, pupils enter the school with levels of attainment lower and often much lower than is normally expected at that age. By the time they reach Year 9, standards observed during the inspection, whilst still below national expectations, have improved significantly. Pupils are working at expected levels in art, modern foreign languages and physical education.
4. In 2002, the proportion of pupils who gained five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades A*-C or General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) equivalent was below the national average. The school has been steadily reducing the difference between school and national performance levels over the last three years. When pupils' performance in GCSE/GNVQ is benchmarked against that of schools achieving similar levels in the national tests at the end of Year 9, their performance is well above that of similar schools nationally. Local education authority data also shows that the school's improvement trend for the proportion of pupils achieving at grades A*-C levels is high by comparison with other schools locally. The school exceeded its statutory targets set with the local education authority for both academic performance and attendance. At this stage in the school, while some pupils still find it difficult to engage in learning, the majority have developed good attitudes to learning and are achieving well.
5. In individual subjects, whilst GCSE results generally remain below national averages, results in art and design are consistently above average and in English literature are in line with the national average. Although remaining below average, results have been improving well in mathematics and design and technology. Standards in information and communication technology are low but have been rising more rapidly than in other subjects.
6. Pupils in the current Year 11 are working at nationally expected levels in mathematics, German, music and physical education. Standards remain low in information and communication technology and religious education because pupils have not had a broad range of experiences in earlier years.
7. Differences between boys' and girls' performances in tests and examinations fluctuate from year to year, but in GCSE examinations the boys' results are rising at a faster rate than girls' and the gap between them is decreasing. The school's strategies to improve boys' performance, by matching

the curriculum to the needs and interests of boys and by careful choice of mentors as role models, are proving successful. In the tests at the end of Year 9 the boys' performance differs little from that of the girls in English, and in mathematics and science, it is better than the girls', contrary to the national picture.

8. The wide range of attainment which pupils have when they enter the school is accommodated well. The school recognises that the attainment of all groups is important as a way of improving whole-school standards, so that all pupils are expected to achieve success at the highest possible level. For example, all pupils with learning difficulties are expected to achieve at least Level 2 qualifications. The school enables several pupils who have been expelled from other schools to feel sufficiently confident to learn and to take increasing responsibility for their personal development. They learn well and make very good progress. The few pupils who are in the early stages of the acquisition of English as an additional language receive focused help that enables them to make good progress in their language development. Their specialist teacher ensures that they are able to participate in lessons by teaching them the technical vocabulary in key subjects. Pupils who are now fluent make good progress and some are achieving high standards in English. Those pupils identified by the school as gifted or talented take part in specific activities, such as summer schools, and make good progress in relation to their earlier achievements.
9. In response to pupils' low standards of reading and writing and below average numeracy levels when they enter the school, Key Stage 3 National Strategy literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have been appointed. Work within the English and mathematics departments is successfully raising pupils' attainment. Awareness raising has taken place about how other subjects can contribute to the improvement of these basic skills. While there are examples within many subjects of the strategy beginning to impact on practice in some departments, this has not yet been formalised into a whole-school approach and, consequently, approaches are not consistent and many opportunities are missed. Generally, numeracy skills are close to expectations and adequate for pupils to cope with the demands of other subjects, but in many subjects pupils' low literacy skills have an adverse impact on their overall quality of work. There are also insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills in many subjects across the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. For all but a very few pupils, school life is an enjoyable experience. They particularly enjoy the many activities the school provides and are eager to participate in whole-school events, especially those at the end of term. They also enjoy the safe and friendly ethos of the school and the opportunities for socialising with friends. However, some pupils have yet to develop attitudes which focus on learning and achievement. In a number of lessons, pupils either show disinterest in the teaching or do not take part fully in lesson activities, for example, during question and answer sessions, some pupils are passive. This is more polarised in Years 10 and 11, where pupils' attitudes are poorer in some lessons but also significantly better in others, than in the earlier years. Despite this, behaviour in lessons is good and there is minimal disruption. The incidents of rudeness to teachers, identified during the last inspection, were not evident this time; neither are there significant occasions of pupils talking across teachers. Most of the time, teachers are able to teach without interruption.
11. Behaviour in and around the school, including at the start and the end of the school day, is good. Whilst some incidents of jostling were observed in the corridors, this would be expected in view of the large number of pupils moving through narrow corridors and with ongoing building work limiting movement. Most of the time pupils show a concern and respect for each other and staff. During the inspection no incidents of aggressive or violent behaviour were observed and neither was there evidence of racist or sexist behaviour. Whilst there is graffiti in some areas of the school, this is minimal. Most pupils show respect for the school environment, despite its poor condition in some areas, and take care of school property.

12. There have been no permanent exclusions during the past year and only 12 fixed period exclusions. These figures are a significant improvement since the last inspection and are now below the national average for similar schools
13. Relationships across the school are very good. There are high levels of mutual respect between pupils and staff. Pupils have a clear understanding about teachers' expectations of them and all school staff provide very good role models when dealing with pupils. As a result, pupils respond well to the advice and guidance given to them and are aware that adults are acting in their best interests. Pupils are positive about the opportunities the school offers them and, in the main, are happy to comply with the school's routines. The school has an informal dress code, devised in consultation with the school council. This is interpreted inappropriately by a few pupils. Minor breaches of school rules are dealt with sensitively, resulting in a positive response from the pupils concerned. Pupils treat visitors, of whom there are many in the school, well. They are polite and readily offer visitors help with finding their way around the school or by opening doors.
14. Pupils show maturity and trust when given opportunities to take responsibility. The school council members, in particular, take their roles seriously and have responded well to the school's initiative to give the council more say in the life of the school. Similarly, prefects make a good contribution to school routines, for example, by helping to manage the large pupil numbers moving about the school. There are numerous letters in the school's documentation praising pupils when taking part in or helping to manage outside events.
15. A major focus of the school's work is that it should be a socially inclusive place. The curriculum is planned to provide a range of opportunities for pupils of all levels of attainment to achieve success. Pupils mix well together, irrespective of gender, ability or social circumstances. There is a strong feeling of inclusiveness around the school and the environment is friendly.
16. Attendance is good. Latest figures show that, during the last reporting year, overall attendance is now in line with national averages, whilst the amount of unauthorised absence is below that of other similar schools. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Punctuality has also improved. Whilst there are still some pupils who arrive late at the start of the school day, the number of pupils doing so has dropped significantly. Similarly, punctuality at other times during the school day has improved; pupils are rarely late for lessons and respond well when lessons re-start after breaks.
17. The Warmdene Centre is an efficient support base for pupils with a very wide range of needs. Pupils who spend time in this centre quickly develop far more positive attitudes to school than when they joined the school, as a result of very carefully devised programmes of learning and extremely well organised systems for support by a large number of outside agencies.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good overall. Whilst a small proportion of teaching, four per cent, is still unsatisfactory, much teaching is good, very good or excellent. Two-thirds of lessons are good or better and almost three lessons in ten are very good or excellent. Weaknesses in teaching were in occasional lessons and not confined to any particular subjects. Teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school. Teaching is also good in design and technology, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. It is very good in art and design, music in Years 10 and 11 and in physical education in Years 7 to 9. In other subjects, teaching is satisfactory.
19. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to plan lessons which are relevant for pupils and form coherent sequences of work. Lessons have very clear learning objectives and teachers make brisk starts to lessons by sharing these well with pupils. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, the teacher displayed a puzzle for pupils to solve as they arrived in the classroom so that pupils became engaged in the lesson quickly and developed their thinking skills; the teacher then explained how this related to the learning to take place in the remainder of the session. In an excellent Year 10 English lesson, the teacher made the study of 'Romeo and Juliet' immediate to

pupils, and boys in particular, by making them pick a fight with the person next to them but without touching, swearing or leaving their seats; this was then developed well by watching at a video to study the importance of gesture and, in so doing, pupils understood and empathised with an important Shakespearian play.

20. Generally lessons are effectively structured to enable pupils to enjoy and play an active part in their own learning. In a Year 7 French lesson, the teacher used a series of short tasks, explained them well and gave pupils opportunities to practise and consolidate new vocabulary, within the context of creating a questionnaire in French about school subjects; pupils then participated in the survey. In a Year 9 hockey lesson, pupils made excellent progress because the teacher demonstrated new skills very well and the follow up was well organised to allow pupils to copy and improve their own skills of dodging and defending; the pace was fast and all pupils remained active and engaged, in spite of inclement weather.
21. Teachers' classroom management and organisation are very good, so that pupils are encouraged to concentrate and carry out the tasks that have been set for them. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson, the teacher involved pupils well, informally as individuals or small groups as they entered the room, about the activity to follow; pupils were involved in these discussions from the start, so that the practical investigation on the transfer of energy using a candle and light bulb was effective in understanding the proportion of useful energy to wasted energy. Much of the success of this session depended on the high expectations of the teacher and his use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking. This is an effective feature of teaching which is widely used in the school. In a Year 7 information and communication technology lesson, the teacher used questions very well with a group with very different skills levels to draw out what they already knew and to move learning forward, so that by the end of the lesson each pupil was able to use the PowerPoint function to add sound which matched the image on the screen.
22. The effective methods used by teachers are further enhanced by the relationships they develop with their classes. This is used to create a sense of teamwork between pupils, so that they are able to work effectively in pairs or small groups and gain from having to articulate their thoughts to one another. Teachers are caring but do not compromise on challenging pupils in a calm and supportive way. They match the work well to provide pupils with tasks which relate well to their previous learning and attainment and give pupils the opportunity to make decisions for themselves about which level they should strive for, for example, through the 'must', 'should' and 'could' system. Very careful planning and preparation result in good resources for learning. Most teachers use good quality information sheets and support materials. Interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to capture pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson on living conditions in the nineteenth century, it was used to build up a picture of a street gradually and systematically.
23. Generally, effective plenary sessions, recommended by the national strategies, are used to summarise learning and give pupils opportunities to reflect on what has been learned during the session. However, on occasion, lessons end rather abruptly and this opportunity is lost. There were a number of reasons why teaching was unsatisfactory or where it was satisfactory rather than good. Mainly, this related to weaker management of a group of pupils in the class who were not interested in learning, where the content of the lesson was not directly relevant to pupils' experiences or where pupils were passive in their response and did not put much effort into their tasks. In a few lessons the teacher depended too much on the plan for the lesson and did not build sufficiently on pupils' conclusions or understanding. In some humanities lessons, where teachers teach beyond their first specialism, their relative lack of subject knowledge means that content is superficial and has a negative impact on learning.
24. In most lessons, pupils develop a range of learning skills; for example, in a Year 7 geography lesson, pupils were required to watch a video about Bangladesh without sound, so that they were encouraged to pick up ideas for themselves and then consolidate their thinking through a card-sorting exercise. Key subject terms and concepts are developed well. In many lessons teachers use strategies, such as key words and writing frameworks, to develop pupils' literacy skills. However, because the implementation of the school policy for developing literacy and numeracy is

inconsistent, opportunities are missed to address this important aspect of pupils' learning. In a number of subjects, learning is impeded by a lack of planned opportunities to use ICT.

25. There are many examples of good marking which provides valuable guidance for pupils on how their work could be improved and setting them realistic targets. Homework is not set regularly and consistently across the school, including homework not being set when it is programmed and additional homework set, regardless of the timetable. Consequently, too many pupils do not value homework as an opportunity to reflect on what they are achieving.
26. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is usually at least good. This is because most teachers know their pupils well so that the targets on their individual education plans are taken into account when the lessons are planned. There is usually very good liaison between the lead teacher and the learning support assistants. As a result of these elements pupils learn well. Although the specialist staff who teach pupils with English as an additional language are very skilled and experienced, there is no whole-school policy for implementing a learning strategy for these pupils. In consequence, it does not impact on all areas of teaching in the curriculum as it should.

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

27. Curriculum provision is good. The school offers a broad and inclusive programme, with the exception of those few areas where it does not comply fully with statutory requirements.
28. The curriculum is broad and balanced, providing a wide range of academic and vocational opportunities. In Years 7 to 9, pupils study all National Curriculum subjects and, additionally, study a second foreign language from Year 8. In Years 10 and 11 there is an entitlement to a full programme of academic and vocational courses through the core provision and the options system. The formal disapplication of a small number of pupils from study of a foreign language in Years 10 and 11 to allow them to undertake appropriate key skills courses is made judiciously and the programme provides a well-structured and positive experience for this group of pupils.
29. There are, however, still elements of non-compliance with the requirements of the National Curriculum. In history in Years 7 to 9, the full entitlement is not being provided within the local history module. In Years 10 and 11 design and technology, an option choice of business studies does not fall within the statutory requirement for the subject and therefore the school is not providing a National Curriculum entitlement for some 20 pupils. The school has a carefully planned discrete course in information and communication technology at both key stages but it does not fully meet the requirements in Years 10 and 11 in ensuring access to all pupils. The religious education element within the humanities programme also does not fulfil statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11.
30. Pupils benefit from a curriculum which is designed so that all can participate fully, and this is a significant strength of the school's provision. Pupils who have special educational needs, or who have particular gifts and talents, have exactly the same range of opportunities as everyone else in the school. It is part of the ethos of the school that this is so. The school caters particularly well for pupils with special educational needs. The procedures for identifying pupils and the development of specific programmes to meet their individual needs through, for example, the Warmdene Centre, are very good. The school has built on its very positive links with the City College, and 30 pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend courses in bricklaying and building, hairdressing and catering. They enjoy these, they work hard, and they have usually been successful in their examinations. There is very strong personal support and moral leadership by all the staff connected with the provision for pupils who have learning needs. This enables pupils to reconsider themselves, often in a much more positive light, and to become more efficient learners. Gifted and talented pupils are also beginning to gain from a well-structured initiative. This has yet to be fully embedded in the planning of all departments but some programmes have been enhanced where,

for example, gifted pupils attend study sessions in science at the University of Sussex as well as summer schools in art.

31. The range of vocational education programmes is outstanding. An unusually comprehensive programme which prepares pupils very effectively for the world of work is provided through GNVQ and other vocational courses in Year 10 and 11, work experience opportunities for all Year 10 pupils and the STEP (School Time Enterprise Programme) initiative for less motivated Year 11 pupils. Additionally, there are college-linked courses and an individual learning programme, with multi-agency support offering work placements as part of the Initial Flexibility project, leading to vocational GCSE and NVQ accreditation.
32. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are in place within the English and mathematics departments. As a pilot school for literacy, the strategy has been enthusiastically adopted. Analysis shows that it is beginning to have a positive impact but the contribution of individual departments ranges from very good in, for example, physical education and art and design, to only satisfactory in others. The numeracy strategy is at a similar stage of development where, although the structures are in place, subject areas have not fully addressed this in their schemes of work or lesson planning.
33. The school offers a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Apart from an Activities Week and the regular additional support from individual subjects, through the after-school sessions and breakfast clubs, pupils can also participate in a range of sporting, art, music and drama activities. The school is rightly proud of its Gold Sportsmark and Artsmark awards. The Gambia project, running since 1995, is of particular note. Pupils have the opportunity to experience at first hand a different culture and, through the theme day programme, disseminate their experience to benefit fellow pupils.
34. The quality of the school's commitment to its work with agencies outside the school is very evident in a number of areas. The school has an impressive number of links with the community and partner institutions. Sports community courses under the Sport England initiative are offered to the local community and there are particularly strong links with sixth form colleges in Brighton and Lewes, which benefit pupils in smoothing the transition from school to college. The links with the Universities of Sussex and Brighton support the work with able pupils through the Sussex Coastal Highways Project, as well as enhancing the professional development of teachers. The range of multi-agency links benefits both the academic and welfare needs of pupils. The Parenting Teenagers network, offering support to parents and their children, effectively involves, amongst others, local sports clubs and the Youth Service.
35. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Staff are aware that many pupils do not have the benefit of opportunities beyond the school to take responsibility, to develop self-confidence and to engage fully as members of the community. As a result the school has developed a range of activities to promote these areas. Foremost is the well-organised personal, social and health education programme, which fulfils all the requirements of citizenship, health and sex education through a sequenced programme, taught through tutor periods and the half-termly theme days. This structure provides good opportunities for input from outside specialist speakers and the impact is evaluated through feedback sheets from staff and pupils. Pupils enjoy these events and participate fully in the activities. Careers education is also a strong element within the programme and the careers education provision is rated very highly by both pupils and external agencies. The school has close links with the careers adviser and is a participant in the Sussex Careers Service initiative 'Committed to Careers'. The dedicated careers room provides pupils good access to a range of appropriate computer software and documentation. The comprehensive careers education document and recent destination statistics show a significant growth in the number of pupils proceeding to further education and local apprenticeships.
36. The school's provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. In lessons, pupils have the opportunity to experience activities that excite them, as well as understanding human feelings and how these impact on their lives. For example, in food technology, pupils show intense excitement when they create meals and in design and technology when they make bird boxes from scraps of

wood. In English, pupils gain greatly from a number of opportunities, for example, by relating colours to human feelings and discussing experiences including death, happiness and anger. Spiritual development is strong in art, including visits to art galleries, and provided for well in music and drama. The school's ethos of mutual respect and security enables pupils to flourish and grow into useful citizens, respecting others and being respected. There are, however, occasions, for example, during assemblies, when the opportunity to provide spiritual development is missed. There is no daily act of collective and the provision for religious education is inadequate. Whilst the lack of planned opportunities for spiritual provision across the curriculum, identified during the last inspection, has been addressed through subjects' planning in their schemes of work, widespread practice is not yet evident in the teaching of individual lessons.

37. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The positive reinforcement of codes of conduct and the fairness and consistency with which rewards and sanctions are applied, provide a strong moral framework which guides pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Teachers are consistent in their focus on appropriate moral values, such as racial and other forms of equality. Staff provide very good role models in this respect, especially in terms of fairness, integrity and keeping promises. This area is not fully developed within the curriculum, where some opportunities are missed to explore moral virtues, for example, through humanities, literature, assemblies and acts of worship. The new buildings will provide additional opportunities for more displays and images to reinforce the school's values.
38. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The school continues to encourage pupil participation in the wider school community very well. The school council and prefect system are good examples. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to work together in pairs or small groups to achieve a common goal. This is especially so in dance, music and physical education. Pupils participate in wide range of sporting and other activities outside school. These include working with less able pupils and others from mainstream schools and involvement in coastal environmental project. All these activities provide pupils with a good awareness about the social aspects of their lives.
39. Cultural development activities and provision are good. In lessons, pupils learn about and understand cultural differences. For example, in French pupils learn about French youth culture, including music and dress; in food technology, pupils learn about the origins of food from around the world and the diets of other cultures; in English and science, pupils learn about the heights of human endeavour through display of great scientists and Irish authors. Outside lessons, the school's well established links and exchange visits with a school in Gambia provide pupils with an excellent understanding of other cultures. Not only do pupils learn about lifestyles but also learn the local language. A further good initiative involves learning about Zimbabwean stone carvings, including visits to an exhibition and later working with the stone carvers in school.
40. In some aspects, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection. However, the school has not monitored its provision formally to identify areas where provision could be more effective.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The importance of providing very strong care and support for pupils is at the heart of the school's educational values. These beliefs are reflected by all school staff and are reinforced well during the daily life of the school. The school has developed a range of systems and procedures that is designed to establish and meet pupils' needs and to ensure that, however limited or difficult, the school will go to great lengths to ensure that pupils receive an education.
42. From the time pupils know that they will be joining the school in Year 7, they benefit from a range of activities, including meeting and developing relationships with staff and gaining a good awareness of what they can expect in their new school. Staff show high levels of sensitivity to the needs of these young pupils and ensure that their transition is smooth. For example, tutor groups are organised to include established friendship groups.

43. As they move through school, pupils benefit from a very good range of support initiatives. These include support from tutors, help with homework by attending the homework club and counselling sessions to deal with personal issues. The range of outside agencies that the school has invited to work with pupils is excellent. Some 21 representatives from outside agencies and organisations currently work in the school. For example, the local police schools' liaison officer provides active support to divert pupils away from crime. The work of these representatives makes a very good contribution to standards of behaviour, attendance and to teaching and learning. The recently-introduced peer mediation scheme provides good support for younger pupils and makes a very good contribution to the personal development of the older pupils who take part in the scheme.
44. A major strength of the school is the provision for academic and behavioural support available through the Warmdene Centre, situated with the school building. Currently some 75 pupils receive a range of educational support through one-to-one or small group sessions. Pupils value and derive benefit from the work of the centre. There is a very well organised approach to ensure that pupils get the support they need. The very many agencies who assist in this process have a high regard for the work which the school does in helping young people to learn and to grow up more comfortably than might otherwise be the case. For example, the school has a designated teacher for looked after children. The school makes very good provision for the care of its pupils with special educational needs. It has also recently begun the process of making specific and relevant provision for those who find that they are very good at some subjects or activities.
45. Pupils who are behind with reading and writing are able to progress well as a result of the encouragement and efforts of the staff and also from other pupils, through a paired reading scheme. In turn, these pupils develop self-confidence and are more able to contribute to classroom activities. Learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning, and to their positive experience of school. This is particularly the case where pupils have been out of school for some time. The school has, for a number of years, taken pupils in who have been expelled from other schools in the neighbourhood. This puts a considerable strain on the school, but these pupils settle happily and effectively into their new surroundings because of the care taken over the whole process. Funding is prioritised to meet the most urgent needs and, consequently, there is only a limited number of learning support assistants working within mainstream lessons.
46. There are very good levels of communication about pupils' needs across the school. As a result, teachers know pupils well and are fully aware of their personal needs, social circumstances and academic needs.
47. Procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' work and progress are satisfactory. In the last two years, improvements to the collection of data have been made and all the records are now on the computer network and available to the subject teachers and form tutors. Each pupil from Year 7 has a predicted and suggested National Curriculum level and this is supplemented with the introduction of the cognitive ability tests that are used to identify potential under-achievers in Years 10 and 11. There has been in-service training for staff in the handling of and interpretation of this enhanced data, although this information is still not used fully in reviewing and developing the curriculum. A cumulative and comprehensive record of assessment data for each pupil is now available and access is through the network. Most teachers use these records to support for their curricular planning.
48. Target National Curriculum grades are reported to the parents in Years 8 and 9 and, in addition, the reports include references to the key skills achieved in each subject and a suggested number of subject target grades for further improvement. At present the approach to target setting varies among departments, with particularly good practice in science, design and technology and the performing arts areas. Predicted GCSE minimum target grades are given in Year 10 and 11 reports, and they form the basis of the discussion for improving standards with each pupil. Reports have been improved and revised since the last inspection and now give a clearer indication to parents of the pupils' progress.

49. From the beginning of the autumn term in 2002, each department is assessing, as a minimum, one piece of work per pupil per term. This has yet to be achieved fully but should bring a greater consistency to the assessment of work and progress across the faculties. Members of the senior management team currently monitor the implementation of each department's procedures. In most departments pupils have a good knowledge of their own progress, for example, they monitor their own progress in conjunction with the staff in physical education and in art. The development of the assessment procedures has, in the last two years, contributed to the overall improvement of standards within the school.
50. The role of the form tutor has been extended to include the assessment of pupils' overall progress. Once a year the tutor carries out a joint review of progress with each pupil and additional time has been found to enable this process to be a comprehensive one. Each pupil is carefully monitored, not only by each department, but also across all subjects to identify both strengths and areas for improvement. As a result of this monitoring, under-achieving pupils are identified, and improved support systems put in place either by the department or by the tutor. Similarly, high-achieving pupils are praised and encouraged.
51. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The overall attendance record has improved consistently over time and in the past year this improvement has been very good. This success is due to very good use of the data produced by the electronic registration system. A range of criteria forms the basis of very effective analysis to establish patterns of non-attendance, as well as targeting pupils who are at risk. However, the key to the school's success is the range of strategies focused on individual pupils. These include effective discussion with the education welfare officer, the setting of targets for improvement and the very close monitoring of those targets. Response to non-attendance on a daily basis is swift and very effective, with staff ringing parents or pupils to establish reasons. Pupils who are late more than three times are quickly identified and, once again, are subject to reports, targets and frequent monitoring.
52. The school has a well-established and very effective behaviour policy that is understood well by staff and pupils alike. The underlying principles of behaviour management include rewarding and praising appropriate behaviour and imposing sanctions when appropriate. One of the keys to the school's success is the very effective identification of the type of rewards that pupils value, as well as sanctions that pupils would want to avoid; for example, being denied participation in some whole-school events.
53. The very strong culture of mutual respect makes a very good contribution to pupils' behaviour. Pupils are treated well and there is a consistency when praising good work or behaviour, as well as fairness when imposing sanctions. Other factors include the presence of staff when pupils are moving about the school and at the start and end of the school day. This helps create a safe and orderly environment. Whilst there is evidence of some bullying, mainly verbal, parents and pupils report that staff deal with these incidents very effectively. Pupils are actively encouraged to bring bullying to the attention of staff. The school provides good opportunities to discuss and reflect on behavioural issues, for example, within the personal, social and health education programme and during assemblies.
54. The school takes seriously its responsibility for the welfare of its pupils and staff. Despite the extensive building works currently taking place, staff remain alert to possible risks and quickly respond to emerging problems. For example, when corridors became dangerous during the inspection, due to leaking water, they were quickly cordoned off and the water removed. In lessons, teachers carry out proper risk assessments and ensure that appropriate steps are taken to avoid injury. The one area where standards are unsatisfactory is the state of the toilets. Both the boys' and, particularly, the girls' toilets are well below acceptable standards. They are old and poorly maintained in terms of their décor, design and the provision of basic amenities. The school is aware of these problems and is seeking to address this health issue through the Private Finance Initiative.

55. The school has appropriate child protection procedures in place, including the appointment of a senior member of staff with this responsibility. Teaching and support staff have undertaken awareness training relating to these issues and the school effectively involves other agencies when potential problems come to light.
56. Overall standards in this area of the school's work are very good and have further improved since the good standards highlighted in the previous inspection report. Nearly all parents acknowledge this aspect as a strength of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. The views of parents and carers, highlighted in the parental questionnaire and the parents' meeting, reveal positive support for most aspects of the school. They are very pleased with the high expectations staff have of pupils and the good progress made by pupils whilst at the school. They also comment very favourably about the wide range of activities available to pupils outside of lessons. The inspection team fully endorses these very positive views. However, a minority of parents and carers feel that they are not sufficiently well informed about how well their children are doing and that the school does not work closely enough with them. The inspection team does not support these views. The school provides many opportunities to discuss progress. These include parents' meetings and progress reports that set out very clearly the extent to which pupils have met academic and behavioural targets. The school also actively encourages parents to make contact to discuss concerns and there is extensive consultation and involvement with parents when setting targets or working out programmes for improvement. Parents and carers also express concern about homework. The inspection team endorses these concerns. The setting of homework is inconsistent across departments.
58. The quality and range of information supplied by the school for the benefit of parents and carers are good. Official documents, such as the school prospectus and the governors' annual report, are informative, well set out and comply with legal requirements. A newsletter, The Patcham Post, is an effective means of keeping parents up to date with school events and other aspects of school life. The school is actively developing its website as a further means of enabling parents to access information about the school. The school journal is recognised by many as a useful means of day-to-day communication with the school. Year group tutors examine these books at the start of the school day and a sample seen during the inspection revealed that staff, pupils and parents were effectively using the booklet. Annual progress reports, provided at the end of each year, show clearly what has been taught, how well the pupil has achieved and include targets for improvement. They also include details of other targets, for example, homework, organisation of work and uniform.
59. Parents' involvement in the life of the school is satisfactory. An active parent teachers' association helps the school through fund raising, arranging social events and acting as a forum for discussing whole-school issues with staff. Funds raised contribute well towards the provision of school resources, for example, computers and sports wear. Six parent governors play a full and active role as members of the governing body and make useful contributions to the management of the school. Although the school encourages and welcomes parents to help in the daily life of the school, their ability to do so is limited by work and other commitments.
60. Most parents and carers share the school's responsibility for their children's education. Attendance levels at formal parents' meetings are good and support for the school's initiatives to improve learning or attendance is good. Generally, parents ensure that homework is completed and give their children appropriate support with its completion. Most parents have signed the home-school agreement and fulfil their part of the agreement.
61. The school works very well with the parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs. The knowledge and support available to them through the Warmdene Centre is a valuable resource, particularly for those who have not found it easy deal with the various agencies associated with their children, or who have just got very frustrated over the years. There are very

clear, friendly and efficient lines of communication between the staff of the Warmdene Centre and the parents and carers of those pupils who they seek to help.

62. The specialist teacher for pupils who are acquiring English as an additional language has established very good links with the parents of these pupils and supports them to communicate effectively with the school.
63. Overall, the school has established an effective partnership with parents and continues to improve these links. These findings are in line with those at the time of the last inspection. However, the school has not formally researched the underlying reason why the minority of parents feel that the school does not involve them enough.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. A recently enlarged and high-performing leadership team provides clear direction for the school. This is underpinned by the vision of the headteacher who has, over a number of years, been dedicated to the idea that the school should be a major player in the Brighton area. This is in the context of a school that has been under-subscribed in the past and, therefore, had become expert at dealing with children who were not wanted at other schools. The headteacher believed in maximising their strengths, for example, work in the arts, but recognised that she needed to attract a more balanced intake so that the school became a true comprehensive, within which all pupils could maximise their attainment. This has been largely achieved.
65. A long-term and passionate commitment on the part of the headteacher to equal value and opportunity and high quality care for pupils is universally recognised and widely shared by the staff. She also recognises that the main priority now is to raise attainment further. This has led to the creation of dedicated senior teams to develop teaching and learning, to oversee guidance and to specialise in individual support. Change is managed carefully; staff are led by example and generally are inspired and motivated to work hard and to succeed in a situation where formal learning does not come easily to many of the pupils. There is a shared commitment to improvement and a developing capacity to achieve it.
66. Monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are taking place and are led by two assistant headteachers, with a cross-school team. One emphasis is upon the development of good teaching techniques, such as identifying and sharing objectives, improving questioning and the use of summaries at the end of the lesson, many of which are drawn from national strategies, as well as upon increasing the use of varied resources, especially the newer technologies. In this context, the school has appointed and is making good use of two accredited advanced skills teachers and a number of other teachers who have been recognised internally as talented. There is also a focus upon improving learning and a recognition that the school needs to develop more of an active learning culture rather than assuming that compliance and quiet are the signs of learning taking place. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are not yet consistently undertaken as a regular feature of subject management and require further development.
67. The school has identified an appropriate set of priorities through the school development plan, to which all subjects contribute their proposed action against the centrally agreed priorities. Currently, these are raising attainment, developing key skills, improving attendance, increasing inclusion and managing the Private Finance Initiative developments refurbishing the accommodation. Within this context, targets are set and monitored closely by a deputy headteacher, and progress is reviewed towards them regularly within staff meeting and with the governors. Performance management is in place; it is well organised and documented, with clear and appropriate guidance for all staff. However, it has not yet become the school's major tool for identifying strengths and weakness in professional practice and acting upon them.
68. The leadership team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, knows what needs to be done to improve and has refocused accordingly. They are perceived as having strong and consistent beliefs and are seen as open and approachable. Decision-making is clear and communication is good overall. Individual staff are not always fully aware of the detail of the

whole school priorities but recognise the need to improve the pupil culture, so that it values learning more highly as the main aim of coming to school.

69. Governors bring a good range of skills, competence from relevant areas of the world of work and strong commitment to their work. They represent well the community served by the school. They support the school very well as critical friends and receive regular reports of its achievements and outcomes. Governors have a developing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but have not ensured that the school meets its statutory requirements in all respects. Governors rely heavily, and to good effect, on the headteacher and bursar for information, advice and guidance. Most of the strategic direction for the school is provided by the headteacher.
70. Day-to-day financial management is very good and detailed information is readily to hand. Systems are unobtrusive, efficient and respond to need. The present bursar has acted on the main recommendations of the latest audit report. The school is careful in the management of its resources, prioritises well and applies the principles of best value to spending decisions. For example, for a recent purchase of a camera monitoring system, the school did not automatically decide upon the cheapest option but on a system which was likely to be compatible with that in the new building and which made use of digital technology and was thus more efficient in operation. The strategy for financial planning follows educational priorities and relies upon the headteacher's pro-active pursuit of new resources and her view of how management should be restructured to focus upon key objectives.
71. Regular meetings of the finance committee are held and the ongoing budget spend is carefully monitored. Governors have sensibly followed advice that they would be wise to hold a larger than normal contingency for unexpected costs at the end of the Private Finance Initiative project, as there are some uncertainties in exactly what it will cover. This factor, along with government changes in the time within which the Standard's Fund may be spent, has resulted in a cumulative under-spend in the budget, which at the end of the last financial year, stood at some £365,000. Present plans are that this should be reduced to about £130,000 by the end of the current financial year. Within the budget for this financial year, specific grant amounts to some £430,000 of income. This is allocated appropriately, monitored effectively and is generally well used. Outcomes generally match objectives, although in terms of the National Numeracy Strategy, only some of the objectives for the grant have been achieved.
72. The headteacher believes in appointing staff to key strategic posts, delegating management responsibility to them and allowing them freedom in which to fulfil their role, within the context of a delegated management structure. Job descriptions for senior roles are detailed and appropriate. This has generally resulted in effective contributions from staff so appointed. Management of subjects varies from highly effective to unsatisfactory and rapid structural change has led to some uncertainties of role for some staff who have held longer-term management responsibilities.
73. The leadership and management of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good indeed. There is a very clear vision for these pupils; that they should experience their school days as happily and as profitably as everyone else. The development of the Warmdene Centre as a resource base has been a very positive move; its success, in very simple terms, can be measured by the number of pupils who are still in school, instead of being expelled or 'voting with their feet'. One of its great strengths is the assessment of, and provision for, specific need within a very wide range presented by all the pupils who come into the school. The department's documentation is in excellent order and the statutory requirements made through the Statements of Special Educational Need are met in full. The Warmdene Centre is truly a 'school resource' for teaching and learning.
74. The school has had a relatively small number of pupils with English as an additional language in recent years. The headteacher has identified the need to develop more formal statements of practice for pupils, to ensure that all teachers understand fully their contribution to the development of these pupils' language and literacy skills.

75. A core of very experienced teachers provides stability and continuity throughout the school. The school is fully staffed and most are well qualified for the subjects they teach; however, there are not appropriate specialist teachers to meet the needs of all pupils in religious education. Learning support staff liaise and work well with teachers to aid pupils' learning. The school prioritises its resources to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs well. However, in some subjects like mathematics, there is still insufficient support for all the needs of the pupils' learning. Administration, technical and clerical staff provide an efficient level of service.
76. The co-ordination of all matters relating to staffing is becoming increasingly effective through clearer management structures and line management focus, for example, through performance management. Provision for the professional development of staff is sound. There are effective procedures for identifying whole-school, departmental and individual training needs. The school is a strong associate in local initial teacher training partnership with Sussex University and with local schools in the provision of training courses. There are satisfactory policies and strategies in place for the induction of teachers new to the profession and to the school.
77. The quality of the present accommodation is unsatisfactory and there are serious deficiencies in overall provision that the new building will provide for, such as the learning resource centre, much needed additional subject rooms and specialist information and communication technology accommodation to redress the current shortage of access for some subjects. The construction of a new building was taking place during the inspection. The site and the arrangements for the construction are complex but safe for the pupils and staff to continue their normal lessons. Negotiations have not yet been completed about the next stage of refurbishment, so that, for example, there is no definite timescale to replace the unsatisfactory toilet provision. In some subjects, such as the humanities and science, recent refurbishment has provided accommodation that is very good.
78. Overall, the school has adequate learning resources to teach the curriculum it offers to pupils. The current number of computers available for curriculum use is only an average ratio of 1:9, which is below the national average. However, this will be increased significantly when the new computer suite becomes available later in the academic year. Teachers are making good use of new technologies available to them, for example, the use of personal computers available in all classrooms, pupil absence administration using specialist software and the growing use of interactive whiteboards for teaching.
79. Planning is in place to ensure that current deficiencies, such as the library which is at present poor in resources, are addressed when the new buildings are completed. The limitation on present spending is reducing the learning opportunities of pupils in the school but there are no major deficiencies. Resources are good in science, history, design and technology, and modern foreign languages. Internet access is good and a sufficient number of computers are stationed in the information and communication technology rooms, although departments' access is limited by the courses in information and communication technology that have priority of use. There has been an improvement in the overall level of resources since the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. In order to improve and build on the good quality of education that pupils already receive, the governors and senior managers of the school should:

(i) **Improve attainment and develop the learning culture in the school further by:**

- improving the contribution of pupils to their own learning and reducing the lack of confidence and passivity of some pupils;

(paragraphs 4, 10, 23, 140, 149)

- implementing more consistently a whole school approach to the development of literacy skills;

(paragraphs 9, 24, 32, 144)

- setting homework more consistently in all subjects;

(paragraphs 15, 57, 155)

- increasing the planned opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual development; and

(paragraphs 36)

- improving access to information and communication technology for all subjects.

(paragraphs 9, 24, 79, 161, 167, 171)

(ii) **Develop a more consistent approach to whole-school monitoring and evaluation by:**

- using assessment and performance data more effectively; and

(paragraphs 47, 48, 49, 103, 141)

- monitoring teaching more consistently to disseminate good practice more effectively and reduce unsatisfactory teaching.

(paragraphs 66, 88, 103, 128, 141)

(iii) Meet statutory requirement by:

- providing religious education in Years 10 and 11 which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus;

(paragraphs 29, 194)

- ensuring that all pupils in Years 10 and 11 have access to the full National Curriculum requirements for design and technology and information and communication technology;

(paragraphs 29, 132, 167)

- ensuring that the requirements for the history curriculum are met in Years 7 to 9; and

(paragraphs 29, 158)

- providing a daily act of worship for all pupils.

(paragraph 29)

(v) Take steps to refurbish or replace toilets.

(paragraphs 54, 77)

Minor issues for consideration within the governors' action plan include:

- increasing the governors' role in the future development of the school;

(paragraph 69)

- planning for history, geography and religious education within the humanities faculty; and

(paragraph 141)

- provide further training for teachers of religious education to develop subject expertise.

(paragraph 192)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	157
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	69

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	5	41	56	49	6	0	0
Percentage	3	26	36	31	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	980
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	172

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	33
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	187

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.1
National comparative data	7.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	96	80	176

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	70	59	63
	Girls	64	39	41
	Total	134	98	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (51)	56 (54)	59 (46)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (15)	26 (25)	14 (13)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	61	62
	Girls	60	46	45
	Total	121	107	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (56)	61 (63)	61 (46)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	22 (18)	30 (30)	15 (14)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	90	82	172

GCSE/GNVQ results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	23	82	88
	Girls	34	72	80
	Total	57	154	168
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	33 (22)	90 (89)	98 (95)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE/GNVQ results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	33.2 (30.9)

per pupil	National	39.0 (38.4)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

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	736	12	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	11	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	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	5	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	21	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	194	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)	57
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	449

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	67
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25
Key Stage 4	21.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	3,040,739
Total expenditure	2,900,484
Expenditure per pupil	3,028
Balance brought forward from previous year	224,772
Balance carried forward to next year	365,027

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years (FTE)	19.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years (FTE)	29.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	980
Number of questionnaires returned	298

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	57	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	57	1	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	63	4	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	62	10	3	3
The teaching is good.	25	64	3	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	57	17	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	47	6	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	48	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	51	15	2	7
The school is well led and managed.	40	49	2	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	57	6	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	45	3	1	3

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

- Teamwork: teachers work well together to raise standards.
- Target setting that is realistic and focuses attention on improvement.
- Marking which is used as a means of teaching and encouraging pupils.
- Inclusion: GCSE English and English literature courses are open to all pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Links with the drama department with regard to the drama requirements of English National Curriculum drama are not sufficiently developed.
- Monitoring procedures are inconsistent, so that the good practice found in the majority of lessons is not fully understood and demonstrated by all teachers.

81. When pupils enter the school in Year 7, standards are well below average. Pupils' attainment, as measured by national tests at the end of Year 9, was above the national average and well above the average when compared to similar schools in 2001. However, this was an unexpected upward trend, not matched by teacher assessments, and results fell back in 2002. Results are now just below the national average but in line with that of similar schools. Taking the last three years together, the average figures show that pupil performance in English was below the national average but rising overall. Over the same period performance in English was better than in mathematics and science.
82. The percentage of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C in English language and English literature in 2001 was significantly below the national average for both girls and boys. Results were close to the national average for those gaining grades A*-G and the percentage of pupils entered for both examinations was higher than the norm. In 2002, results in English language remained at the same level but improved significantly in English literature, taking them into line with the national average. The results for the years 2000 to 2002 indicate a marked upward trend in the percentage of A*-C grades gained by girls and boys in both examinations.
83. Standards in English of pupils currently in Year 9 are below expectations but a scrutiny of work and observation of performance in lessons indicate that pupils across the ability range make steady but very real progress. In Year 9, higher attaining pupils plan their work and write confidently in appropriate styles and well-constructed sentences. They produce evocative writing. Pupils of all levels of attainment draft their work. Presentation is generally good and pupils appear to enjoy writing. They handle text with appropriate confidence; for example, pupils studying 'Z of Zachariah' demonstrated an understanding of genre. The low standard of achievement on entry to the school is obvious in Year 7 but equally obvious is the progress pupils have begun to make. With the lower attaining pupils, attention is focused on the basics of spelling, punctuation and sentence construction. In one lesson, pupils were investigating commas while in another room work was being done on the apostrophe. By the end of both lessons, pupils demonstrated understanding and use of these aspects of grammar. Pupils in Year 8 are more confident in themselves and in their writing. Work on word association and imagery led one pupil to produce a poem which begins, 'My life is a painted palette'. They handle words with increasing confidence and are not afraid to experiment. Although not many examples were heard of children reading, their written and spoken responses demonstrate ability, at appropriate levels, to handle text. In a Year 8 class, pupils, when encouraged to do 'detective work' on a poem, were able to extract implied meaning. Pupils in all three years demonstrate the ability to listen well and follow oral instructions. Few pupils were heard speaking at length but in most lessons they demonstrate the confidence to ask and answer questions and do so using appropriate vocabulary.

84. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average but the upward trend continues and so achievement is good, taking pupils' prior attainment into account. A study of Year 11 work shows dedication to task and some remarkable examples of pupils forcing their potential GCSE grades upwards. One Year 11 pupil had started the course as a potential grade G, progressed steadily to grade D and was obviously striving for a C grade. A pupil who was targeted at an A grade had produced work of a consistently high standard, including perceptive studies of characters in 'The Crucible'. Pupils plan and draft their work and, at its best, writing demonstrates a real feeling for language. The majority of books and folders in Years 10 and 11 show that pupils take pride in their work; there is a noticeable absence of graffiti. Pupils tackle a range of literature with increasing confidence. A lower attaining Year 10 group studying Shakespeare grasped the significance of the gesture that starts a fight. Pupils across the ability range are able to give oral expression to their ideas. Year 11 pupils demonstrated articulate speech and perceptive thought, as their teacher encouraged them to justify their opinions.
85. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory. Very good and even excellent teaching is in evidence. Learning is equally good and accounts for the progress pupils make. Target setting and marking are two strong features of the work of department. Pupils carry target sheets in their exercise books. These are informed by efficient assessment procedures. Teachers are ambitious for their pupils and constantly urge them upwards, reminding them of what they need to do to obtain higher grades. Conscious efforts are made to raise self-esteem. A teacher, for example, told a class how impressed he had been with their work the previous day. At its best, marking is used as a powerful teaching tool; it is diagnostic, didactic and encouraging. For example, a Year 7 pupil is urged, 'Now extend ideas and length of paragraphs'. In a small minority of books, marking is less rigorous and the progress correspondingly less obvious. All lessons are well planned with clearly defined expected outcomes. Where the National Literacy Strategy is well embedded, it allows good teaching to promote rapid learning. However, there are occasions when a teacher allows the plan to rule the lesson and consequently pupils are denied the chance to take responsibility for their own learning. This was obvious in a Year 10 class where pupils were told the rhyming scheme of a sonnet, rather than being encouraged to investigate it for themselves. In the very best lessons teachers start from where the pupils are. A teacher introducing 'Romeo and Juliet' to a Year 10 class commanded immediate attention by clashing two swords together. All lessons feature a mixture of activities, including whole class, group, pair and individual work. Relationships are good and are an important factor in promoting good learning.
86. One of the strengths of the English department is its inclusive nature. Pupils have open access to GCSE English language and literature courses and a very high proportion of pupils take both examinations. Lesson plans note and take account of the needs of all pupils, including the most able and those with specific physical, behavioural and learning problems. Although differentiation is often by outcome, writing frames, structured work sheets and ideas for extension work are readily to hand. In Years 7 and 8, two smaller classes are provided to help boost those with very low literacy levels. Special educational needs support staff are concentrated on these groups. Setting in Years 8 to 11 is informed by a variety of testing and teacher assessment and it is kept under regular review. An examination of pupils' work shows those at both ends of the academic spectrum meeting their targets. All groups of pupils, including those with English as an additional language, make appropriate progress. There is no noticeable difference between the performance of boys and girls.
87. The English department was one of a number of schools piloting the Key Stage 3 National Strategy. It is very obvious that this informs planning and lesson structure positively and has the potential to improve pupil performance once it is firmly embedded in the teaching process. Although whole-class access to computers is limited, effective use of information and communication technology does play an important part in enhancing teaching and learning. There is a computer in each classroom and information and communication technology usage is built into the schemes of work. Some classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards. When used imaginatively, by teachers who have the confidence to manipulate them and allow pupil access, they are excellent motivators and ensure whole class involvement. A new, purpose-built library will soon be available. This will enable the department to ensure that pupils are encouraged

to read for pleasure and develop a wider range of information-handling skills. Homework is built into lesson planning. Pupils have homework expectations written in their exercise books and it is given status in lessons. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils were asked to check their partner's journal to ensure homework had been recorded correctly.

88. The strength of the department lies in its teamwork. It is staffed by suitably qualified teachers who work together to produce innovative and attractive schemes of work. Short, medium and long-term planning to raise standards is sound and, judging by results, increasingly effective. An area of weakness in the management of the department lies in liaison with other department heads, notably special educational needs and drama. At the time of the inspection there was no knowledge within the department that the drama entitlement for Years 7 to 9, which is not delivered in English lessons, was actually being met by the drama department. Monitoring of teachers takes place within the department but the process is yet to be formalised and added to the handbook documentation.
89. The progress made by the department since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The areas of weakness identified then have been addressed, although the planning for drama is not explicit.

Drama

90. The percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades in GCSE drama was below the national averages in both 2001 and 2002, with a significant decline in attainment last year. There were no A* or A grades. However, relatively low numbers followed the course in 2002, which makes comparisons unreliable.
91. Drama has suffered mixed fortunes since the previous inspection. It went into a decline but now, under the leadership of a vibrant head of department, standards are improving. Teaching across the age range is good. Both short- and long-term planning are good and lesson plans take into account individual needs. Although attainment is at best average, attitudes are good and it is obvious that pupils are gaining in confidence. Members of a Year 7 class, being introduced to the techniques of silent film, were able to demonstrate some wonderful facial expressions by the end of the lesson. Pupils in a Year 11 class gradually raised their standards of performance through teacher encouragement and peer evaluation. An examination of Year 10 written work shows pupils trying hard to respond to challenges. School productions, links with Brighton Festival and theatre visits are all being reintroduced. Through its choice of texts, themes for exploration, including bullying and decision making and visits to productions such as 'Blood Brothers', the drama department makes an important contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Media studies

92. The small numbers following the GCSE media studies course make comparisons with national averages unreliable. In 2001, almost half of the pupils entered obtained A*-C grades, which is below the national average, but all gained A*-G grades. Figures for 2002 indicate a similar result pattern with twice as many candidates. This is indicative of the increasing popularity of media studies within the school.
93. Teaching and learning were good in the small number of lessons seen. The scrutiny of work confirms that teaching is structured well, with clear learning outcomes to enable pupils to progress systematically in their learning. Pupils at all levels of attainment are supported by well designed materials which help them to structure their work, develop research skills and think for themselves. Effective use is made of assessment data to direct pupils towards appropriate target grades. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and transmit their confidence to pupils. In a Year 11 lesson on newspapers, pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of previous learning as they began to turn theory into practice. Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships and mutual respect.

Literacy

94. The school has started to take positive steps to improve literacy. There is a cross-curricular working party, a literacy audit has been made, key words are evident in some classrooms and teacher training days have been used to raise awareness. The school has appointed a literacy co-ordinator and a leading literacy teacher has been employed to work with small groups of specially targeted pupils in Years 7 for 'catch up' sessions. A literacy support assistant has recently been appointed to concentrate mainly on improving writing skills across the curriculum. In areas where the Key Stage 3 Strategy is clearly understood and used well, it is beginning to have a positive effect on teaching and learning. This is noticeable in English where its influence can be seen in lesson plans and approaches to teaching. However, the cross-curricular aspect is not sufficiently developed. In some subjects, notably modern foreign languages, physical education and art, a conscious effort is being made to enhance basic literacy skills but this is not planned within a structured whole-school framework. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with skills that are well below average and are not yet gaining maximum benefit from the teaching and reinforcement of literacy skills within all areas of the school.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Good teaching motivates pupils to learn.
- Good team management is focused on raising standards.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in national tests and examinations remain below national averages.
- Assessment and monitoring processes do not include a clear analysis of year by year progress.

95. Standards of attainment for pupils at age 14 are below the national average for all schools but in line with similar schools, as measured by the national tests in 2002. This was the case at the last inspection but since 1999 there has been an improvement each year, the rate of improvement being greater than the national trend. The 2002 results show a marked improvement over the previous year, although the overall standard remains below the national average. Performance is in line with that in science but not as good as in English. Boys performed slightly better than girls, which is not the case nationally.
96. The standards of attainment when pupils enter the school have been well below national averages but have been rising. However, the standards of pupils in the current Year 7 were still below average when they entered the school. This is reflected in the lessons and books of these pupils. However, in Years 8 and 9 pupils are achieving well and the standards of attainment seen in lessons and in books are in line with the national expectations. Pupils show increasing confidence and competence in all areas of mathematics and their work is well presented. As they proceed through the first three years, pupils extend their knowledge of number and algebra, shape, space and measure and handling data. They learn how to solve algebraic equations, they become adept at managing fractions, decimals and percentages and they enjoy theoretical and practical geometry. They become more and more competent at plotting and interpreting graphs, using positive, negative and square numbers. One Year 9 class learned how to express a linear graph as an equation and to sketch graphs from equations. Pupils use protractors accurately to measure angles and do a variety of practical exercises to construct shapes, which help them understand symmetry, scale and enlargement. Much of this work is proudly displayed in classrooms.
97. The good achievement during Years 7 to 9 is a result of good teaching. All lessons begin with imaginative starters, which allow pupils to reinforce basic skills or to focus on the skills needed for the lessons' main learning objectives. Pupils often use write-on/wipe-off boards. In one class, pupils used the boards to record answers to questions on percentage quickly. In another lesson, pupils used the boards to solve problems based on number sequences. The teacher presented the problems at varying levels of difficulty to allow all pupils to experience challenge. Teachers plan carefully and always prepare tasks for pupils at three levels of difficulty described as 'must', 'should', and 'could', so helping to ensure that pupils of all attainment levels will experience

challenge and so make progress. The system also helps to allow the highest attaining pupils to develop the breadth of their mathematics and the depth of their thinking. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by their teachers and sometimes given additional support by learning support assistants, but this level of support is insufficient to meet all pupils' needs fully.

98. There are some good examples of the use of information and communication technology to support learning. In one class, pupils constructed graphs from equations and discovered how changes in equations affected the line of the graph. Their understanding of such changes was reinforced when the teacher demonstrated the effects, using an interactive whiteboard. Pupils also learn how to use graphical calculators but the use of computers is extremely limited because the department does not have enough access to the school's computer suites and there are not enough computers in the classrooms. Investigation work is a regular feature of the mathematics schemes of work and pupils work very well together, sharing ideas and problem solving.
99. Standards of attainment in GCSE have remained below the national average since the last inspection but have improved markedly in recent years with a higher number of pupils achieving grades A*-C. Boys did slightly better than girls in 2002, whereas nationally girls do better than boys. Current standards of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are in line with expectations. Pupils in Year 11 are covering all the topics of the GCSE syllabus and are sufficiently prepared for the examination. They have developed higher level numerical and geometrical skills, including trigonometry and they enjoy problem solving. Many pupils develop their ability to deal with abstract mathematics, use the language of mathematics and use higher level thinking skills.
100. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good and results in pupils' good progress. Teachers plan well use a variety of teaching styles, according to the needs of the pupils. They continue the strategies used effectively in earlier years by starting every lesson with a mental starter to prepare pupils for the lesson and to help their understanding. Pupils in a Year 11 group were given the task of sketching straight line and curved graphs from given equations; this prepared them for the lesson on solving simultaneous equations graphically. Teachers are skilled in explaining new concepts. Highest-attaining pupils are taught separately and are given every opportunity to experience challenge. Higher-attaining pupils in other groups, however, do not always experience sufficient challenge. One such group was set the task of investigating the lengths of the sides of triangles; higher-attainers resolved the problem immediately and so did not benefit from performing the given task.
101. Teaching is good overall and some is very good. It is of a higher standard than at the last inspection. All teachers plan thoroughly. The standard of marking ranges from satisfactory to very good. When it is very good, teachers add comments of encouragement and advice. Assessment and monitoring processes currently do not include a clear analysis of year by year progress. Teachers are excellent role models, being calm, kindly and conscientious. In response pupils are respectful, work hard and make good progress.
102. Leadership and management of the department are good and teamwork is well established. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted positively and GCSE courses are provided at three levels. Schemes of work have been thoroughly constructed by the key stage co-ordinators. They include samples of carefully differentiated tasks and practice exercises but the use of textbooks and video programmes is limited and pupils miss the motivating effect of colourful illustrations and the experience of the application of mathematics, which such sources offer. The department runs weekly catch-up programmes after school and extra lessons for pupils preparing for the higher-level GCSE examinations. Some pupils, who would benefit from extra lessons, do not attend these voluntary lessons and there are no plans at present to provide additional compulsory booster lessons.
103. The subject improvement plan is thorough and addresses most priorities for development. However, at present there is no time-plan for staff performance and development programmes, including the monitoring of teaching and learning. Neither is there a deadline for establishing a more rigorous target-setting regime. The department's primary liaison teacher has established

good links with primary feeder schools; these have provided valuable training opportunities and information on standards of pupils entering the school. The department is fully staffed with good dedicated teachers and the effect has been continued improvement in standards. Improvement since the last inspection is good overall.

Numeracy

104. The mathematics department's numeracy co-ordinator has prepared an excellent document outlining the development of the National Numeracy Strategy, the application of which is reflected in all mathematics lessons but not yet at a whole-school level. The document includes plans to review the extent of the application of numeracy in other subjects. The department recognises the need to establish a consistent approach to teaching certain topics across other subjects to avoid duplication or inconsistency in approach.
105. In science, design and technology and physical education, pupils' numeracy skills are applied to collect and interpret data and for taking measurements. In one information and communication technology lesson, pupils developed their numerical skills in the preparation of spreadsheets and graphical applications. In art lessons, consideration of proportion, perspective and scale contribute to pupils' spatial awareness.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and based well on good teaching schemes.
- Pupils are achieving well in relation to their previous attainments.
- The department is very well led.

Areas for improvement

- Further monitoring of teaching to enable the very best practice to be shared more widely.

106. In national tests at the end of Year 9, pupils achieve standards of work that are below the national average and below the standards achieved in similar schools for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 5. However, pupils enter the school with standards in science which are below the national average and in many aspects of science, well below average, so that their attainment in the tests still represents good achievement across Years 7 to 9. In common with schools nationally, standards fell after the last inspection in 1997 but they have improved since then at a rate which is faster than the national rate, so that results are now closer to the national average. Performance in science has been lower than in English but in line with that of mathematics.
107. In Year 9 overall, pupils are working at standards below national expectations, although some are working to a standard that is in line with national expectations. Investigative skills are developing well, seen, for example, as pupils observed the rate of emission of oxygen bubbles rising from pondweed. Recent initiatives have improved standards for younger pupils so, now, in Year 8 many more pupils are working to standards that are in line with national expectations.
108. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C in GCSE examinations is below the national average and the proportion gaining a grade in the range A*-G is also below the national average. These results have been consistent over the last three years. Boys achieve slightly better than girls.
109. Overall, current standards in Year 11 are below national expectations, but some of the current Year 11 classes have a number of pupils who are expected to achieve the highest grades in their GCSE double award science. These pupils are working to standards that are in line with national expectations and this represents good achievement. For example, higher attaining pupils understand the relationship between velocity, distance and time; they interpret graphs of distance

plotted against time to describe the motion of a vehicle and confidently move on to understanding that acceleration is the rate of change of velocity and to interpret graphs of velocity plotted against time. All pupils can confidently work in units of kilometres per hour and metres per second to meet the requirements of the lower GCSE grades.

110. Overall the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The majority of pupils are interested and motivated and it is the synergy between the willingness to learn and good teaching that leads to good learning. All science teachers are very skilled and they have a good knowledge across all aspects of the subject. In most cases they organise their pupils and manage classroom and laboratory situations well. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory because, on this occasion, the practical session was poorly organised. This affected the quality of learning because the pupils did not get maximum benefit from the hands-on experience. Very good teaching and learning were seen in a Year 8 class; an experienced teacher set high expectations to which the pupils readily responded. Teachers provide a variety of interesting and challenging experiments and tasks. The highest attaining pupils are required to explore more difficult concepts and all the pupils received excellent attention when they were working on their tasks. In contrast, a small number of other lessons, although sound, would still benefit from the present strategy of sharing best practice and successes with colleagues.
111. Frequently good questioning reinforces previous learning and advances the pupils' understanding. In some lessons the most able pupils receive very good encouragement and support through the more challenging elements built into the lesson. However, other lessons simply set additional work or questions. Special learning experiences are provided for older pupils who show talent in this subject; for example, a very successful scheme enabled some pupils to attend regular study sessions at the University of Sussex where subject experts taught them and they were engaged in challenging investigations which particularly enhanced their quality of learning. In many lessons pupils with special educational needs are supported well, with individual attention when the pupils are working alone or in groups.
112. The new schemes of work and the special focus on teaching techniques, developed under the Key Stage 3 Strategy, are effectively improving the quality of learning for younger pupils. Many of these pupils respond well to the challenge of the high expectations for learning. In a Year 7 lesson, learning was outstanding as the pupils built up a definition of life form, observing a range of exhibits including animated artefacts, fossils, fruit and many other living and non-living things, which made them think very hard about what constituted life. Challenging questioning was used well, so that a highly motivated and attentive class progressed from generalised statements to using words to describe concepts such as respiration, nutrition, growth and reproduction.
113. Pupils benefit from working in broadly banded groups, according to their prior attainment. This enables them to have appropriate attention and support. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils demonstrate increasing confidence and development in their understanding of scientific concepts. This is apparent in the quality of the replies given to their teachers' questioning. A small number of older pupils find it difficult to engage fully in lessons. For this small group, the quality of learning is unsatisfactory. However, the majority of pupils of all abilities make good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs. The department facilitates enhanced learning for gifted and talented pupils in Year 10. A very successful scheme enables these pupils to attend regular study sessions at the University of Sussex, where subject experts teach them and they are engaged in challenging investigations. All pupils have the opportunity to improve the standard of their work by attending evening, Saturday and holiday revision lessons.
114. The curriculum is well planned and the scheme of work is matched accurately to National Curriculum requirements. There is good continuity and consistency in what is taught from class to class and year to year. The standard of pupils' work is regularly monitored and recorded as they progress from year to year. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Above Year 7, regular assessment enables pupils to be correctly placed and appropriately challenged.
115. There is some use of information and communication technology, for example, where a computer is connected to sensors, to enable it to collect data and plot graphs but opportunities are missed

to use it to its fullest extent. A wide range of information on CD ROMs is available to supplement pupils' research and pupils are encouraged to use the Internet for research. Computer applications to plot graphs are not frequently used to enable pupils to display and compare data in graphs and bar charts. Skills in literacy are developed when the pupils are encouraged to explain their observations and key words for the lesson are on display. There are further opportunities to develop skills in numeracy, particularly to improve their skills and accuracy in plotting graphs to interpret data from experiments.

116. An experienced specialist leads the department very well. He has managed the implementation of the government initiative to improve teaching and learning for younger pupils very effectively. The staff work well as a team; they have become very involved and committed to the initiative to improve the quality of teaching and learning for younger pupils. This has benefited the quality of lessons and the progress made by the pupils and led to good improvement since the last inspection. All of the lessons are taught in laboratories that are well equipped. Two laboratory technicians make a good contribution to the smooth running of the department.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Attainment is very high; art is the school's strongest subject.
- The culture in art is that of the pursuit of excellence.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Exciting teaching, with very high expectations, inspires pupils.
- Visits to galleries and by artists in residence are linked well to excellent display which celebrates and inspires.

Areas for improvement

- There are no significant areas for development.

117. Pupils' attainment on entry is below national expectations. The proportion of pupils reaching level 5 or better at the end of Year 9, as measured by teacher assessments, is above the national average. The assessments in 2002 show a significant improvement over previous years. Attainment in work and lessons seen in Year 9 is at the national expectation overall, with many indications in sketch books of work at higher levels, representing good achievement from their attainment when pupils enter the school.

118. GCSE results in 2001 were well above the national average for grades A*-C and average points score. Results in 2002 declined but art results are consistently the best in the school, reflecting the department's pursuit of excellence. Attainment in work and lessons seen with Years 10 and 11 is well above that expected at this stage in their course. Pupils achieve very well, and the progress and achievement of those with special educational needs are at least as good as their peers. Higher attaining pupils are stretched. Pupils all work at their own level, with individual development as a central characteristic. Excellent sketchbooks were seen showing the development of directly observed drawing and the growth of skills in colour and texture. Standards of work, harnessing information and communication technology, were very high, including applications in textiles. Styles based on Mondrian, Kandinsky, natural form, abstraction and surrealism were all seen, as was work in relief and two and three dimensions. There was some excellent large-scale work from pupils in Years 10 and 11. A good programme of gallery visits, artists in residence such as the recent Zimbabwean stone carvers, and extension activities after school, all support the development of high quality work from pupils.

119. Teaching and learning are both very good across the school. The best teaching is inspirational, passionate and visionary. It is characterised by very good preparation and planning, where clear targets are linked to criteria for success, and where technique and expression are linked. Relationships are very good, with pupils' strengths and weaknesses clearly understood; as a consequence, pupils feel secure and are willing to take artistic risks. Questioning is also very

good, both reinforcing and extending awareness and learning; it is both focused and probing. Organisation and management are very good, making resources easily accessible. Teacher feedback inside the learning and making process is very good. Pupils learn by observation and analysis, by selection and rejection, through skill development, and above all by making and doing and subsequent continuous refinement.

120. Pupils' response is very good up to Year 9 and excellent in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are open and positive, often bubbly, and share a sense of common purpose. Attention is rapt, listening intensive and concentration deep. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem and believe they will succeed. A small proportion arrive in lessons feeling restless and needing positive teacher management, but respond very well because of the teachers' calm and unflustered manner.
121. Leadership and management are excellent, and while inspirational and setting very high expectations as a role model, build common ownership by staff. The head of department links vision to hard work and commitment, and is continually growing as a professional. Expectations of pupils are very high, and results indicate that excellence is a reasonable target for the department. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with historical and world cultures well represented; information and communication technology is strong. Direct observational drawing is at the foundation of skill development and there is a good balance between expression and the skills to resource it. The three specialist teachers complement each other well. Accommodation is of good quality and is spacious with good light. Resources are excellent. Art provides excellent support for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, by the opportunities provided for pupils to reflect on the work of many artists and cultures. Pupils are also taught to value their own and others' work.
122. Improvement has been good since the last inspection. All of the issues identified at that time have been fully addressed. The next issue is that of the wider use of information and communication technology and this is well planned for as a major development. The strength of art is recognised by the school's 'Gold Artsmark' status.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The curriculum has been reviewed and adapted to provide an appropriate structure for the planned programme.
- Leadership is good and innovative.
- The subject has the support and enthusiasm of most teachers.
- Strong relationships in the classroom provide a good environment for secure learning.

Areas for improvement

- Full schemes of work have still to be developed to cover the curriculum for all years.
- Teachers require further training to develop their confidence to teach this new subject.
- An assessment strategy is necessary to support progression in learning.
- More opportunities for writing should be provided to support pupils' literacy skills.

123. As this is a new subject, there are no available measures for assessing standards, other than to assume that the overall standards achieved will be comparable with other subjects. It can therefore be said that standards are below the national average at the end of Year 9, in line with much of the school. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of becoming informed citizens, through the study of the democracy module and through the recent theme day that has covered crime and its implications. Future days are planned to look at equality issues and working together positively. The subject is taught in the mixed ability tutor groups and there are opportunities for all pupils to contribute appropriately in active group work, paired work and through presentational activities. Currently, pupils are making satisfactory progress through the course and achievement is satisfactory. The citizenship activities are well supported by good quality worksheets.

124. At present, given the absence of assessment data, it can be stated that pupils reach similar standards by the end of Year 11. Currently, all groups within the school are studying a common module, looking at democracy within the school and through consideration of the local and national situation. The weekly lesson is to be supplemented later in the year by whole-day theme days, where co-operation and conflict, parenting issues and opportunities through careers education will be studied. Pupils make satisfactory progress over the course, as a result of teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. There are good opportunities for all pupils, those who are gifted and talented, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language to achieve satisfactorily throughout these years.
125. Pupils of all ages participate actively in the school council, taking part in annual elections and gaining direct experience of participation and responsible action. The teaching period that was observed discussed issues that could be brought to the council and was a very good illustration of encouraging effective local democracy.
126. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some good and very good features, across the school. Most teachers are enthusiastic about the new initiative and they work from clear objectives that are shared with pupils. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own experiences of democracy, to develop their understanding of democratic systems within the school and to actively look for practical solutions. Key words and phrases are well explained and whole class sessions are used effectively to reinforce learning. In a Year 7 class, pupils showed a very good understanding of current affairs and the current national debate about the criminal justice system. In a Year 10 class, democratic issues are reinforced by an example of a Year 10 pupil, who had jumped the bus queue the previous day, over a Year 7 pupil; this led to a thoughtful discussion about the rights of minorities and the need for respect for other groups. Good opportunities are observed for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and the quality of the group presentations overall is good. There are fewer opportunities to reinforce literacy skills through writing and this is an area for improvement when the schemes of work are fully developed. Teachers work hard to ensure that a balanced view is given and they give several opportunities for pupils to reflect and respond. In a few lessons, learning opportunities are lost because the teachers introduced other business into the lesson; for example, a review of the homework diaries. Some pupils are removed for other activities and are, therefore, missing their citizenship entitlement when the teacher does not make alternative provision. Overall, good relationships in class groups are supporting the successful introduction of the subject this term.
127. In addition to the timetabled lessons for citizenship, a school audit of all other subjects has revealed how several other subjects contribute to the wider curriculum and this is used well in planning the formal citizenship curriculum. These include humanities, where there are many opportunities to study the nature of different regimes, the interaction of the individual with the state, the impact of changes on the population, pollution and urbanisation issues; sociology, looking at the family and socialisation issues; and physical education, where relationships are particularly stressed. Many of these other contributions are reinforced through the special theme days.
128. The leadership and management of this new subject are good. A co-ordinator has been appointed and, with the active support of senior managers, has led the introduction of citizenship well. Effective and innovative planning has led to the development of an action plan that has prioritised the topics still to be achieved. Full schemes of work have still to be developed, in order to provide continuity and progression from Year 7 to Year 11. The school audit has ensured that the other subject contributions are highlighted and that they can play an important part in the development of the subject within the school. There has been no specific training for the form tutors and, currently, there is some variation of practice. A small number of tutors appear to be unclear about the citizenship requirements and training is needed to ensure that the very good practice which has been observed is disseminated throughout the school. The co-ordinator recognises the need to develop an assessment procedure that will support the future development of the subject. Citizenship is still a developing initiative and the school has made a good start in the introduction and development of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a good range of experiences of different materials.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and skilful.
- The team approach of teachers allows them to transfer information well and plan appropriate activities for pupils as they move from one module to another.

Areas for improvement

- The curriculum organisation, with pupils changing to different aspects of the subject and different teachers every few weeks, lowers attainment in Years 7 to 9.
- Graphic and written communication skills require further development for pupils to improve their designs.

129. Pupils enter the school with standards well below expectations for their age. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below national expectations at level 5 and above, as measured by teacher assessments. Every pupil has experience of resistant materials (wood, metal and plastic), graphics and food, with supporting areas of understanding in mechanisms, electronics and computer-aided design and manufacture. Pupils' making skills are in line with expectations but their design skills are under-developed. The school covers the requirements of the National Curriculum for Years 7 to 9 but at a low level.
130. In the GCSE courses of food products, resistant materials and graphic products, the overall pass rates are below the national averages, although for boys they are just in line. However, the proportion achieving grades A*-C is significantly below the national average. Boys have not performed as well as girls in the higher grades. In 2002, there was a significant improvement in results and the quality of work in the current Year 10 and 11 groups is in line with this improved standard. Pupils' achievements are in line with those expected, taking their prior attainment into account.
131. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory overall, with some good and very good teaching. Teachers form good relationships with their groups so that pupils develop appropriate attitudes. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and use this well to provide good materials for learning. In the best lessons, teachers provide very good evaluation sessions so that pupils understand the quality of their work and how it could be improved. The teaching programmes for the modules in Years 7 to 9 are planned to fit in as many skills as possible and allow pupils to make suitable products that they are pleased to take home. However, because pupils are changing teachers every six or seven weeks, this arrangement has a negative impact on the overall standards achieved. It takes pupils a while before they settle down with their new teacher and make the progress of which they are capable; no sooner have they got into a good learning routine than it is time to change again. The planned development of the overarching skills of drawing, modelling and planning is missing. Consequently, teachers have to direct the work of the pupils too much and this does not allow sufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their own designing, planning and evaluating skills sufficiently. Teachers share information with each other

to ensure that pupils' achievements are well recorded over time and pupils who are making too slow progress are monitored well. Pupils know their individual achievements. Lower attaining pupils, through effective teaching and interesting tasks, make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Most pupils like design and technology and look forward to their practical lessons.

132. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils follow a design and technology specialist course in food technology, graphic products or resistant materials. These courses provide for the requirements of the National Curriculum but those who choose business studies do not have a course of study that meets statutory requirements. Although progress is satisfactory overall, pupils start the course at a disadvantage because they have not developed the higher level skills in earlier years. There is good practice to support learning in many groups. This best practice needs to be adopted more widely to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, are given better access to the higher grades. The school is noted for its entry into local and national Robot Wars competitions and the Robot Club is enthusiastically run by staff and similarly enthused pupils.
133. There are six specialist rooms, covering different materials and processes and this gives pupils access to a good range of curriculum experiences. Accommodation is generally good but one converted science room is unsatisfactory, being cold and poorly equipped for a design-based subject. Technical staff support the work of teachers well, by providing an organised environment and keeping resources maintained well. There is a good supply of teaching materials, appropriate to the needs of the work. Computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture are being soundly and systematically developed.
134. The management of design and technology is good and post holders take responsibility for their roles well. All teachers work together as an effective team. There is a good departmental development plan but it does not include a strategy for delivering the curriculum in longer, more effective portions.
135. There has been sound improvement in both the provision for the subject and the level of work followed since the last inspection.

HUMANITIES

136. Pupils study an integrated humanities course in Years 7, 8 and 9, consisting of geography, history and religious education modules, taught in rotation over the year and planned to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although the course is called integrated humanities and is taught as subject modules, care is taken to ensure that key concepts and skills are drawn out across the modules, regardless of whether the topic focus is history, geography or religious education. However, this approach has not been fully effective in ensuring that the statutory requirements for the individual subjects have been met. Issues relating to geography, history and religious education are reported under separate subject headings.
137. Generally low levels of literacy skills, particularly in writing, impede pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are better orally. Pupils do not have good presentation skills but this improves as pupils move into Years 10 and 11.
138. In Years 10 and 11 pupils study GCSE humanities, which is designed to be a fully integrated course based around a series of humanities themes. This course is part of the core entitlement for all pupils and a large proportion, over 90 per cent, of pupils in the year group are finally entered for the examination. GCSE humanities carries a 25 per cent coursework component and a 25 per cent module test, which suits the needs of pupils and undoubtedly helps them achieve well in this subject. The module element is to be removed in future examinations and the faculty will need to decide how to help all pupils achieve well, under these more strenuous test conditions. The standards achieved by pupils in the GCSE course have risen for the last three years. The number of pupils gaining an A*-C grade in 2002 is in line with national averages and good in comparison with those pupils' attainment levels on entry to the school. Girls achieved slightly higher results in

1999 and 2001 but otherwise results of boys and girls are similar. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in comparison with their prior attainment.

139. The scheme of work that supports the teaching of integrated humanities in Years 7 to 9 is very variable. Those parts of the scheme of work for history are, in many places, six or seven years old and do not reflect National Curriculum requirements. In geography, some modules have good planning, whilst other modules again are old and dated. Those for religious education are very sketchy. The schemes of work for all year groups do not provide a good basis for non-subject specialists to teach from, nor are they effective for new members of staff.
140. Teaching overall in the humanities is satisfactory, with some lessons being good or better and a few lessons less than satisfactory. There is insufficient emphasis on active learning strategies across all subjects within the humanities. A good range of fieldwork opportunities is provided across the key stages to support the humanities, including local, national and European visits. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
141. The management of the humanities faculty overall requires much more clarity and cohesion. The weaknesses in the schemes of work and the split leadership responsibilities do not support all teachers sufficiently well within the faculty; monitoring of teaching and learning has not been effective in identifying deficiencies in curriculum coverage. There are several assessment policies for humanities, it is not yet clear which assessment strategy the faculty is following to create the best target-setting opportunities. There is inconsistency in the quality of marking and written feedback to pupils across the faculty. The quality of library resources to support the humanities is poor.

Leisure and tourism

142. Leisure and tourism forms part of the applied GCSE curriculum offer to pupils, with the first group scheduled to take the external examination at the end of this academic year. The planning for this course is appropriate and the resources are being developed. Pupils engage well in the lesson activities and show an interest in their work. Pupils are achieving in line with expectations at this stage in their course.

Sociology

143. Sociology is offered as a GCSE option and is a popular and successful subject. Examination results have been in line with national averages for the proportion of A*-C grades achieved. Lessons are planned well, with a clear emphasis on learning objectives. Only one lesson was observed. In this lesson, the pace was brisk, pupils were involved in their learning, drawing conclusions for themselves and sharing these successfully with one another. Pupils in Year 11 are achieving at levels similar to those of previous years.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Starters activities at the beginning of lessons create a positive learning focus.
- Sharing the learning intentions with pupils enables pupils to make sense of what they are about to learn.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed well in the classroom.
- Display in the classroom enhances the learning environment.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work do not reflect best practice in long-term planning.
- Pupils have insufficient guidance for their literacy skills, particularly in writing and in the presentation of their work.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils do not have enough opportunities in lessons to play an active part in the tasks set.• Plenary sessions are not used well enough to consolidate learning effectively. |
|--|

144. Pupils' standards of attainment are very low on entry to the school in Year 7 and low levels of literacy, especially in written work, hold back pupils' progress. Standards of attainment in Year 9, judged by teacher assessment are broadly in line with national expectations for their age and have been rising over the last few years. A small minority of pupils, both boys and girls, are achieving above this level.
145. Only four pupils studied for GCSE geography in 2002. All pupils achieved an A*-C grade. This was very good, as all their studying was undertaken with teachers after school. The number of pupils sitting GCSE geography, as opposed to humanities, varies on a year-by-year basis. The school endeavours to accommodate the examination choices of these pupils.
146. Achievement in lessons is similar to that in examinations and reflects low levels of literacy skills, especially grammar, which hamper many pupils in making more rapid progress. Presentation skills are particularly weak, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils are more confident orally and are able to discuss issues and listen to each other's contributions to lessons. Pupils have better levels of graphicacy and are able to present geographical ideas in graph form with good degrees of accuracy. They have reasonable atlas skills, for example, understanding the differences of physical and political maps. However, a significant number of pupils still have problems with compass directions, relative position of countries and the differences between weather and climate. Pupils have made good gains in their knowledge of natural hazards, including earthquakes and volcanoes. Pupils develop good skills in comparing and contrasting issues in more and less economically developed countries. A number of pupils have enhanced their work with the use of computers, using graphics, word processing and researching topics on the Internet.
147. Progress by the end of Year 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is good. Learning by pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers know their pupils well and make effective use of information, such as individual education plans, helping pupils to make generally good progress. Higher-attaining pupils use a good range of appropriate vocabulary and accurately describe geographical processes, such as climatic effects and the factors that influence the location of factories both today and in the past. In GCSE coursework, pupils work on appropriate topics of enquiry, with clear questions to answer or hypotheses to test. Their work is usually well structured and a good number make effective use of information and communication technology, including the internet. They collect a wide range of data. Higher-attaining pupils analyse their information clearly. Lower-attaining pupils do not always analyse the relevant data and sometimes their analysis is superficial.
148. Good relationships exist between teachers and pupils and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils' attitude to learning is satisfactory overall but in some Year 10 and 11 classes pupils are not so keen to co-operate and to work hard.
149. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some teaching reflecting good or very good practice. A very small number of lessons are less than satisfactory; this is either where behaviour is not managed firmly enough or where the lesson lacks subject-specific rigour. Teachers know students' needs and set about meeting them so that effective learning takes place. The use of good starter activities to lessons, following the recommended practice in the Key Stage 3 Strategy, helps pupils to focus on the topic being studied from the beginning of the lesson. Learning intentions are shared both orally and on the board with pupils as the lessons begin. This policy has a positive impact on helping pupils understand what they were going to learn and the activities they are undertaking. In most lessons there is a brisk pace and pupils learn through a variety of tasks, but in some lessons, teachers do not involve pupils sufficiently in activities which require active engagement on the part of pupils. In the best practice, teachers' question and answer sessions are focused and require pupils to think more deeply about questions, rather than responding with a simple answer. However, in some lessons, question and answer sessions are too long, pupils lose interest and answers given are superficial. Marking is not yet consistent

across all geography groups and, whilst some pupils receive excellent written comments on their work, this varies depending on the teacher.

150. In a number of lessons, teachers set up activities that require pupils to use a greater range of their senses. For example, the silent video clip of life in Bangladesh, where pupils were really challenged to use their eyes to search for geographical image and impression. The quality of feedback and discussion between pupils from this activity was of a much higher level than some of the more routine activities pupils were asked to complete. This was followed by a card sorting activity, requiring pupils to differentiate a variety of geographical and life-style phenomena in the UK and Bangladesh and to determine those that were pertinent to both the UK and Bangladesh. The high quality analysis that Year 7 pupils were able to undertake in pairs showed the potential of pupils when really challenged.
151. The management of geography is satisfactory overall, with good attention to the Key Stage 3 Strategy for this foundation subject. However, schemes of work are too variable and do not as yet provide a good enough basis for geography teaching by non-specialists or new teachers. There is an improving system of tracking the progress that students make during Years 7 to 9 and GCSE. The geography component of integrated humanities in Years 7 to 9 meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in relation to pupils' standards of attainment but insufficient development has taken place in relation to schemes of work.
152. The quality and range of fieldwork provided to support geography are good. The school also has a very active link with a school in Kaur in Gambia, which pupils are encouraged to develop. Some pupils have also visited Gambia. Pupils have also set up a web site of favourite places, supported by an Ordnance Survey project.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards.
- Teachers generally plan lessons well to interest pupils.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good.

Areas for improvement

- Marking, syllabus coverage and assessment are not consistent across all groups.
- Schemes of work do not provide sufficient support for all teachers within the faculty.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 does not meet National Curriculum requirements fully.
- There are insufficient written assignments, including homework, to support the development of literacy.

153. The standards of work seen in history in Year 9 are below national expectations. This does not match the above average teacher assessment of pupils' work in 2002. There are periods of time when no history is taught in Years 7 to 9; this may inhibit the continuity of pupils' learning. History is taught by both specialist and non-specialist teachers from within the humanities faculty, which also may impact negatively on standards. However, by the end of Year 9, pupils' achievement is, given the pupils' level on entering the school, satisfactory for all groups of students, including those who are gifted and talented, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
154. In Years 7 to 9, pupils develop a broad range of historical skills, including the interpretation of appropriate historical evidence and data, the analysis of historical issues and the understanding of chronology. Pupils use a range of learning materials including thematic worksheets, pictorial evidence, timelines, writing frames, videos and a range of primary and secondary source material. The handling of different forms of historical data is satisfactory and pupils effectively work on their

own to develop their understanding of history. There is some evidence of good, paired work and some effective group activities were observed. In Year 7 lesson, pupils made effective notes from the Tollund Man video and several pupils make enthusiastic, paired presentations on their findings. In Year 8, pupils analyse a wide range of evidence to decide whether the Roman army was really as good as it seemed. By Year 9, pupils can calculate how many people live in an average working class urban street and they draw thoughtful conclusions about the state of hygiene and living conditions.

155. The standard of literacy throughout Years 7 to 9 is low and, to meet this need, some support for improvement has been introduced by the use of writing frames, starter sentences, which are often highlighted effectively on the interactive whiteboards and by the judicious use of key words and phrases. However, the standard of written work varies considerably, both in its quantity and its quality, from class to class and is not reinforced sufficiently through a variety of writing exercises and the regular use of homework.
156. GCSE results in 2002 were below the national average. However, as an option subject, the number following the course was low and given their starting point, pupils achieved, on average, at a much higher level than was expected at the beginning of the course. This represents good achievement.
157. There are currently no pupils in Year 11 studying history. The present Year 10 GCSE history cohort is small and contains a comprehensive range of ability. Pupils in this group are working at standards which are below national expectations. However, they make good progress and work enthusiastically so that their achievement is good. Those pupils with special educational needs, effectively supported by a learning support assistant, make good progress. Pupils match a wide range of sources of Roman medicine to specific situations and ideas. The analytical task is historically demanding and pupils are able to feed back their findings with accuracy and confidence. They are secure in their learning. The scrutiny of work indicates that note-making is good and that the pupils develop good study skills
158. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good and very good practice. It is more effective in Year 10. There is particular evidence in a Year 9 class of very good planning, leading to very good learning taking place. In some lessons where teaching and learning are satisfactory rather than good, some pupils do not concentrate on the learning activities for parts of the lesson and this hinders the overall progress of the group. In the best lessons, pupils are fully involved in their learning through a wide variety of tasks, some written, others speaking or listening. In these lessons the pace is challenging, with pupils constantly urged to stretch their capabilities. Learning objectives are shared with pupils, there are short and relevant starter exercises that capture the interest of the pupils and the objectives are effectively reviewed at the end of the lesson, so that the teacher and pupils can judge how much progress has taken place. In these lessons there are positive attitudes towards learning and pupils work well together. These good features are not disseminated widely enough across the faculty to help teachers to develop their practice further. Where there is additional support, teachers and learning support assistants work well together and, as a result, pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in relation to their earlier attainment.
159. Current arrangements for the leadership of history have not been effective in ensuring that the history curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum fully; a local history study in the 1750-1900 period is missing. Schemes of work do not contain sufficient detail of resources and associated learning activities to provide all teachers, especially non-specialists, with the support they require to plan effectively to match the teaching methodology with the learning needs of particular groups of pupils.
160. The humanities classrooms are spacious, well decorated and support an effective learning environment, with some displays of students' work. Resources are satisfactory, with a wide range of books, videos and worksheets. Current library resources are relatively limited to provide a strong foundation for individual research, project and coursework. However, planning is in place to address this issue when the new buildings and associated resources become available. Some

good fieldwork activities are evident; in particular, Lewes Castle is visited in Year 7 and some imaginative project work is achieved. Effective links have been developed with the Brighton museum service.

161. There has been limited improvement since the last inspection. There are inconsistencies in marking. The monitoring of teaching has not been effective in ensuring consistent depth in the teaching of history across the faculty. Regular access to information and communication technology remains, as at the last inspection, difficult.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Standards in the subject are rising.
- Teaching and learning are frequently good.
- Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards and available computers.
- The Key Stage 3 Strategy for information and communication technology is being effectively implemented.

Areas for improvement

- The statutory requirements for information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11 are not met fully.
- Standards achieved by pupils are below expectations across the school.
- Access to information and communication technology equipment does not meet the needs of a number of other subjects.
- Pupils' information and communication technology achievements across all subjects are not yet tracked sufficiently to ensure that they have balanced experiences.

162. In 2002, the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show that the number of pupils attaining the expected level was well below the national figure. However, these Year 9 pupils and most of the year groups entering the school started at very low levels of attainment. Although the courses at the school have been restricted by time, most pupils have made satisfactory progress over the three years in Key Stage 3. The school is confident that, with the improved access to equipment and the development of the Key Stage 3 Strategy for the information and communication technology curriculum, standards of work will improve over the next few years. This confidence is justified by the quality of the work currently taking place in Year 7. Much of the work seen in Year 7 is of a higher standard than previous teacher assessments suggest and a larger numbers of pupils are achieving the standard appropriate for their age. The work of many pupils in Years 8 and 9, however, is still below the expected standard for their ages.

163. In Years 10 and 11 about half of pupils opt to take a GCSE course in ICT. The proportion of pupils achieving the A*-C grades has doubled from 2000 to 2002 but is still below the national average. Overall, the attainment of all pupils in Year 11 is below National Curriculum expectations. The

most significant differences in attainment within teaching groups were the result of pupils' previous limited opportunities to develop skills and confidence in information and communication technology, compounded by their low levels in basic literacy. In one lesson, for example, the progress of two pupils was markedly different because one pupil had used the program before at home and another had not. In another lesson, a pupil was having difficulty in making a successful Internet search, not because of a skill problem with the program but simply because of a difficulty in spelling the words needed. Pupils have had very different information and communication technology school experiences, which impacts on their present ability to learn and their attainment levels. Pupils have access to the computers at lunchtimes and after school. At one of these sessions, pupils turned up to continue work on their personal web sites. The information and communication technology staff work hard to provide additional opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and, for those who make use of this additional time, their attainment is improved.

164. Teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory in all the years in the school. In a few lessons, the teaching was good and, on occasion, lessons included a number of very good strengths. The most effective lessons mixed brief whole-class demonstrations with extended periods of individual work. Teachers were good at explaining tasks and made good use of interactive whiteboard equipment, which allowed the whole class to be more involved with their learning. These lessons flowed smoothly from one task to the next and, where support staff were available, made good use of the help for pupils who have special educational needs. Where there was effective teaching, pupils' learning was good; they acquired new information quickly and had plenty of time to practise their skills. In one lesson, a pupil quickly applied formatting skills learnt in Word to the text in a PowerPoint presentation. In another lesson, a pupil created and worked on a Publisher page within minutes of the teacher's tightly focused demonstration.
165. Pupils are very motivated by using the equipment. They show respect for the computers and take great care when logging in and out of the system. They concentrate well and are enthusiastic to try out ideas. They work hard and co-operate well in the few instances where they have to share equipment. Although there is a very small minority of pupils who find it difficult to settle and concentrate, the overall standard of behaviour in lessons is satisfactory.
166. The department is very effectively led. The new head of department has produced a new curriculum for Years 7 to 9, introduced the Internet to the curriculum and ensured that assessment procedures are in place and effective for the information and communication technology courses. New equipment has been installed and with the network manager's efficiency, it is working well. Although the information and communication technology rooms are in very different parts of the school, the two teaching staff, support staff and network manager work closely, ensuring the department follows all the courses it has planned.
167. The cross-curricular use of information and communication technology is the area in most need of improvement. Since the last inspection the school has invested in new equipment, software, training, curriculum developments and additional technical staff. However, the developmental emphasis on information and communication technology courses has made it more difficult for other departments to gain access to the facilities. There is some very good work, for example, controlling lathes in design and technology, textiles computer work in art and using new technological health-related equipment in physical education, but this is still too limited at present. Most departments are keen to develop their cross-curricular aspects of information and communication technology, and to assist that development, they meet regularly to share good practice and sort out network problems. However, more school-wide management and resources will be needed before departments' needs are met more fully and pupils in Years 10 and 11 have their full entitlement to the statutory curriculum. The school's future plans for information and communication technology, including the new computer suite to be available during this academic year, suggest that, in future, there will be sufficient facilities and resources to support departmental needs.
168. Overall since the last inspection, improvement is satisfactory. Pupils' achievements at GCSE have improved. Much change has taken place recently to improve levels of hardware, software and technical support; teachers have been trained and are using a wider range of equipment within

lessons; and curriculum planning has improved. However, not all pupils have sufficient access to appropriate information and communication technology learning experiences in the curriculum. There is inconsistent tracking of the overall information and communication technology work and achievement of each pupil, throughout the school, to ensure that all receive broad and balanced experiences. At present the school does not meet the statutory requirements for Key Stage 4 in information and communication technology and, in Year 9, there is insufficient time to teach the programme of study effectively.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Well structured lessons and clear presentation ensure pupils make good progress.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are positive, leading to a secure learning environment.
- Teachers place emphasis on pupils' understanding of grammar.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' use of the foreign language is inconsistent and opportunities are missed to broaden pupils' use of language.
- Pupils are not confident enough to use the foreign language unprompted.
- There is insufficient use of a wide range of resources, such as television, video and information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.

169. In 2002, the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show pupils' attainment to be below national expectations. The work of pupils currently in Year 9 shows that pupils, in both French and German, are attaining levels overall which reflect average expectations more closely and this is similar to findings in the previous inspection report. This represents good achievement. Listening and reading comprehension skills are generally better than speaking and writing, although, in the case of a Year 9 German class, pupils' grasp and application of the dative case and their high levels of comprehension indicated above average attainment at this point. Pronunciation is often too anglicised and pupils rarely use the foreign language to question or seek help without prompting. In a Year 7 French lesson, pupils, after only two months of study, had no difficulty in understanding a range of instructions in French and in writing accurately extended sentences about their opinions of school subjects. Recent teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show that girls' attainment is significantly higher than that of boys.

170. Although GCSE results in modern foreign languages in 2002 are still below the national average at grades A*-C, there has been a significant improvement in German since the last inspection, whereas in French and Spanish results have remained constant. At grades A*-G results are at or slightly above the national average. Boys also did better than girls in German, whereas in French and Spanish results reflect the national trend of higher attainment by girls. The attainment of pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 is below average expectation in French but in line with the average in German and Spanish. Overall, pupils achieve well in relation to their previous levels of attainment, except in speaking skills in the lower attaining sets, where pupils make insufficient effort to produce extended language or to pronounce carefully. The written work of higher attaining pupils shows good attention to accuracy and a sound understanding of grammar; their pronunciation, particularly in German and Spanish, is usually good. However, pupils seldom initiate the foreign language and many pupils are too reliant on the teacher or the stimulus material.

171. The quality of teaching is good. Of lessons observed in all three languages, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and in over four lessons in five, teaching was good or very good. There is no significant difference between key stages. This is an overall improvement since the last inspection. The particular strengths of teachers lie in their positive relationships with their pupils and their ability to present new work very. Time is used well and pace is invariably brisk. Lessons are well planned and clearly structured and in almost all lessons there was a prompt start and a purposeful approach, which ensured that pupils were ready to listen and learn. Although there are very good examples of appropriate and frequent use of the foreign language by teachers, this is not

consistent and there were missed opportunities to promote pupils' use of the foreign language. In the best lessons the range of tasks, frequent review and consolidation were strong features. Teachers use resources effectively with frequent use of overhead projectors, good use of the new interactive whiteboards, cassette recorder and good-quality documentation. There is, however, limited use of television or video and information and communication technology facilities by pupils to support their learning. Work is marked regularly, although in some cases the marked work would benefit from more detailed commentary on how pupils might improve.

172. The range and variety of teaching approaches enable pupils to learn well and make good progress. In the best lessons, they build upon previous knowledge and respond well to challenging tasks and collaborate well in paired or group activities. In a Year 11 Spanish lesson, for example, pupils worked at their own pace, reviewed and corrected their work on present and past tense verb forms and made very solid progress in both speaking and writing. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make good progress in writing in French and German. Where progress is only satisfactory, a general passivity and lack of self-confidence inhibits progress in speaking and there is an over-reliance upon the teacher. Pupils' attitudes are usually positive and behaviour is good and sometimes excellent.
173. Departmental documentation is comprehensive and provides useful guidance to teachers. The departmental development plan is realistic in its scope but does not include budget estimates. The management of the department is 'light-touch' but the head of department provides good leadership through example. Formal monitoring by the head of department is not yet in place but peer observation sessions provide good opportunities for teachers to share good practice. The department operates well as a coherent team. Accommodation is good and display makes classrooms pleasant. The presentation of key words and grammar points, together with the increased emphasis upon mastery of structures, support the development of pupils' literacy skills. European Theme Days contribute to pupils' appreciation of other cultures but it is unfortunate that there are, at present, no opportunities for links, exchanges or visits abroad which could enhance pupils' language skills. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, reflected in a gradual rise in standards, particularly in German.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Pupils have a sense of purpose and joint endeavour in their work, as they play keyboards or compose music.
- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils enjoy and delight in extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have missed some parts of their music entitlement because of staffing difficulties last two years.

174. Standards of work seen in lessons are below the national expectations in Year 9. This does not match the above average teacher assessments of pupils' work in 2002, which were conducted previously by teachers without a detailed knowledge and understanding of the subject. As a result, the teachers over-estimated the pupils' attainment. Almost all pupils come into the school with a set of skills and knowledge well below expectations for their age. However, they make good progress, and, by the time they finish Year 9 they are expected to reach standards only just below expectations. In Year 7 pupils learn how to read and write simple musical notation and the principles of graphic score, so that the playing of Britten's 'Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra', illustrated by boxes, lines, and triangles, actually means something to them. By the time they reach Year 9, they apply this knowledge to the keyboard, compose their own material in a variety of forms and become increasingly familiar with the style and language of the Blues. This represents good achievement on the part of the pupils, and is a direct result of good teaching and a willingness to work hard and become involved on the part of the pupils.

175. When those pupils who have chosen to take music for GCSE enter Year 10, overall, they do so with a below average set of skills and knowledge, although this is very variable across the groups. Some of this is due to considerable staffing problems in recent years. However, there is some good musicianship amongst the group of pupils. The relatively small numbers taking GCSE make comparisons with national statistics unreliable. However, the examination results have shown a downward trend over the last three years and are below average but include achievement at the higher grades A*-C. The work seen in lessons at the beginning of their examination year indicates that the pupils currently in Year 11 should achieve at least the national average, if their work continues on its present course. Work done using 'Sibelius', an information and communication technology program for composition, shows powerful compositions using big themes, with characteristic interval usage and a very good sense of harmonic progression. There is a familiarity with the relationship between tonic, dominant, and dominant 7th, which is used well, and is comforting to both composer and listener. There are some rare talents; some pupils are able to pick up an instrument and play it but for the vast majority they have to struggle to master their chosen instrument or use their voice properly. The achievement made by these pupils at the top of the school is good. It is as a direct result of their willingness to learn, experiment, their ability to work together and the very good teaching they receive.
176. The musicianship seen in the extra-curricular rehearsals is above average, both in instrumental work and in singing. Pupils show a real enjoyment in these activities when they get it right, for example, when they make a wonderful noise, as in the choir rehearsals and in the hilarious playing of 'Oompahpah' from Lionel Bart's 'Oliver!' by the orchestra. A very significant contribution to standards and achievement is made by the peripatetic instrumental and voice teachers who visit the school. This is because the pupils who benefit from their efforts raise the standards, expectations and enjoyment level of all involved.
177. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The hallmarks of teaching throughout the school are the subject expertise and the high expectations of but friendly relations with, all pupils, no matter what their musical ability. Teachers have the happy knack of making pupils feel safe enough to make mistakes, so that they learn the faster. There is very much a sense of a club in lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11; pupils are busily engaged in the business of composition and use the teachers as a reference point. There is a sense of purpose and joint endeavour amongst pupils, for example, as they struggle to play their keyboards or to compose their music in ternary form. It is quite clear that pupils feel themselves to be valued as individuals and they are confident learners. They feel as if they have a place in the world. All pupils are treated equally; there is an insistence on the 'House Rules' of the music department, to which all pupils are expected to adhere. Teaching is planned to accommodate all abilities within pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are particularly able musically.
178. The leadership and management of the department are good. It is only recently that the department has had almost two full-time subject specialists to cover the work. This has eased matters considerably but both teachers are now setting about the business of redressing omissions, as well as making a determined effort to raise attainment at GCSE. The curriculum is very broad and well balanced and gives the pupils a very wide range of musical experiences. This addresses the need of pupils very well because many pupils, on entry, have little familiarity with even the most basic untuned and tuned percussion, and have not sung since they were very young children. Good attention is paid to the development of literacy through the subject. Key words and phrases are listed on the board in each lesson and sometimes made the subject of a game; in one lesson where pupils had been studying the Blues tradition, they assembled a list of about thirty associated words and then made up a crossword using some of them. This does much for their spelling and for pupils' ability to commit the technical terms to memory.
179. The improvement since the last inspection is mixed but satisfactory overall. The results at GCSE have been below national expectations recently, for reasons outlined above, but there are significant improvements in assessment procedures and in the appointment of a second specialist teacher. The most significant improvement is the improved attitudes of pupils; pupils want to learn and teachers teach them well. This creates the sense of joint endeavour, of embarking on a

fascinating project, and makes a very big contribution to the pupils' personal, spiritual and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching results in good attitudes and learning by pupils.
- Extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- The subject is very well led; there is an excellent commitment to improvement and a capacity to succeed.
- A very good sports co-ordinator programme promotes the development of the physical education curriculum in local primary schools well.

Areas for improvement

- Completion of the link between individual target setting to National Curriculum levels.

180. Teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2002 stated that standards in physical education were close to the national average and that boys performed better than girls overall. Pupils currently in Year 9 are working at levels in line with national expectations but boys and girls attain equal standards. During Years 7 to 9 pupils begin to apply skills accurately with precision and control. This was apparent in a Year 9 hockey lesson where boys and girls were refining skills of controlling the hockey ball, whilst finding ways of beating an opponent. In a Year 8 gymnastics lesson, most pupils were performing rolls and balances with accuracy, whilst highlighting their creative abilities when linking their movements in paired and group sequences. Pupils' creative qualities were further displayed in two Year 7 dance lessons when they were either applying speed to their choreographed technical study or devising dance patterns to hieroglyphics. Pupils were also demonstrating a secure understanding of key dance terms such as canon, unison and dynamic.
181. In 2002 the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE at A*-C grades was below the national average. Predicted grades for present Year 11 pupils based on secure information, suggests that the proportion of A*-C grades will be broadly in line with national averages. The proportion achieving A*-C grades in GCSE dance in 2002 was well below the national average. The predicted grades, based securely on assessments of ongoing work, for present Year 11 pupils indicates significant improvement in A*-C grades. In both physical education and dance, the improvement reflects the different prior attainment of these groups.
182. The attainment of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is broadly in line with national expectations. Girls and boys attain similar standards. In a Year 11 GCSE theory lesson, pupils gained a clear understanding of the major providers of sport facilities, both locally and nationally, and the role of Sport England. In a Year 11 GCSE dance lesson, most girls successfully considered the importance of clarity, dynamics and focus, whilst working on their set studies. The good curriculum provides pupils in core physical education lessons full opportunities to develop expected knowledge, understanding and skill in a wide range of opportunities. In physical education and more importantly in dance, working in groups and performing increases pupils' confidence and self-esteem and improves their interpersonal skills. In all physical education and dance lessons, pupils' personal development and relationships are good.
183. Pupils' achievement in relation to standards on entry is good. The vast majority of pupils throughout the school work at a level in line national expectations for their age and make good progress. Below average standards of literacy and numeracy skills have limited impact on pupil performance in physical education. Nevertheless, the department puts importance on developing the pupils' literacy skills. Staff emphasise key words and continually encourage pupils to relate their knowledge and understanding to their physical development. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is at an early stage. Some teachers are creating imaginative warm-ups in swimming using literacy and numeracy-related activities. The achievement of pupils with special

educational needs is good. The department has adopted a variety of teaching and learning styles appropriate to different levels of attainment. Activities are matched to pupils' needs well.

184. Pupils are encouraged to learn very well by the very good teaching that they receive. In all lessons seen teaching was good or better. The very high quality of teaching has a very good impact on the pace and productivity in lessons. It enhances pupils' attitudes to learning and promotes good progress and success. This was apparent in Year 7 and 8 swimming lessons where the majority of pupils worked with great effort to achieve level 1 and level 2 Survival Skills Award, or refine their diving start and tumble-turns. All teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Teachers' management of pupils in the majority of lessons is very good. This produces enjoyable lessons which promote high levels of enthusiasm, for example, in a Year 10 rugby lesson where boys were executing the 'ruck' with great eagerness. Teachers plan lessons very well. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils and lesson aims are often revisited. Teachers continually encourage pupils to evaluate their performance and develop an understanding and knowledge of their work in order to become independent learners. Plan, perform and evaluate are features of most lessons. In a Year 9 table tennis lesson, pupils had to devise five types of service, execute them and evaluate their success. Most pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Occasionally, when parts of lessons lack pace or classroom management is less than very good, some immature behaviour amongst a few pupils inhibits learning but the majority of pupils are hard working and well motivated. Pupils collaborate effectively and evaluate each other's work sensitively and with respect.
185. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is exciting and stimulating so that it captures pupils' interest. Levels of attendance and participation are high. An option course in Year 9 allows pupils to enhance the performance of their better sports and works as a very good transition module into Years 10 and 11 core activities and GCSE, for those who choose that option. There is good planning for the use of information and communication technology within schemes of work. Extra-curricular provision is excellent. Pupils have opportunities to participate in clubs, in competitive competition and gain representative honours. The wide range of extra-curricular provision has been justifiably recognised by the Gold Sportsmark Award.
186. Assessment procedures are good and teacher and pupil self-assessment are used to set individual learning targets. However, these are not linked to National Curriculum levels. The same applies to the departments schemes of work. The department is developing its information and communication technology capacity very well.
187. The department is very well led and managed. Teachers are good role models and form a very strong team. The shared commitment to improvement of the subject and capacity to succeed is excellent, so that progress since the last inspection is very good. The department contributes significantly to the positive ethos of the school. Teachers have developed very good links with its local primary schools, through a highly valued sports co-ordinator programme. The programme is promoting the development of the physical education curriculum in the primary school. Extra-curricular activity in the primary school is supported by Year 11 pupils on the Junior Sports Leadership course. The department is providing an education in which all can participate fully, despite accommodation that has not undergone a refurbishment programme.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good quality teaching provides a wide range of activities for pupils.
- Pupils make good progress when the teaching keeps them focused and engaged.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers require further in-service training to develop their subject expertise.

- Improved monitoring and greater consistency in teaching to ensure that all pupils receive a consistent entitlement, in line with the schemes of work.
- Provision in Years 10 and 11 does not meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.

188. Overall, standards in religious education are below local and national expectations. There are no test or examination results available for the subject. From the work seen in lessons, many pupils in Year 7 join the school with expected levels of attainment in religious education at the end of Year 6.
189. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below local and national levels. Some pupils can write well about the main beliefs and significance of Islam and the life of its founder. Some pupils ask questions and contribute to lessons in ways that demonstrate that they are able to reflect maturely on questions of value, and show that they are able to engage in, for example, debates over religious and scientific views of the origins of the universe or to empathise with an individual undergoing a change of belief. Explicit knowledge of religions and their key ideas, though, is often low. Pupils acknowledge that they are not used to this type of discourse and find it hard to articulate ideas about beliefs and values or to apply them to their own emerging beliefs.
190. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below local and national expectations. Pupils can explore and respond to social and environmental issues but find it difficult to articulate religious and non-religious responses to these. They have difficulty in describing, analysing and evaluating religious rituals, beliefs and communities and in expressing their own attitudes and beliefs about issues of religious significance in a coherent and confident way.
191. The teaching of religious education seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, with teaching that was good and very good. Teaching is carefully planned and incorporates a range of pupil activities, well paced through the lesson. It is also often supported by good use of resources. Good use of the biblical text of Genesis in one lesson assisted motivation and offered pupils a challenging task in understanding a poetic version of the origins of the universe. Skilled use of quality video sequences enables pupils to access and engage with unfamiliar traditions and cultures and with ultimate questions about belief. Objectives for lessons are clearly articulated and usually shared with pupils. Key technical words are put on the board to assist with literacy. Pupils with special educational needs are well known and strategies to help them maximise achievement are included in lesson planning. In the best lessons, intervention by the teacher improves their capacity to complete the task. Intervention with gifted and talented pupils enables them to reflect in greater depth on the ideas being covered. Lessons are usually managed well, with established techniques for so doing in evidence. Learning is summarised at the end of some lessons but this is not consistently practised and can diminish learning as a result.
192. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding by the end of the lesson, and targeted interventions for particular pupils increases this. Some pupils easily become disengaged from learning and teachers have to pay constant attention to keeping them involved in the lesson activities. Teachers' subject knowledge about religions and religious ideas is limited, due to them being non-specialists. At times, expectations of what pupils can do are modest or some tasks are too challenging for the maturity of some pupils, especially boys.
193. There is no explicit teaching of religious education on the timetable as such but detailed schemes of work have been written for religious education in Years 7 to 9 by a subject specialist, and these are incorporated into the schemes of work for humanities. Provision for religious education in these years is thus satisfactory and meets the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. There has been no recent input into the team from a religious education specialist and none of the present team is a specialist. However, the recently appointed advanced skills teacher in humanities has taken on the role of developing the schemes of work and resources for religious education, including differentiated materials. It is not clear that the entitlement to religious education as expressed in the schemes of work is currently secure for all pupils, as teachers have some latitude in how they interpret the overall scheme of work within the humanities area.

194. Provision of religious education in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory and does not meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. The school intends to teach religious education in this key stage as part of the GCSE humanities course, which is taken by all pupils, but the evidence from books and from discussions with pupils suggests that coverage of both the local attainment targets for the subject is not being achieved during Years 10 and 11. Therefore, the school does not meet the statutory requirement to teach religious education according to an Agreed Syllabus at this level.
195. Management of the subject is, therefore, unsatisfactory as pupils' entitlement to religious education is not consistently delivered or monitored and the statutory requirement is not met. Improvement in provision for religious education since the last inspection, when this was a key issue, is unsatisfactory. The school still does not meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for Years 10 and 11 and there is now no provision for religious studies at GCSE level, whereas there was at the time of the last inspection.