

INSPECTION REPORT

WINTERTON COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

WINTERTON

LEA area: North Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 118099

Headteacher: Mr John Fitzgerald

Reporting inspector: Brian Rowe
1695

Dates of inspection: 07 – 10 October 2002

Inspection number: 249201

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
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andrew Pascoe
Date of previous inspection:	17 March 1997

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32216	Annie McCabe	Team inspector	Design and technology	
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15208	Anthony Briggs	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
20649	John Flinn	Team inspector	History Religious education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Winterton Comprehensive is a mixed secondary school for pupils aged 11 - 16 years, situated in Winterton, a small town north of Scunthorpe in North Lincolnshire. The majority of the pupils live in the immediate area and nearby villages and many travel by school bus. Currently, the school is at full capacity. Many of the children live in an area that is economically advantaged, but, overall, pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Overall, unemployment in the area is average. There are currently 737 pupils on roll, making it smaller than an average sized secondary school. The proportion of boys (386) is similar to girls (351) and varies between years. Only a few pupils come from minority ethnic groups, a very much lower proportion than average. All of them are fluent in the English language. There are no refugees or pupils from a traveller background. About 11 per cent of pupils receive free school meals and this proportion is slightly less than the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is now just above the national average. About 13 per cent of the pupils have been placed on the special educational needs register, of whom 4 per cent have been assessed to have a high level of learning difficulty. These proportions are below average when compared to other secondary schools. Twenty one pupils have statements for special educational needs; this is close to the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Winterton school is an effective and improving school that provides its pupils with a good standard of education. By the time pupils reach the age of 16 they attain academic standards that are close to average for all schools nationally and just below average for schools with pupils of a similar background. Pupil attendance rates are above average. Most pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Overall, teaching is good and this ensures pupils make good progress overall and especially in Years 7 to 9. The headteacher provides purposeful and determined leadership that has helped to raise standards, notably in Years 7 to 9, and ensured the school is popular in the local community. The governing body and senior staff provide a clear direction for the school's development. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Overall, attainment in Years 7 to 9 is above national expectations and in some subjects even higher.
- Standards in ICT and music in all years and science in Years 7 to 9 are well above average.
- The effective leadership and management are raising standards, improving the quality of teaching and learning and creating a positive team ethos amongst the staff.
- Promotes positive behaviour, good relationships and high attendance amongst the vast majority of pupils.
- Produces high-quality assessment data to set individual pupils targets for improvement.
- Supports the good progress made by pupils of all ability.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved in Years 10 and 11.
- Developing the roles of the heads of departments and year groups.
- The structure of the school day.
- Implementation of the 2002 Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has accomplished good improvements since the last inspection in March 1997. Virtually all the recommendations identified in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed, however, the school still does not meet statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship. The school has also made improvements in many other important areas. These include raising pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9, improving their attendance and implementing systems to assess pupils' progress. The school has also been successful in maintaining Investors in People status and ensuring all pupils gain some examination success. A number of building projects have been completed and more are planned. The most important issue now facing the school is raising the standards that are not high enough in Years 10 and 11.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	C	B	C	C	

Pupils' attainment as they enter school is now just above the national average and many of them are capable of achieving high standards. The above table shows that in the 2001 GCSE examinations for 16-year-olds, pupils' performance was close to the national and similar school averages. The unconfirmed 2002 test results indicate a decline in standards and are likely to be below national and similar school averages. There were a number of factors that contributed to this. They included staffing difficulties in some subjects and a relatively small group of disaffected pupils, who underachieved and considerably affected the overall school performance. However, the quality of pupils' work seen during the inspection indicates that attainment in the current Years 10 and 11 is better than the 2002 results and now close to the national average. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 now make satisfactory progress. From 1997-2001, girls outperformed boys to a greater extent than national trends. The school's overall trend during the last four years has been below the national trend of improvement. In Years 10 and 11, attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) and music is well above average and in all the other subjects it is close to expectations. In religious education, standards are in line with local requirements.

In Years 7 to 9, pupils build on their knowledge, skills and understanding gained at primary school and progress is usually good. The results of the tests taken in 2002 were a significant improvement on the previous year and overall standards were well above national and similar school averages. Significantly, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher grades in English, mathematics and science improved and is also likely to be above average. The quality of work seen during the inspection confirms these results. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment. In ICT and music, standards are well above average, whilst in design and technology and geography, pupils achieve well and their work is above expectations. In all other subjects, pupils make sound progress and their attainment is as expected for their age. The implementation of the National Key Stage 3 strategy is good, resulting in standards of literacy and numeracy that are above average by the age of 14 years. In all years, pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of good teaching and effective support. The school has set realistic academic targets for both 14 and 16-year-olds based on their previous test and examination results.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes and show enthusiasm for school and lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils are polite, trustworthy and respectful. Oppressive or bullying kinds of behaviour are rare and handled well by staff.
Personal development and relationships	The high quality of relationships at Winterton is one of its strengths. Pupils accept responsibility well and duties, such as being prefects, members of the charity committee and school councillors, are carried out conscientiously. In lessons, pupils show less independence and there are only occasional opportunities for them to show initiative.
Attendance	Attendance rates are above average. Punctuality to lessons throughout the day is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection the overall quality of teaching was good in all years and has improved since the last inspection. Teaching was at least satisfactory in every subject. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and provide a purposeful working atmosphere, which promotes good concentration and learning by the pupils. However, some lessons are too long for the pupils to sustain concentration and the pace of work slows. Strengths in the teaching include the high level of subject expertise, the way that teachers manage the pupils and the good relationships that exist between them. Areas for development include improving the provision for teaching the gifted and talented pupils, ensuring the pace of work is maintained in all lessons and ensuring pupils' make some of their own decisions, take responsibility for their own learning and work independently of the teacher. Although an improving area, the school does not yet have a consistent approach to using assessment information to match the tasks set to challenge all pupils and help them understand how to improve their own performance. In all years, the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science is good. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are helping to strengthen provision for English and mathematics throughout the school. The quality of teaching is good in most subjects and the main reason why pupils are making progress and achieving well. During the inspection, teaching was especially effective in ICT and music and frequently good in English, mathematics, history, geography, modern languages, physical education and science. In art, teaching was satisfactory, but not as effective as in other subjects. Pupils' work is marked regularly and this guides them in their future learning. Overall, homework is used well to support the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, but there are some inconsistencies between classes.

Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and generally provide work at an appropriate level. Strong evidence of this is seen in the very high level of A*-G passes achieved by these pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, all statutory requirements are met. Cross-curricular ICT is a particular strength and is well taught throughout the school. In Years 7 to 9, the literacy and numeracy strategies are working well and citizenship has been introduced successfully. The time allowed for pupils' learning is less than that recommended and the content of the curriculum is mostly restricted to academic-based courses. The structure of the school day prevents a more creative approach to planning the content and ensuring a better balance to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is limited use made of individual education plans to meet pupils' needs or to record their progress towards individual targets. This limits the quality of assessment and the ability to review targets and set new ones.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. It has very good arrangements for promoting social development and good provision for moral development. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of the richness and variety of multi-cultural Britain are more limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a harmonious community where all pupils matter. Staff work hard to know and care for all the pupils as individuals. The school is committed to equal opportunities and promotes the importance of racial harmony. The procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress are good. The assessments are used well to build a profile on each pupil, place them in appropriate ability groups and to set them targets for improvement.

Parents have a positive view of the school and it is a popular choice in the community. Relationships with parents are strong. They receive good information about school life and are made to feel welcome.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is a clear focus and determination by the headteacher and senior staff to raise standards and improve the school. The school has the capacity to ensure that recent improvements will be sustained. The senior staff ensure the school operates well on a daily basis and have created a positive team approach to school developments. Many of the subject and pastoral managers are very effective, but the whole-school co-ordination of special educational needs is less effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide good support to the school. They successfully fulfil most of their statutory requirements and have developed a sound knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have ensured good improvements have been achieved. However, they do not fully comply with all curriculum requirements to support pupils with special educational needs or meet the requirements to provide collective daily worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring by the headteacher and senior staff has improved since the last inspection. It identifies many of the strengths and areas for development and these are recorded in the school's plan for improvement. However, the monitoring arrangements by heads of departments are still not sufficiently regular and rigorous. Consequently, the governors and senior managers have not fully developed the school into a self-evaluating institution.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources and additional funds. It is now making better use of new technology in many aspects of its work. The school correctly applies the principles of achieving value for money to all major purchases.

The school has sufficient qualified staff to teach the curriculum as they wish and to fully meet the needs of pupils. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory and for ICT they are good. The accommodation is adequate and further improvements are planned.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school sent out 737 questionnaires of which 232 (31 per cent) were returned. 26 parents attended a meeting prior to the inspection to express their views about the school.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's enjoyment of school Children make good progress Children's behaviour The teaching is good. The school has high expectations of pupils They feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems The school is well led and managed Children become more mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of homework Providing more information about their children's progress The school working more closely with parents

The inspection team agrees with the above positive views expressed by parents. They do not agree with the views concerning homework and the information provided about children's progress. In both these aspects they found the provision to be at least satisfactory. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's education.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When pupils start school in Year 7 their overall level of attainment at entry is close to expectations and their skills in literacy and numeracy are now just above average. The level of attainment fluctuates slightly each year, but appears to have risen in recent years. There are several pupils in each year, who are capable of achieving the highest grades in the national tests and examinations.

Years 7 and 9

2. In the 2001 tests, taken at the age of 14, pupils' attainment overall was above the national average. During the same year, attainment in English was average, in mathematics it was above average and in science it was well above average. When compared with similar schools¹, English and mathematics results were average and in science they were very high. In the 2001 tests, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 6 in English and mathematics was average, but above average in science. The 2001 results, when compared to similar schools, show the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 6 grades was average and this indicates that many of the higher-attaining pupils were underachieving. From 1997 to 2001, the girls outperformed boys at a similar rate to national trends. During this period, the school found it difficult to substantially improve attainment and the rate of improvement was below the national trend of improvement.
3. In the most recent 2002 tests, results improved significantly. These results indicate that attainment in English and science is now well above the national and similar schools averages and mathematics results are above average. Significantly, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher-level (6 to 8) grades in English and mathematics improved considerably and are above national and similar school averages. The quality of pupils' work seen during the inspection confirms the level of attainment indicated by these latest test results. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are now achieving well and for many their progress is good. There are a number of factors that have contributed to these recent improvements:
 - the appointment of effective staff;
 - using more staff qualified in the subject they teach;
 - improvements in the quality of teaching and learning;
 - grouping and teaching pupils in ability sets;
 - successfully implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy;
 - improving curriculum planning and departmental schemes of work;
 - making better use of the assessment information to set pupils targets for improvement.
4. In most lessons seen during the inspection, pupils made good progress. However, the very highest-attaining pupils were not always set work that was sufficiently challenging. This was because tasks were not always well matched to their different needs, with these pupils often completing the same work as other pupils before proceeding to more challenging activities. Pupils with special educational needs

¹ Similar schools are identified by using the number of pupils claiming free school meals.

- achieved well in their learning, especially when they received specific support in lessons. The support they received often allowed them to make good progress.
5. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils are currently attaining at a similar level to the 2002 national tests in English, mathematics and science, reflecting that for a few years the school has made these the priority for development. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels has increased and is now above average. Attainment is well above expectations in ICT and music and above in design and technology and geography. In all the other subjects, pupils' attainment is close to national expectations. In religious education, standards are in line with local requirements. There were no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. The school has set targets for 14-year-olds, based on their attainment at the end of Year 6, in mathematics and English. Although demanding, they are within reach.

Years 10 and 11

6. In 2001, the school's total GCSE points score² was close to the national average, but showed a decline from the previous year. From 1997 to 2001, girls outperformed boys by a greater extent than the national trend. Over the last five years, the trend in the school's average point score per pupil has fluctuated, yet overall indicates a downward trend below the national trend of improvement. In the same year, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades was close to the national average, but below average when compared to similar schools. In 2001, every pupil gained five or more A*-G grades, placing the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally in this respect and also when compared to similar schools. This was a remarkable achievement for a school with an all-ability in-take.
7. In the most recent 2002 GCSE examinations, results declined for the second year in succession and the average points score per pupil achieved was the lowest for four years. This result is likely to remain close to the national average, but below the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades also declined to the lowest figure for six years and is likely³ to be below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A*-G grades remained high and is likely to be well above the national and similar school averages. The number of pupils gaining at least one GCSE is also high. The high proportion of pupils gaining some examination success is a testament to the school's commitment to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. The school has found it difficult to substantially raise the attainment of both boys and girls during the last few years, although some subjects, such as ICT and music, have had high levels of success in examinations.
8. The school has set itself challenging GCSE points score targets for the years 2003 and 2004. Although targets were not met in 2001 or 2002, there is confidence in school about improvements being achieved in 2003. The school has implemented several strategies to raise standards in Years 10 and 11 that include: using assessment information to identify pupils at risk of underachieving; providing booster classes for pupils who appear to be underachieving; supporting individual pupils with a mentor to help them achieve their academic targets; devising a seating plan in each

² The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stage 3, the Level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 4 = 27 points, a Level 5 = 33 points and so on. ~~Therefore~~ The average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the Level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore, a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Key Stage 3 tests is greater than 33 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. The calculation is similar for the GCSE points score. The only difference is the value of the points assigned to an individual grade, for example, an A* grade is worth 8 points, A is 7 points, B is 6 points and so on until grade G which is worth 1 point

³ At the time of writing the report the comparative national results for 2002 have not been published.

class so pupils are less distracted and providing examination revision clubs. Undoubtedly, staff have worked hard to improve pupils' performance in Years 10 and 11, but in some cases with limited success. The school's analysis of its 2002 results has identified that in fact only a relatively small number of pupils failed to achieve their predicted grade and this underachievement was the cause of the disappointing examination results. The inspectors agree with this analysis and support the initiatives that the school is implementing to raise attainment. The standard of work seen during the inspection in several subjects was higher than that indicated by the most recent examination results. This improvement is due to recent appointments in staff that have overcome some long-term staffing difficulties, the positive benefits of the national Key Stage 3 strategy that is benefiting the current Year 10 pupils, better use being made of the assessment data available to track individual pupil's progress and set them challenging targets and the effect of the school's own strategies described above. However, the inspectors judge that there are also further measures that should be taken to improve standards in Years 10 and 11 and these include:

- helping pupils to become more independent learners through increasing the range of teaching strategies so pupils make more decisions and take more responsibility for their own learning;
- making even better use of the assessment information available to motivate pupils and help them understand how to improve their own performance;
- developing pupils' self-assessment skills and awareness of target-setting arrangements;
- providing pupils with opportunities for more vocational courses in Years 10 and 11;
- ensuring the pace and urgency of work are increased in all lessons;
- improving the provision for the most gifted and talented pupils;
- developing the roles of the heads of departments and year groups by providing them with further support to strengthen the review and monitoring procedures, including the observation of lessons;
- providing more time for subject managers to regularly monitor and support teaching and learning;
- requiring the heads of department to produce termly reports on the progress made towards implementing the priorities identified in their annual action plan;
- requiring the pastoral staff to monitor pupils' academic progress across all subjects;
- improving the structure of the school day by increasing the amount of taught curriculum time and devising a timetable with either five or six teaching sessions per day.

9. In most subjects, the achievement of pupils in their GCSE examinations was close to predictions based on their prior attainment when measured at the end of Year 9. This is a clear indication that pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11. The overall trend of adding improvements to pupils' performance is satisfactory, but some teachers mentioned that several pupils in the previous Year 11 cohort did not have a determined approach to achieving success in the examinations. In most subjects, pupils' attainment in Years 10 and 11 is currently in line with national averages. In religious education, standards are in line with local requirements. However, in ICT and music, standards are well above this level. Pupils with special educational needs continue to make good progress as a result of good teaching and effective support.

Literacy and numeracy

10. Standards of literacy are good across the school. Pupils use talk fluently in most subject areas to explore ideas and develop their understanding and they have good opportunities to do this, especially in English, science, geography and history. Pupils are able to write in a variety of styles and this is particularly evident in Years 7 to 9,

where the influence of the literacy strategy is strongest. Because they are well used to identifying the characteristics of different sorts of text, pupils can read a variety of resources and source materials effectively. By the time they leave school, higher-attaining pupils can respond perceptively to sophisticated writing and the great majority of the lowest attainers can understand implied meanings in a fiction text and can identify bias in reports or media articles.

11. Standards of numeracy are above average in Years 7 to 9. The very effective teaching methods, particularly in mathematics, geography and science and the above average mathematical ability of pupils on entry to the school, have combined to reach these impressive standards. However, standards of numeracy in Years 10 and 11 are in line with the national average. Pupils are not held back in their learning, but a lack of focus on the use of numeracy means that such skills are developed satisfactorily, but no higher.
12. The school has developed strategies to eliminate the different rates of achievement between boys and girls and different groups of pupils and has been largely successful. The school provides good support for pupils with learning difficulties, but support for those identified as gifted and talented is less well developed. In national tests taken at the age of 14, boys and girls reach standards similar to the national trend. In GCSE examinations, girls are still ahead of boys by more than the national average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The high quality of relationships at Winterton is one of its strengths. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behaviour is good. These attributes are all helping pupils to make good progress in their lessons and personal development. This was the case during the previous inspection and punctuality to lessons has improved.
14. Pupils show enthusiasm for school and lessons. This is reflected in their good attendance figures that are above national averages. When asked by inspectors about their favourite subjects, the overwhelming answer was science! Most respond well to teachers and are well motivated. They are usually able to sustain concentration and persevere when tasks are difficult. They are loyal to their teachers and make every attempt to co-operate. When asked to share their work with each other, or to discuss their ideas in pairs, approaches especially seen in mathematics lessons, they do so willingly. For example, in an excellent science lesson about magnets, pupils rose to the occasion and were spellbound as they hung on the teacher's every word. The teacher's stimulating demonstration meant they were keen to be involved, excited about what they were going to do and they explained their answers confidently, as the teacher's cheerful enthusiasm became infectious.
15. Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils are polite, trustworthy and respectful. Oppressive or bullying kinds of behaviour are rare and handed well by staff. The number of pupils temporarily excluded is falling, largely due to the introduction of a support unit to help those with challenging behaviour. Taking into account the small size of the school, numbers of pupils being excluded are average.
16. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to the life of the school and community, especially in sport and drama. They listen carefully to others views, for example, in a personal, social and health education lesson, where they were discussing factors influencing good health and presenting group findings to the class.

17. Pupils accept responsibility well and duties, such as being prefects, members of the charity committee and school councillors, are carried out conscientiously. A group of pupils had just produced the Winterton Chronicle, the annual newspaper, which was hot off the press. In lessons, pupils show less independence and there are only occasional opportunities for them to show initiative provided by teachers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and there are examples of very good teaching in most subjects. Of the 127 lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good in 45 per cent, very good in 18 per cent, excellent in 3 per cent and satisfactory in 32 per cent. In only two lessons, taught by temporary staff, did teaching not ensure pupils made adequate progress. The quality of teaching is now a strength in the school and has contributed to the progress pupils make and the raising of standards, especially in Years 7 to 9. In addition, the quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' personal development, their attitudes towards work and their behaviour in class and around the school.
19. The previous inspection report judged the quality of teaching to be satisfactory or better in only 83 per cent of the lessons, but satisfactory overall. The unsatisfactory teaching was closely linked to several factors: weaknesses identified in teachers' working outside their specialist subjects; classes taught by more than one teacher; low expectations of what pupils could achieve in some subjects; the slow pace of work in some lessons; that planning was too variable and there was no precise target-setting resulting from the use of assessment information. This resulted in key issues related to monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning, improving aspects of curriculum planning and the use made of assessment information and homework. In particular, art and religious education were highlighted as subjects with a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Current inspection findings show that the school has addressed most of these issues relating to teaching and learning successfully, although there is still room for further improvement in the teaching of art, and ensuring the most able pupils, especially those who are gifted and talented, achieve to their full potential. The extent of good teaching was evident in all year groups.
20. The quality of teaching is good in most subjects and is the main reason why pupils are making progress and achieving well. During the inspection, teaching was especially effective in ICT and music and frequently good in English, design and technology, mathematics, history, geography, modern languages, physical education and science. In art, teaching was satisfactory, but not as effective as in other subject areas. Generally, teaching is effective because teachers have a high level of subject expertise and manage the pupils very well in class. In some subjects, teacher expectations are very high, but the most gifted and talented pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
21. In the best lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge, which is passed on to pupils with interest and enthusiasm. The purpose of the lesson is shared with pupils and contributes well to their understanding of their own learning. Planning is very good, matching the scheme of work and ability of the pupils. Teachers use demonstration and explanation well to put across key teaching points. A significant strength of teaching is the successful management of pupils' behaviour. This is a result of high expectations for behaviour and pupils knowing exactly what is expected of them. Relationships are very good, with pupils being confident and secure with their teachers and support staff. Many subjects now make good use of ICT to further learning and this has been an area of development since the last inspection.

22. Within this context of a good provision for teaching, at times, the pace of work is too slow. This is due to too greater emphasis on teachers explaining the tasks or imparting factual knowledge, class activities that last too long, inappropriate tasks that do not closely match pupils' ability or needs and lessons that were just too long to sustain pupils' interest and concentration. Generally, teachers provide pupils with a high level of support and guidance, but this is at the expense of ensuring pupils make some of their own decisions, take responsibility for their own learning and work independently of the teacher. At times, teaching becomes too directed and pupils are too passive, not developing sufficient self-motivation or their own 'culture for learning'.
23. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and this guides pupils in their future learning. The quality of marking is satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies in the use of constructive comments on how to improve. Teachers often use the results of marking to plan future lessons as well as the assessments they make of pupils' learning. Overall, homework is used in a beneficial way to support the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, but there are inconsistencies between classes.
24. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and in general, provide work at an appropriate level. Strong evidence of this is seen in the very high level of A*-G passes achieved by these pupils. Teaching assistants provide effective and caring support for pupils with special educational needs, especially those, who are physically impaired. Individual education plans, for those pupils to whom they apply, are satisfactory. There is a tendency for individual targets to be too general, especially where the school uses group rather than individual education plans. In some subjects, such as English, physical education and science, departments have extended individual education plans into more subject specific targets and this has improved the quality of work provided for pupils. In other subjects, there is limited use of individual education plans to meet pupils' needs or to record their progress towards individual targets. This limits the quality of assessment and the ability to review targets and set new ones.

Teaching of Literacy and Numeracy across the curriculum

25. The quality of teaching literacy and numeracy skills in different areas of the curriculum is generally good throughout the school. Most teachers have secure knowledge of the literacy and numeracy strategies. They usually plan thoroughly, identifying clearly how the basic skills of literacy and numeracy for pupils of different abilities are to be covered, although there is room for improvement in physical education. Teachers recognise the primary importance of literacy and often create effective links between English and its application to other subjects.
26. The teaching of literacy is well developed across the school. The school participated in the pilot stages of the Key Stage 3 Literacy strategy and the positive influence is clear across most subjects. All the staff have been trained to teach pupils to write different types of non-fiction texts, so that each subject specialist is now able to promote the specific writing skills that are useful in their area. Key vocabulary is displayed to help pupils to read and spell the words that they will need most often and some teachers are assessing skills in writing, which is specific to their subject. Some subjects, such as science, make a particular contribution to literacy, using a range of reading styles to accommodate different aptitudes. There is good scope for pupils to re-express ideas in their own words to extend their understanding of concepts and opportunities for discussion to develop understanding.
27. The teaching of numeracy is very well developed within mathematics lessons, particularly in Years 7-9. However, because of the school's drive on literacy, it is less

well developed throughout other curriculum areas. Despite this, awareness has been raised amongst all staff and a very good programme has been planned. This involves using common approaches to graph work and calculation techniques as well as auditing the timing of when different subjects make use of numeracy in their teaching. Throughout the school, pupils show above average standards of numeracy, particularly in Years 7-9. In physics, excellent opportunities are provided to use formulae and to construct and interpret graphs. In geography, pupils use correlation meaningfully and graphs are used well in history, religious education, physical education and modern foreign languages. Pupils make very good use of spreadsheets in information and communication technology.

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

28. The overall quality and range of the school curriculum is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. All statutory requirements are met. As a result of excellent planning, the cross-curricular coverage of ICT is a particular strength and it is well taught throughout the school. In Years 7 to 9, the literacy and numeracy strategies are working well and citizenship has been introduced successfully. The science curriculum is very good. English provides very good learning opportunities for the more academic aspects, but there is not enough role-play because there are too few opportunities to study drama.
29. The time allowed for pupils' learning is less than that recommended and the current content of the curriculum is mostly restricted to academic based courses. The structure of the school day prevents a more creative approach to planning the content and ensuring a better balance to the curriculum. For example, there are few opportunities for pupils to study vocational subjects or work-related courses. Lessons are 70 minutes long, which although providing time for some in-depth study of practical activities, does lead to problems in maintaining concentration for some groups of pupils in certain subjects. The current structure of the school day a) restricts a greater variety and breadth in the curriculum, b) limits the number of times during the week when some subjects are taught, especially important for mathematics and modern languages, c) does not support heads of departments and year groups in fulfilling their management roles of review and monitoring, and d) results in the pace of work in some lessons being too slow.
30. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow a core curriculum that includes both religious and physical education. Pupils can follow a full GCSE ICT course or a short course. This is imaginatively taught through other subjects and is very successful. Courses in business studies are also offered. A small number of pupils are disapplied from some subjects to allow them to follow more relevant courses. For example, pupils follow an accredited life skills course. Other pupils are able to focus on ICT and a small number learn an additional language.
31. The programme of extra-curricular activities and study support is very good. There are very good opportunities in music with over 180 pupils taking part, including a number of musical ensembles and a highly valued annual production. In addition to being able to take part in a wide range of sporting activities during lessons, the physical education department provides opportunities for pupils to be involved in many individual and team events outside lesson time and organises a very successful outdoor programme. Field trips and study visits enhance pupils' experiences in history, geography, and modern languages. The school has systematically set about identifying activities of interest to pupils, successfully gained the necessary funding and set up a comprehensive and imaginative programme. The school makes a

considerable effort to ensure that as many pupils as possible take part in the wide range of activities offered.

32. The programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is a developing aspect of the curriculum and provision is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only been in post a few weeks, but has a clear vision of the developmental needs in order for it to become more effective. Lessons are currently delivered during tutor time in the mornings. The quality of delivery is mixed, with some good sessions providing useful guidance for pupils and others where teaching is pedestrian.
33. The school has effective arrangements for careers guidance and work experience. Careers education is integrated well into the work of subjects. There is very good support for the annual careers convention from a wide range of higher education and business organisations. There are very good links with post-16 institutions and training organisations that provide good information when pupils are making choices about their future pathways.
34. The school has very good links with other schools and colleges. It enjoys a good reputation in the locality. There are very good pastoral links with the local primary schools and links between subjects are developing well. Regular community music events are staged with school performance groups visiting local churches, retirement homes and schools.
35. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is well developed. Links with external agencies and other organisations provide valuable experiences for pupils. The local education business partnership provides business representatives to support a mentoring programme for Year 10 pupils.

Educational inclusion, including race equality

36. The school is justly proud of its approach and determination to include as many pupils as possible in all aspects of school life. This is especially so for pupils with physical disabilities, where the school works hard to ensure they receive similar kinds of experiences as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs have access to all areas of the school's activities and the same curriculum as other pupils.
37. The arrangements whereby pupils are set into different ability groups adequately covers the needs of most pupils, but higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged to achieve their full potential. The school has yet to identify pupils as being gifted or talented and they recognise this as an area to develop. They have recently adopted a thoughtful race equality policy. The headteacher is aware of negative attitudes, which some pupils bring with them, and is clear about the school's role in challenging these. Helping pupils to understand more about life in a multi-cultural society is an area the inspection has highlighted needs developing further.
38. Establishing a support unit for pupils with challenging behaviour has successfully reduced temporary exclusions and kept more pupils in school as a result. There are very good attendance monitoring procedures ensuring that pupils and their families are swiftly made aware if there is a concern. Good relationships with the Educational Welfare Officer means those few pupils with significant attendance problems are well supported and provided with a range of alternative options, such as extended work experience and college placements.
39. The mentoring programme (further described in paragraph 49) ensures that pupils at risk of not completing coursework, becoming disaffected or generally underachieving,

are well supported. This is in addition to a good range of *booster⁴ and revision classes provided by the school. A small group of middle-attaining pupils underachieved in their 2002 GCSE exams. Virtually all pupils achieve success in their GCSE examinations, with almost every pupil gaining a qualification. There are currently few vocational courses offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 and this forms part of a key issue for the school to improve this aspect of the curriculum.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

40. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The positive picture seen during the previous inspection is still evident and opportunities for spiritual development have improved.
41. Spiritual development is now satisfactory. The school has worked hard to improve it since the previous inspection and there is now a good-quality policy outlining how each subject could contribute. In practice, a minority of subjects are referring to spiritual opportunities when planning lessons and some departments have little awareness of the policy. In science, the excellence of some lessons generates a spiritual element, for example, in marvelling at the genetic codes involved in a single cell. Governors have decided that the school will not provide a daily act of collective worship and this does not meet statutory requirements. Assemblies contain a good mix of pupils' contributions, such as, Year 7 speaking about their first impressions of the school, visiting speakers and themes discussed by senior staff. These are often connected with the exploration of meaning, purpose and values.
42. Social provision is very good and moral development is good. Values such as respect, honesty, fairness and justice are strongly promoted. A considerable emphasis is placed on the importance of personal rights and equality. This is shown by the school's inclusive approach for pupils with physical and learning disabilities. Very good relationships within the school make a considerable contribution to the positive and friendly atmosphere. There are very good opportunities for pupils to take part in residential visits and a good number of sporting fixtures and extra-curricular activities. These are all helping to develop pupils into well-rounded individuals. The consistent way good behaviour is encouraged ensures pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Implementing seating plans in lessons means pupils have to learn to get along with others they would not perhaps naturally choose to sit next to. Teachers do not always allow pupils opportunities to get fully involved in lessons, to devise ways of learning for themselves or show initiative.
43. The overall provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There are a good number of visits out, which help pupils gain an understanding of western culture, for example those to York, Amsterdam and Paris, connected to history and art. Regular drama productions and good musical opportunities, such as, this year The Sound of Music, are key features of school life. Opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of the richness and variety of multi-cultural Britain are more limited. This is a minor area for the school to improve.

Citizenship

44. The management of the development of citizenship has been good. A careful audit of the potential offered by all subject areas and of the programme for personal, social and health education has been carried out. Departments across the school are aware

⁴ Booster class. A term used to describe lessons designed to help pupils who are working at a level below what would be expected and who need a 'boost' to help them catch up.

of the potential their subject offers. The quality of teaching and planning for citizenship are satisfactory. There is some good practice in subjects, such as history, geography and religious education, where schemes of work and planning recognise and plan aspects of citizenship. In other subjects, mathematics and physical education for example, there is limited consistent recognition of the possibilities presented and little consistent contribution to the overall programme. Where citizenship is taught as a discrete area, mostly in personal, social and health education lessons, it is generally taught well. Consistent and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning for citizenship is not yet fully in place, but the school has made a positive start with introducing this new requirement of education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. Arrangements for child protection, safety and welfare are sound. Teachers are aware of and are mostly sensitive to the personal and home circumstances of each pupil. The child protection policy has just been reviewed. Not all staff are familiar with the revised policy and the last whole-school training was some years ago. Staff new to the school are not always briefed on child protection issues, but procedures are included in the staff handbook. Tightening up the systems in place is a minor area for the school to improve.
46. There is an effective and clearly defined partnership between staff and governors, who monitor health and safety issues carefully. Health and safety concerns from the previous inspection have been resolved. Staff have been trained on emergency first aid, but only one person holds the advanced certificate. The school are taking steps to improve this.
47. There are very good attendance monitoring procedures, introduced since the previous inspection, based on a First Day Response⁵ system. The main aim is to check that every pupil, who sets off for school in the morning, arrives safely. The system is very efficiently administered and good use is made of attendance data. It is well used by pastoral staff, who pursue pertinent issues such as lateness or patterns of non-attendance. The school has reduced its unauthorised absence figure to virtually nil and increased its attendance figure because of this system. Despite letters of caution from the headteacher, the number of parents taking holidays during term time continues to grow.
48. The school has devised a high-quality system for monitoring any disruptive behaviour and the way this system operates is one of its strengths. Data is used very effectively; for example, to monitor the behaviour of individuals, diagnose trends or to reveal lessons where extra help is needed so that well-trained behaviour support staff can be strategically placed. Any cases of bullying are investigated fully and the school has recently reviewed its procedures. Pupils and parents are happy that the school takes any incidents seriously and inspection evidence supports this view.
49. The way the school monitors and supports pupils' personal development is good. Tutors stay with their forms as they move up the school and there is a good amount of daily contact between pupil and tutor. The use of mentors⁶ has developed over the last few years and evaluations from pupils have shown how much they found this relationship useful. Mentors and school staff also feel it has benefited pupils both

⁵ First Day Response- this is where parents are telephoned on the first day of absence if no reason is provided, to check why their child is away.

⁶ Mentors- in the context of this school, mentors are volunteers and staff trained to provide pupils with support and guidance, in order to ultimately improve their academic performance.

personally and academically. Although academic assessment data is now being stored and analysed, there is little active monitoring of the pupils' academic progress undertaken by the form tutor or heads of year. This is an area the school and inspectors agree needs developing and forms part of the second key issue from this inspection.

Assessment

50. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, academic progress and personal development are good. The quality of monitoring pupils' academic progress in departments is also good. An extensive range of information on pupils' academic achievement is collected and analysed. The information includes the results of tests taken by pupils on entry to the school, various diagnostic tests, national curriculum tests and their progress as they move through the school. An analysis of the information, the recording of individual pupil progress and making predicted targets for achievement is supported very well by the local education authority. The results of these assessments are now used well to build a profile on each pupil, place them in appropriate ability groups and to set them targets for improvement. The practice of setting targets is at an early stage of development, but starting to be effectively used across the school. Most pupils, up to the age of 14, are aware of their level of attainment in English, mathematics, science and ICT and what they need to do to improve. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 are aware of the grades and percentages they obtain in tests and what they should achieve in future examinations. The levels of attainment and predicted grades are shared with pupils in all subjects. However, in many subjects, pupils are not fully aware of what they have to complete in order to achieve their predicted grade or how to achieve an even higher grade. The practice across departments is uneven.
51. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning and lesson preparation is satisfactory across subjects. There is good practice in the use of assessment in some departments, such as mathematics, science and ICT, but this is not yet fully developed across the school. There is also some uneven practice, across departments, regarding the use of pupils' self-assessment skills and their ability to work independently and become aware of what they need to do to improve their own performance. In some lessons, assessment information is not sufficiently used to influence the content and planning of lessons to match the work closely to the needs of individual pupils, especially the pupils, who are capable of very high standards.
52. There are satisfactory procedures in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs and for arranging the necessary provision for them. Arrangements for tracking attainment and progress for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory, but are inconsistent across subjects, are heavily reliant on assessment from teaching assistants and do not make best use of the wide range of data available in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents have a positive view of the school and it is a very popular choice in the community. Relationships with parents are strong, very much the same as at the time of the previous inspection. One-third of all parents returned the inspection questionnaire, although replies to the school's own comprehensive survey last year were much higher. Nearly all replies were positive, apart from those concerning homework, information about progress and the degree to which the school works with parents. On the whole, parents are very happy with the academic standards and the attitudes and values staff promote. They are pleased that their children make good

progress. Parents at a meeting before the inspection expressed similar positive views about the school. Inspectors broadly agree with all of parents' positive views.

54. In response to parental concerns in the questionnaire, inspectors judge that the provision of homework is good. It is well organised, regularly marked and builds on learning at school. The opportunity to find out information about pupils' progress is also good. There is a parents evening, plus annual and interim reports. Staff are approachable and pleased to talk to parents individually if they need more information. The school urges parents to contact them directly about any homework concerns. They strive to work closely with parents and are largely successful in their aim.
55. The main avenue for communication is through the newly revamped Journal, which nearly all parents sign each week. It is well used and valued by both home and school. The governing body contains a number of parents, who serve the school well and fulfil their roles conscientiously. Parents provide much help for school productions, both through making costumes and helping backstage. The school values parental opinion and acts on it, where possible. Their own specially commissioned questionnaire threw up concerns about bullying and the school policy was reviewed as a result. There are satisfactory formal and informal contacts with parents of pupils, who have special educational needs. The school is now beginning to involve parents and pupils in the review and target-setting process under the new 2002 Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs.
56. Overall, pupils' annual reports contain a satisfactory amount of information. They are carefully presented as Records of Achievement and contain a useful page of explanation. Comments include a balance of pupil's progress, attitude to work and skills learnt. There are inconsistencies in quality between subjects; some are less strong on the areas pupils need to improve upon and targets are imprecise. Reports have improved in quality since the previous inspection, when shortcomings were highlighted.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The school has made a good improvement since the last inspection and has the capacity to ensure that this level of improvement will be maintained. Winterton Comprehensive is an effective and improving school that provides the pupils with a good quality of education. There is a clear focus and determination by governors, headteacher and senior staff to raise standards and improve the school. For example, the school has addressed most of the key issues raised in the previous inspection report when weaknesses were identified in its long-term planning, the systems to review and monitor the quality of teaching and learning, the use made of assessment information and low standards in art and religious education. Consequently, there has been an improvement in the overall quality of education and the academic standards pupils now achieve, especially in Years 7 to 9.
58. The school is a pleasant and well-ordered community that creates a positive environment where virtually all pupils work well and achieve academic success. The mission statement and aims of the school are reflected in the life of the school and the vast majority of pupils are happy to come to school, as reflected in the high attendance rates. The school is committed to equal opportunities for all. It has recently adopted a policy on racial equality and promotes the importance of racial harmony through the taught programmes of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Although most pupils are challenged to achieve the standards of which they are capable, the provision for the most gifted and talented pupils has room to improve further.

59. The headteacher provides purposeful and determined leadership that has helped to raise standards, notably in Years 7 to 9, and ensured the school is popular in the local community. The headteacher is supported well by hard-working senior colleagues. However, some senior staff and subject managers teach a high proportion of lessons and this reduces their capacity to fulfil all their management tasks effectively. Monitoring by the headteacher and senior staff has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is now good and has identified many of the strengths in school and areas for development. The senior staff, with support from other agencies, now perform regular review, monitoring and developmental work across the school. This keeps them informed about the quality of work in subject areas. Together, the team of senior staff ensure the school operates smoothly on a daily basis and have created a good team spirit amongst the staff. The school provides a positive environment for staff and pupils to work.
60. Several of the subject and pastoral managers are very effective and lead their departments well. However, as most of the curriculum timetable is taught through four teaching sessions per day, staff have very few sessions when they are not teaching. This reduces the possibility to deploy heads of departments to conduct regular and rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in their departments and then share any effective classroom practice. Consequently, the role of the head of department is not being fully developed and does not always ensure that decisions made for future action are followed through to their completion across all subjects. The school has a planned programme for all subjects of when monitoring and support by the senior managers will take place. There is a full review of all departments during the autumn term. However, little systematic monitoring is possible in subjects on an on-going basis with heads of departments reporting formally on the progress made. The governors, headteacher and senior managers have not delegated sufficient responsibility to heads of department to monitor the work in their areas and accept accountability for the standards achieved and, subsequently, there is room to develop the school further as a self-evaluating institution. The leadership and management of the literacy and numeracy strategies are good.
61. The school's development plan identifies suitable priorities for raising attainment and improving the quality of education. There have been substantial improvements made in development planning since the last inspection. The development plan is written by the headteacher and senior staff, but governors and other staff are suitably involved in the process. The current plan is aptly linked to departmental action plans and issues raised through the performance management appraisal scheme. The development plan provides a clear focus for the governors to enable them to help the school to move forward.
62. The governors meet at least termly and provide good support to the school. They successfully fulfil virtually all of their statutory requirements. Exceptions are they do not provide daily worship or fully comply with the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. Governors have developed a sound knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have ensured good improvements have been achieved. During the last few years the governing body has developed its role as a 'critical friend' by becoming better informed about what happens in school. However, the governors do not have a plan for their own development. The governors' role in strategic planning, financial management and reviewing the school's strengths and areas for development would be strengthened further by setting measurable objectives for more areas of school performance.
63. The co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Due to the commitments from other roles in school, the co-ordinator

has insufficient time to monitor and evaluate the provision across the school, or to advise and support staff. This means that some teachers are unsure how to meet and evaluate the pupils targets expressed in their individual education plans. There is insufficient monitoring of this work by senior staff. Statutory requirements for special educational needs are not fully met because the governors do not maintain a sufficiently good oversight of the school's work. The governors, senior managers and the middle management of the school have failed to recognise the scope and nature of the changes required by the 2002 Code of Practice. Consequently, most of the changes necessary are not yet fully in place and provision for pupils with special educational needs, although satisfactory, is not as good as it should be. Funding for special educational needs is prudently and well used. Relevant training has been provided for the support assistants, who work with pupils, who have special educational needs.

64. The school's senior administrative officer is actively involved in the administration of the finances. She has a detailed knowledge of current budget figures and projected costs. The governors and headteacher appreciate the high quality of her work. The management and control of financial matters is very good. The school makes some use of the Local Education Authority to provide budget monitoring and maintaining the accounts. Principles of 'best value' are applied to major purchases, but there is room to develop this aspect of financial management by measuring if value-for-money is achieved. The school uses its specific grants for the purpose they were intended. For example, the grant for special educational needs is used correctly and provision for these pupils is satisfactory. The school makes good use of new technology in aspects of its work. For example, it has started to use computer software to record and analyse assessment information and record pupils' attendance.
65. All adults, including administrative staff, technicians, those working in the canteen and the caretakers, work well as a team and help to ensure the school operates smoothly on a daily basis and provides a high level of care for pupils.

Staffing, accommodation and resources

66. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is satisfactory. However, one long-term absence in English is proving difficult to fill. In religious education and geography, there are non-specialists, but this does not unduly impede the quality of learning.
67. The contribution of the professional development of staff to their effectiveness is a positive feature of the school. Courses attended are closely linked to the school's improvement plan and to the needs and targets identified through performance management. Staff complete a course evaluation form upon return and are expected to 'cascade' the outcomes of the course to their colleagues. An assistant headteacher has had responsibility for staff development since September and has put in place procedures to monitor and log the effectiveness and value of the courses. The present focus is on the national Key Stage 3 strategy, which involves much in-house training. The school's contribution to the professional development of staff has been recognised by the Investors in People accreditation. As a result of feedback from this accreditation process there is now an induction programme for administrative staff.
68. The induction of both newly qualified and new teachers to the school is organised well and effectively supports staff new to the school. There is an ongoing programme throughout the year to ensure they have the required information about whole-school procedures. However, induction procedures for child protection issues are not clearly defined for newly qualified teachers or teachers new to the school.

69. Accommodation at the school is satisfactory overall and allows for a broad range of subjects to be taught. The school building is welcoming, clean and safe with effective use of display in some areas, enhancing the quality of the learning environment. Physical education accommodation is very good, particularly in terms of the range that is available, whereas the provision for teaching ceramics, part of the art and design programme, is unsatisfactory. Other areas, for example modern foreign languages, have been improved since the last inspection. Fewer classes are now taught outside specialist rooms and department rooms are now grouped together. There is an ongoing refurbishment and improvement programme. The premises development plan is clear, concise and prioritised with a Spring 2003 start for new humanities, art and ICT rooms, improved office facilities and a new dining hall. At present, however, there are difficulties in terms of the increasing numbers of pupils and the three classrooms, which are small, the use of the resource centre as a teaching room and the problem of access to the ICT suites for different subjects. The planned provision of a new lift will allow wheelchair users improved access to more parts of the building.
70. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. In recent years there has been an upgrade of computers and more effective use made of ICT in several curriculum areas. For example, mathematics and religious education make effective use of new equipment, while in history, science and modern languages, access and resources are still in need of improvement. The library is too small for the size of school. It is not in full time use as a learning resource area because of its use as a teaching classroom by the English department to solve access problems until the proposed major building programme begins.

Value for money

71. Taking into account:
- the good improvements since the previous inspection;
 - the good quality of teaching and learning;
 - the good behaviour of the vast majority of the pupils;
 - the effective and purposeful leadership and management;
 - the average unit costs per pupil

the school is judged to give good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to improve the standards of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- 1 Raise pupils' attainment in Years 10 and 11**, by:
 - helping them to become more independent through increasing the range of teaching strategies so pupils make more decisions and take responsibility for their own learning;
 - making better use of the assessment information available to motivate pupils and help them understand how to improve their own performance;
 - ensuring that the good practices in the use of assessment and independent learning, which already exists in some departments, are shared and adopted in all subjects;
 - developing pupils' self-assessment skills and awareness of target-setting arrangements;
 - providing pupils with opportunities for more vocational courses in Years 10 and 11;
 - ensuring the pace and urgency of work are increased in all lessons;
 - improving the provision for the most gifted and talented pupils.(paragraphs 6, 7, 73, 82)
 - 2 Developing the roles of the heads of departments and year groups** by:
 - providing further support and training to strengthen review and monitoring procedures, including the observation of lessons;
 - providing more time for subject managers to regularly monitor and support teaching and learning;
 - requiring the heads of department to produce a termly report on the progress made towards implementing the priorities identified in their annual action plan;
 - requiring the pastoral staff to monitor pupils' academic progress across all subjects.(paragraphs 9, 49, 59, 60, 79, 85, 91, 100, 105, 115, 127, 133, 145, 153, 159)
 - 3 Improve the structure of the school day by:
 - increasing the amount of taught curriculum time, and
 - devising a timetable with either five or six teaching sessions per day, in order to:
 - a. offer greater variety and breadth to the curriculum;
 - b. increase the number of times during the week when some subjects are taught;
 - c. give time to heads of departments and year groups for fulfilling their management roles;
 - d. increase the pace of work in lessons;
 - e. raise the attainment of pupils.(paragraphs 9, 22, 29, 39, 91, 100, 127, 133, 137, 153, 159)
 - 4 Fully implement the 2002 Code of Practice for supporting pupils with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11 by:
 - ensuring all staff are fully aware of the implications of the 2002 Code of Practice;
 - clarifying the roles of governors, senior managers and other staff to ensure the Code of Practice is fully implemented;
 - improve the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs;
 - ensuring that pupils' progress and the quality of provision for special educational needs is rigorously and regularly monitored by the SENCO and senior managers;

- improving the quality of individual education plans to ensure that the targets set meet individual pupils' needs.
(paragraphs 9, 22, 29, 39, 91, 100, 127, 133, 137, 153, 159)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Governors may consider including the following less important issues in their action plan.

- Improving the co-ordination of child protection to ensure all staff are kept fully informed and trained;
- Helping pupils to understand more about life in a multi-cultural society.
(paragraphs 43, 45)

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

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

126

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

56

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	23	57	40	2	0	0
Percentage	3	18	45	32	2	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	737
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	78

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	21
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	97

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	64	75	139

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	47	55
	Girls	58	54	66
	Total	97	101	121
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (66)	73 (65)	87 (66)
	National	64 (66)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	36 (29)	47 (36)	54 (30)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	42	48
	Girls	65	58	59
	Total	108	100	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	78 (71)	72 (67)	76 (71)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	49 (27)	38 (38)	44 (26)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	57	51	108

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	19	57	57
	Girls	29	51	51
	Total	48	108	108
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	44 (55)	100 (95)	100 (98)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	39.5 (40.6)
	National	39 (38.4)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age. It 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)	39.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	399.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.6
Key Stage 4	22.4

FTE means full-time equivalent

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll		Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
31		52	3
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
0		0	0
		0	

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	2,017,271
Total expenditure	2,000,334
Expenditure per pupil	2,794
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,668
Balance carried forward to next year	56,605

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

31%

Number of questionnaires sent out

737

Number of questionnaires returned

232

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	47	9	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	50	6	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	63	8	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	57	17	5	7
The teaching is good.	28	63	4	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	56	13	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	41	4	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	40	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	21	54	15	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	41	46	4	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	52	4	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	47	7	2	8

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The improving trend in standards of pupil attainment.
- Teaching methods that help pupils to build on their knowledge and skills through good planning.
- Very good relationships that increase pupils' confidence and effectively supports their learning.

Areas for Development

- Strategies that promote the skills of pupils, to learn by and for themselves.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning, by the head of department, to identify and disseminate best practice.
- Planning lesson objectives in terms that pupils' understand, so short-term achievements can be assessed to promote further progress.

73. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 is above the national average. The attainment of the current Year 11 pupils is average. In 2001, the school's results in national tests for pupils aged 14 were in line with the national average and standards have improved faster than the national trend over the last three years. Results for 2002 show a significant continued improvement. Girls' attainment is higher than boys', but the difference between them is smaller than it is nationally. This represents good achievement for pupils, who come into the school with average attainment, and work seen during the inspection week confirmed this. Attainment in the 2001 GCSE examinations was close to the national average in English Language. However, this was below average for similar schools and a disappointing reduction after results had improved over the previous two years. Results in 2002 recovered significantly and are likely to be above average for similar schools. Pupils' attainment in English exceeded that in mathematics and science. With consideration to the levels attained in Year 9, pupils made satisfactory progress. Boys' attainment improved considerably and was closer to the level achieved by girls than was the case nationally. Results in English literature followed a similar pattern.
74. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and planning is based on the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy. Standards of speaking and listening skills are above average and pupils use discussion effectively to develop and extend their understanding. In a Year 9 class, higher attainers varied their roles productively in a discussion about an Irish short story. They questioned each other carefully to clarify meaning and to seek evidence to confirm opinions. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils made a good range of points in a discussion about a writer's intention and understood the need to use standard English in their formal presentations. Reading skills are well above average. Pupils in Year 7 can pick out specific words and phrases to justify their analysis of a text and by Year 9, higher attainers are able to draw out subtly implied meaning from a sophisticated story by *Brendan Behan*. Writing is well above average. Lower attainers make particular progress in lengthening their writing by developing more ideas. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils demonstrated their skill by assessing each other's writing, commenting on the choice of vocabulary, sentence styles and suitability for a particular audience.

75. Teaching is good overall in Years 10 and 11 and gives clear guidance to prepare pupils for examinations. Speaking and listening skills are average in Years 10 and 11 as pupils had not arrived at school with such developed skills as in current Years 7 to 9. Where pupils discuss ideas they do not have a well-developed range of skills. A high-attaining group in Year 11 struggled to draw the meaning out of a poem about reform in South Africa. In a skilfully taught class, however, where attainment was below average, pupils' self-esteem was carefully protected, enabling them to express their ideas clearly and confidently.
76. Higher-attaining students in Years 10 and 11 write very competently. This is seen when they compare coverage of court proceedings in tabloid and broadsheet newspapers or create their own powerful writing using techniques they have found in the poetry of *Ted Hughes*. Pupils, whose writing is quite limited, show above average skill in expressing their views about the texts that they have studied. They can write a sustained analysis of a soap opera, for example, because they have been given a clear understanding by their teachers. Pupils of all abilities show above average reading skills as teachers lead them methodically towards a clear understanding of the content, structure and background of their texts.
77. Although they arrive in the school with literacy skills, which are average, by the end of Year 9, pupils have developed very effective strategies for working with texts and using their talk and writing to develop their understanding. These skills are helping them to learn more effectively in every subject. This is because they are predominantly well taught. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully to develop learning by building on previous work. They cater for pupils with special educational needs, adapting their individual education plans so that the pupils make good progress in lessons. Although they have not specifically identified pupils, who have exceptional ability in English, the planning gives scope for these pupils to excel - challenging them to read with greater insight and write with greater clarity and effect. Teachers work hard to develop very good relationships so that pupils feel secure to learn and, as a result of changes in style promoted by the literacy strategy, they maintain a good pace and variety throughout their lessons.
78. Where teaching is best, learning targets are clear and simple so that pupils understand their responsibility at all points of the lesson and when they are working at home. Marking is clearly linked to the learning targets and pupils can use teachers' comments to plan how to improve their work. However, not all lesson planning includes objectives that pupils fully understand, or have short-term achievements that can be readily assessed to promote further progress.
79. The team of teachers is well led and have made good improvements to the scheme of work, teaching styles and pupils' attainment since the last inspection. The support for pupils' personal development relies too much on individual teachers identifying opportunities as and when they arise, so the provision is not equally good for all pupils. There are examples of very good practice in different classrooms at different times and these are not yet being identified and shared with all of the English team through a regular and systematic programme of review and monitoring by the head of department.

Literacy across the curriculum

80. The school participated in the pilot stages of the Key Stage 3 Literacy strategy and the positive influence is clear across the school. All the staff trained to teach pupils to write different types of non-fiction texts, so that each subject specialist is now able to promote the specific writing skills that are useful in their area. Key vocabulary is displayed to help pupils to read and spell the words that they will need most often and some teachers are assessing skills in writing, which is specific to their subject. Some subjects, such as science, make a particular contribution to literacy, using a range of reading styles to accommodate different aptitudes. There is good scope for pupils to re-express ideas in their own words to extend their understanding of concepts and opportunities for discussion to develop understanding. Older pupils are asked to use sentences of a specific style, which ensures that they explain their understanding clearly. In geography, activities are well planned throughout the scheme of work. In religious education, teachers use key terms well and require that pupils know and use them. They have developed writing frames to support less confident writers. Key terms are also clearly defined in history lessons and pupils learn to read sources to detect bias. There are good opportunities for speaking and listening and pupils listen well. Literacy skills and opportunities are satisfactory in physical education, art and design, design and technology and mathematics, where teachers are very conscious of pupils' needs, but the practice is less sharp. However, the resources in the library are insufficient to support appropriate research activities across different subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are consistently good in Years 7 to 9.
- Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 are above the national average.
- Assessment and target setting are very effective, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.

Areas for development

- Standards in Years 10 and 11.
- To broaden the range of teaching styles in Years 10 and 11.
- The length of lessons is too long for most pupils to sustain concentration.

81. At the end of Year 9, the proportion of pupils, who gained at least the standard expected of all 14 year olds in the 2002 tests, was above the national average. Based upon the average points score achieved by all pupils, the school's results were also above the national expectation. The results are regularly in line with those of similar schools and above those of all schools. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
82. The proportion of pupils, who gained grades A*-C in the GCSE examination in 2001, was just above the national average. These results maintained the trend of being just above national standards. In 2001, girls did significantly better than boys, performing above the national average, whilst the results of the boys were marginally below. However, there is no regular trend of girls attaining higher than boys. In 2002, the proportion of pupils, who gained A*-C grades, is likely to be below the national average. Whilst this cohort of pupils was overall weaker than usual, this represents barely satisfactory progress compared with prior attainment in the national tests at age 14 years. However, the school has consistently been above the national average for the proportion of pupils attaining grades A*-G.

83. By the end of Year 9, the standard of work of a larger than average proportion of pupils is at least at the level expected of 14 year olds. Consistently good teaching throughout Years 7 to 9 helps pupils to think mathematically, use terminology accurately and to think logically. The majority of pupils make good progress. They are required to discuss and explain their methods to others. The most able pupils in Year 9 were very successful in solving simultaneous equations because they were required to relate graphical methods to the algebraic ones they studied in the lesson.
84. Mathematical problems are regularly related to real-life situations. In a very good lesson with a broadly average ability class, pupils attained above what could reasonably be expected. The investigation to construct the cuboid box with the maximum volume by cutting out square corners from an A4 sheet of paper caught the imagination of pupils. They built on practical work from the previous lesson, using sketches and then calculations to look for trends. Eventually, they put the information on a prepared spreadsheet to plot a graph of volumes for different cut out sizes. An outstanding feature of the lesson was the way some of the more confident girls were given the task of going round the room, helping pupils, who had not yet learned how to plot graphs from the spreadsheet.
85. Lower-attaining Year 9 pupils also make good progress. They understand the use of most algebraic notation, but many struggle with the shorthand notation for squaring numbers. In a lesson with such pupils, almost all were able to explain how to add and subtract positive and negative numbers. The use of individual whiteboards allowed each pupil to answer every oral question and then receive prompt feedback from the teacher. However, pupils found difficulty in concentrating for the entire lesson, which, at 70 minutes, was too long. As a result of this, the teacher complained about pupils fiddling with pens when they were asked to listen and the pace of the lesson dropped near the end. The change of tone and the ability to play act on the part of the teacher, so often seen in many very good lessons, were missing in what was an otherwise good and worthwhile lesson.
86. During Years 7 and 8, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In Year 7, pupils are placed into sets by ability soon after entry to school. This helps teachers target work for individuals. In a very good lesson, the least able pupils worked successfully in doubling and halving difficult numbers and calculating areas of rectangles and irregular shapes. This was because the teacher, working closely with the learning mentor and a teaching assistant, showed great imagination and expectation by providing very attractive and challenging worksheets and activities. The whole team showed tremendous energy in motivating and helping all the pupils to learn.
87. By the end of Year 11, pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with expectation compared to their prior attainment. Achievement, overall, is satisfactory. Some of the higher-attaining pupils do not fulfil their potential, whilst many others work at higher levels than could be expected. A significant minority of pupils in the top class showed little confidence in solving inequalities in one dimension. Learning tended to be in a rote fashion and most pupils did not test their solutions thoroughly. Despite the work eventually being done correctly, there was little attempt to make the work relevant or enjoyable.
88. Many pupils in the middle-attaining class do better than could be expected. They show not only the ability to draw cumulative frequency graphs, but also to interpret them accurately. The teacher's strong focus on the most likely errors and the use of a high-quality overhead transparency, highlighted clearly in a relevant example, how to

determine the number of candidates above a certain pass mark, rather than below. Lower-attaining pupils aim high. They are able to solve simultaneous equations by graphical methods because in one lesson, the teacher made excellent use of the interactive whiteboard and encouraged pupils to use relevant web sites at home. However, in common with a number of lessons in Years 10 and 11, pupils were insufficiently challenged to discuss their work or to test out their answers by checking their reasonableness or using alternative methods.

89. Pupils behave very well in lessons. They are very well prepared. They work well together, particularly in younger classes, because teachers plan for pupils to share ideas and on occasion teach each other. Relationships between pupils are usually very good. The school's policy of seating pupils with boys next to girls is successful in creating good learning environments in most lessons. Only in Years 10 and 11 were there instances of silliness and occasionally arrogance from a few more able pupils. Pupils respond according to the quality of the activities in lessons and also the challenge of homework. In an outstanding lesson, the second highest class in Year 8 had used the Internet to find out all they could about triangles. One girl had used "Encarta" and printed off ideas about spherical triangles.
90. Teaching is consistently good in Years 7 to 9. It is often very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers have clearly embraced the national strategy with enthusiasm and skill. The best lessons involve the pupils actively in sharing ideas and thinking for themselves. Transitions between activities are sharp and the work is varied. Teachers focus effectively on key words, in accordance with the school's emphasis on literacy. Resources, including information and communication technology, are used very effectively. In the excellent lesson on triangles with Year 8, pupils warmed up by using number fans to do certain calculations, then showed answers on individual whiteboards. They were then required to discuss in pairs more difficult questions before putting answers on whiteboards. They eventually constructed angles forming a straight line from the angles in a triangle to prove that these added up to 180 degrees. The teacher had practised this first and the clear practical advice made this activity successful. Teaching is always at least satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. It is often very good. However, the creative use of resources and technique of directing pupils to work together is not so evident with pupils in Years 10 and 11. The pace of these lessons often drops. Teachers assess pupils very well. Targets are explained to pupils and teachers regularly refer to the level of work the pupils are doing, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Homework is given regularly. It is often stimulating and teachers make good use of it to prepare pupils for the work that is to follow.
91. Leadership and management of the department are strong. The head of department sets a very good example with his own teaching by demonstrating enjoyment in lessons and preparing high-quality resources for the department. GCSE statistics has been introduced as a subject outside the normal timetable in Year 10 and this is raising the aspirations of the most able pupils. Whilst the department relies upon teachers from other departments and senior staff, these are also able teachers, who provide strong support. As a result of the small number of full time teachers in the department, the workload for the head of department is heavy. Together with timetable constraints, this has made it difficult for him to complete his monitoring role or prepare for the gifted and talented pupils. Time needs to be provided for these. The head of department is fully committed and capable of ensuring that the successes in Years 7-9 will be carried through to Year 11. Overall, the department has made good progress since the last inspection.

Numeracy across the curriculum

92. The school has already done considerable preparatory work in readiness to develop the use of numeracy further across the curriculum. Documentation regarding common approaches in the methods of calculation, graph work and terminology has been circulated to staff in all departments. The school is now ready to audit the use of numeracy in departments and have training in how numeracy skills can be developed and enhance learning in other subject areas. Whilst the school has focused recently on literacy, there is good practice in the development of numeracy, particularly with data handling and graph work in science and geography. Pupils also have some opportunities to develop these skills in history, religious education and physical education, but limited use is made of this in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

Strengths

- Standards in Years 7 to 9 are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good and ensure high standards are maintained.
- The good working relationship between pupils and teachers give pupils confidence to ask and answer questions.
- Consistently good teaching as a result of well-planned lessons containing a variety of learning activities.
- Accurate assessment and target-setting keep pupils focussed on learning in Years 7 to 9.

Areas for improvement

- Examination results at the end of Year 11.
- Monitoring of classroom teaching and learning by the head of department to ensure the spread of good practice.
- The development of pupils in Years 10 and 11 as independent learners.
- The increased use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning in Years 10 to 11.

93. Standards of work seen during the inspection are well above average in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10 and 11. This represents an improvement from the last inspection. However, progress during Years 10 and 11 is less rapid than in Years 7 to 9. The improvements made lower down the school in the areas of assessment and variety of learning activities offered to pupils are only just beginning to have an impact in Years 10 and 11.
94. In the 2001 national tests held at the end of Year 9, standards were well above the national average and very high compared to similar schools. This is a substantial improvement on the previous report. Results in 2002 show a similar high standard. The results over the last few years have been better than those achieved in English or mathematics. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Observations in lessons and scrutiny of work confirm these high standards.
95. Lessons are carefully prepared with a clear focus on learning. Science is made interesting and exciting so that pupils become fully involved in their own learning. Assessment and target-setting systems are good and help pupils towards the demanding targets set for them. High-attaining pupils can carry out and report effectively on investigations in biological, chemical and physical contexts. They can explain the functioning of the major organs of the body, how electromagnets work and have a good understanding of elements, compounds and mixtures. Less able pupils

and those with special educational needs are pushed hard and can give the quality of explanations that might be expected from older pupils. Most pupils make very good progress. There is good emphasis on the use of literacy and numeracy to help pupils record and interpret their understanding in science. Good use of information and communication technology is made in the collection, interpretation and presentation of information. This is an improvement since the previous report.

96. GCSE results were in line with the national average in 2001, but are likely to have dropped below it in 2002. The recent trend of attainment is downwards. Analysis of the examination results shows a weakness in the chemistry element. However, observations in class and scrutiny of work show that standards are currently satisfactory and rising. This is mainly due to a change in staff and the improvements feeding through from Years 7 to 9. There are no weaknesses in the delivery of the science curriculum, though physics is especially strong. Pupils perform better in science than in most of their other subjects. Girls and boys produce work of equivalent standards. All pupils gain a GCSE grade with high-ability pupils achieving A and A* grades in GCSE.
97. All lessons are carefully planned and pupils have a good attitude to learning. However, there is little of the excitement of science that occurs in Years 7 to 9. Teachers and pupils work hard, but lessons are inclined to be more prescriptive and so pupils do not become fully engaged as active learners. Pupils do not take enough responsibility for their own learning and become sufficiently independent of the teacher. ICT is used for teaching and learning, but its effectiveness for learning is limited by a lack of equipment. Pupils do not get enough hands-on experience. Booster classes and revision guides help pupils to achieve. All pupils benefit from being placed in groups of similar ability, as teachers set appropriate work that is both demanding and accessible to every pupil. Pupils obtain the full range of grades from A*-G. High attainers can carry out detailed scientific investigations, accurately complete calculations associated with kinetic and gravitational forces, explain genetic variations and apply their understanding of electronic structure to describe bonding in chemical substances. Pupils with special educational needs have a good understanding of cell structure and generally make good progress. Average- and higher-ability pupils achieve satisfactorily. There is no difference in the quality of work produced by boys and girls.
98. Teaching is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. No unsatisfactory lesson was observed during the inspection and teaching has improved since the last inspection. All lessons are carefully planned with a common structure. The introduction includes a recap of the learning objectives, this is followed by the learning activities and a final check of the pupils' understanding. There is a marked difference in teaching of the lessons. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is much livelier than that seen in Years 10 and 11. There is much more pupil teacher interaction, a wider range of learning activities and pupils are fully engaged in their own learning. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on electricity, pupils were observed in discussions, practical activity and a role-play on the electric current and resistance. A final discussion showed that learning had not only been enjoyable, but also rapid and very good. This lesson was a model of excellent practice. Teachers have high expectations, assessment is frequent and pupils understand their own strengths and weaknesses. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 tends to be more prescriptive and so pupils become more passive towards their learning. Appropriate homework to consolidate and extend learning is regularly set. Books are marked and graded, but there is little written guidance given. The working relationships between teachers and pupils are good and this gives pupils confidence to both ask and answer questions. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences in science; reading and writing poetry, marvelling at cell division and

genetics, discussing the pros and cons of scientific advances, working safely in groups and researching the contributions of scientists from different cultures.

99. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are enthusiastic scientists. They are keen to learn, willing to join in discussions and take a pride in their own learning. They like science and fully reflect the enthusiasm of their teachers. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 diligently apply themselves to their studies and respond well when given the occasional opportunities to plan their own work.
100. Leadership and management are very good. Assessment and target-setting systems are good, but pupils in Years 10 and 11 need more frequent feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Assessment and analysis of results is well used to influence curriculum planning. Documentation gives good guidance and is useful for student teachers and new members of staff. Similarly to the previous report, the head of department does not have the time available to monitor teaching. This leads to inconsistencies in teaching and marking. The comparatively new head of department fosters a very good spirit of team work and is providing the leadership necessary to take the department forward. The department has made a good improvement since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good.
- There is a good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Leadership and management of the subject to have a clearer understanding of how to improve standards, teaching and learning further.
- Teachers availing themselves of training opportunities to develop their subject knowledge.
- The accommodation, in particular for the teaching of ceramics.
- The quality and quantity of resources for the subject.

101. The unsatisfactory standards at the time of the last inspection have been improved and pupils' attainment is now in line with the national average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, pupils' attainment was in line with the national average. In the 2002 examination, the number of pupils attaining the higher A*-C grades fell and standards are not as high as in 2001. The quality of pupils' work seen during the inspection was close to expectations. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
102. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' work and progress are guided by good planning and assessment procedures. The targets set for pupils to achieve are starting to help them become more aware of their own standards. For example, pupils in a Year 7 lesson that was supported by good planning and effective teaching learnt how Vincent Van Gogh developed his style of painting. They effectively adapted and developed their own work in the style of the artist. A satisfactory use of literacy and numeracy is made to support the pupils' work, but the use made of sketchbooks is underdeveloped. Many pupils give insufficient attention to their presentation and do

not clearly give justifications and evaluations for their chosen style of working. Few can describe clearly how this has been influenced by the artists they have studied.

103. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory and most pupils make sound progress. There are some examples of good teaching, as seen in a Year 9 lesson where the pupils used a range of materials to design and compose a picture. They successfully explored ideas using chosen information and resources to develop, modify and improve their work. In an optional Year 10 and 11 group, the teacher organised the two years well. The Year 10 pupils were introduced to making coiled clay pots, whilst the Year 11 pupils continued to develop their work based on studies of various artists. At times, teaching was not so effective and opportunities were lost to increase pupils' understanding of the topic. At other times, teacher expectation of what pupils can achieve is too low. For example, in a Year 7 class there was insufficient discussion with pupils about how they produced their styles through the use of mark making, brush strokes and the use of paint in a variety of tones.
104. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, show good attitudes to their work overall. They are attentive, quickly settle down to their tasks and when motivated by good teaching respond well. All pupils have opportunities to make progress. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory through the efforts of the school to increase the numbers of computers, however, in art, they are insufficiently used for image analysis.
105. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because there is insufficient drive by the head of department to identify areas for development and lead the necessary initiatives to improve the department. The department has insufficient systems for internal review and monitoring. The range of learning support materials is unsatisfactory as pupils have a restricted range of artists' work to examine. There is no provision for them to do so independently in the school library. The accommodation in the two available art rooms is unsatisfactory as one has to be used for both painting and design and three-dimensional work in clay. In addition, there is no facility for keeping on-going clay work damp between lessons and this is detrimental to the quality of work. There is too little space in both rooms to store materials.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils' attainment in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The GCSE results in resistant materials subjects.

- The Years 10 and 11 pupils' understanding of their own learning and the standards achieved.
- A shared commitment by staff to improve standards.

Areas for improvement

- The overall standards at GCSE in design and technology.
- Developing the role of the head of department to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning throughout the department.
- The stability and continuity of specialist staff to teach food and textiles technology.
- The lack of technical support for the subject.

106. Teacher assessments and inspection evidence show that for pupils age 14 at the end of Year 9, standards of attainment are above the national average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons and throughout Years 7 to 9. Standards are consistently good in graphics and those in resistant materials are often very good. Attainment in textiles and food is at the expected level. The department's arrangements for assessment ensure pupils and staff assess levels of achievement at the end of each project, against the five areas of design and technology in the National Curriculum. Pupils are helped to identify how they can improve and reach higher standards. However, these targets for improvement are not yet effectively built into the teaching and learning of all subsequent projects.
107. In 2001, the overall proportion of pupils obtaining GCSE grades A*-C was slightly below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils obtaining GCSE A*-G was above the national average. Results at the higher grades were above average in resistant materials, average in graphics and below average in textiles and food technology. This pattern of attainment was repeated in the 2002 GCSE results, with the trend in design technology continuing to be below the national average. Girls are achieving higher grades and closer to the national average than boys. Very few girls take the resistant materials courses (one in Year 11) and the number of boys in food and textile technology in Years 10 and 11 is also very low.
108. On the evidence of the work seen during the inspection, standards of attainment in Years 10 and 11 are at, and in some areas above, the national average expected at this stage in their GCSE courses. Inspection evidence shows that standards are rising in food and textiles technology as a result of a more appropriate curriculum being developed, together with more regular specialist teaching. There have been several periods of long-term staff absence during the last two years, with the resulting lack of continuity and consistency in pupils' learning. This has adversely affected the achievement of some groups. This partly accounts for the decrease in higher grades since the last inspection. The teachers currently in post are committed to raising standards. Continued improvement is reliant on the department maintaining staff stability.
109. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory and in some areas good and very good. Overall, teaching was more effective in Years 7 to 9. Many lessons benefit from a clear structure with teachers using established routines to ensure pupils settle quickly and are prepared to work. Where teaching and learning is best, teachers employ good questioning to check understanding and plan activities that encourage both group and independent learning. For example, in a Year 9 food lesson, groups of pupils were cooking and evaluating similar products. They were able to negotiate and share their tasks, discuss their judgements robustly, but respectfully, and organise and present their findings. Pupils valued having their

opinions taken into account and this led to higher levels of motivation and learning. However, opportunities to assess and extend understanding at the end of lessons are not always used effectively because too often teachers summarised the lesson content rather than using strategies to assess what learning had taken place. In all lessons observed, pupils worked quietly, but at times this was without real enthusiasm or any sense of urgency. This was most apparent when the pace of the lesson was not appropriate or sufficiently challenging. For example, when the teacher introductions are overlong and do not engage the pupils or when pupil tasks involve too much copying from textbooks, allowing little opportunity for pupils to develop their ideas or think and learn for themselves.

110. The specialist expertise of teachers is used well and pupils handle tools, equipment, machines and materials with increasing confidence and skill and with due regard for health and safety. Accurate making skills are well taught, for example, a Year 10 GCSE class made very good gains in understanding and applying skills required to make dovetail joints through the teacher's use of explanation and demonstration followed by individual or small group support. Pupils received individual verbal feedback on their progress and specific advice on how to improve.
111. Resources to support learning are thoughtfully designed and used. Literacy is well supported in design and technology with, for example, specialist wall words, evaluative writing frames and structured design sheets in Years 7 to 9. These are used well by pupils. For example, in Years 10 and 11 there are teacher-prepared GCSE coursework booklets for all design and technology material areas. These provide guidance for organising coursework and identify the criteria for each grade to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve. These are regularly used by pupils during their lessons. Questioning by the inspector revealed pupils value having the guidance and a time frame to help them structure and schedule their workload. Homework is used well to support learning in most lessons.
112. The department is making increasingly good use of information on pupils' progress. Every pupil taking a GCSE knows the grade they are predicted to achieve based on end of Year 9 attainment. Where this has been well explained to pupils, they understand how this grade was established and many are determined to achieve above their predictions. The assessment system in Years 7, 8 and 9 is well established and attainment levels for Years 7 and 8 are now recorded on a department database to chart progress. However, this data is not sufficiently used to plan individual teaching and learning strategies in order to raise attainment.
113. Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good. They are interested to learn in design and technology lessons in all years. Pupils respect the resources and materials provided for their use. Behaviour is rarely less than good and is often very good. Pupils' concentrate well on their work and their teachers' explanations. Relationships are good between pupils and good with their teachers in all the lessons observed. Staff work hard to ensure the inclusion of pupils with physical disabilities. For example, in a Year 7 textile lesson where one pupil has brittle bone disease and cannot get into the textile room, the teacher liaised with the classroom support assistant so she was fully briefed and had all the necessary resources for the pupil to do the work elsewhere. Members of the class then took it in turn to work with this pupil, repeating the teacher's skill demonstrations and sharing in discussions and learning.
114. Overall, the subject offers an effective and varied curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well planned for across the design and technology curriculum and is particularly effective in Years 10 and 11 where pupils are confident

in using computer-aided design packages to communicate their ideas. However, access to ICT rooms for the large number of Year 7, 8 and 9 groups is not always sufficient. ICT resources, particularly in computer-aided manufacturing for use in resistant materials and textiles, are limited and need improving to provide fully in this area.

115. The management of the department is satisfactory and improving. The present post holder is new since the previous inspection and is making good progress in bringing together the two main parts of the department and improving cohesion in departmental developments. Improvements have been made since the last inspection, including good planning for the use of ICT, use of achievement data to allow increased understanding and use of pupils' self knowledge of their attainment, improved department development planning and addressing the health and safety issues previously raised. The development of rigorous and effective department monitoring and self-evaluation strategies are not yet in place to identify and share department strengths and address areas, which need improving. There is still no technical support and staff continue to spend excessive and inappropriate time preparing lesson materials.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Standards are above average and steadily improving.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Teaching of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is good.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work.

Areas for improvement

- Boys' attainment is below that of girls.
- Developing pupils' skills so they can work independently of the teacher and learn how to improve the quality of their own work.
- The use of assessment information to set individual targets for pupils and help them achieve to their full potential.

116. In the 2001 teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, the number of pupils attaining the expected Level 5 and above was higher than the national average. Results in 2002 indicate a continued improvement. Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations were above average at A*-C grade and very high at A*-G with all candidates achieving a pass. There was a slight dip in A*-C results in 2002. In relation to other subjects in the school, results have improved from being one of the poorer performers at the time of the previous inspection to currently, one of the best. Boys achieve lower results than girls, both in the tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE results.
117. In general, pupils' attainment in geography is below expectations when they come to the school. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are above average, both at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. All pupils achieve well overall, but boys' achievement is still lower than that for girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards in relation to their prior attainment and achieve well in Years 7 to 11. Improvements in teaching have led to rising standards since the previous inspection.

118. By the end of Year 9, pupils have acquired a good geographical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 9, for example, study volcanoes and earthquakes and understand such terms as plate tectonics, epicentre, pyroclastic flow and Richter scale. A criticism of the previous report was that pupils had limited opportunities for problem-solving activities and decision-making tasks. There has been an emphasis on these aspects of pupils' work and this has been a contributory factor in the rise in standards that has taken place. Pupils are now developing the skills of analysis, interpretation and exploration and use these well to explore physical and human geography on a world scale.
119. By the end of Year 11, pupils studying for GCSE have extended these skills in preparation for their examinations. The department makes good use of field work in all years to aid the development of independent research. This is clearly seen in the good-quality work that Year 10 pupils produce on coastal erosion and deposition on the North Yorkshire coast. Pupils have good drawing and mapping skills and produce a good range of maps and diagrams to support their GCSE work, often making good use of ICT.
120. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy development. Pupils' work is regularly marked and corrected and attention is drawn to important vocabulary in every lesson. This emphasis on vocabulary development, on grammar and spelling has a positive impact on standards. Pupils routinely draw and use graphs and tables to present information, to interpret data and to work out scales and distances. As a result, the subject makes a good contribution to numeracy in the school. Pupils' use of ICT to edit and refine their work, for research and to create graphs and diagrams is good. This is particularly so where older pupils use ICT to write up the results of their field courses. The subject has identified the contribution it can make to citizenship and this is developing well.
121. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and this is the main factor in the rise in standards since that time. A strong feature of all the teaching is good pupil control. This is achieved with quiet authority and without pupils being demeaned. As a result, classrooms are relaxed and businesslike and no time is lost controlling poor behaviour. Pupils show good attitudes to work and behave well in class. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are good. Teachers plan lessons carefully so that pupils are not just given a range of geographical facts, but are also expected to think for themselves, interpret evidence and work out solutions. The subject is at an early stage for teachers to develop the independent learning skills, such as pupils' proposing their own questions and then setting up methods of finding information to answer them. The two specialist teachers have good subject knowledge and this is clearly demonstrated in the high level of good advice that older pupils receive on how to maximise their marks in examinations and in the depth of work being done. Relevant homework is regularly set. Although pupils' work is regularly marked and corrected, the use of National Curriculum levels for showing pupils what level they are at, or for setting targets for improvement, is inconsistent. Boys' attainment still lags behind that of girls and teachers have not yet developed strategies to overcome this.
122. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In most lessons, pupils are able to reflect on their environment and appreciate the power of nature and the wonders of the world. This is clear, for example, in work done on earthquakes and volcanoes. Good work was seen where pupils wrote accounts imagining they were the victims of a volcanic eruption. A moral dimension is found in lessons and pupils are taught right from wrong. In discussions, pupils are taught to listen to and respect the views of others. There are good opportunities for social development through working together and taking part in discussions about environmental issues. The in-built cultural element about people

from other countries provides good multicultural development. Pupils' social and cultural provision is further enhanced by a good programme of trips and field courses. There are good assessment procedures in place for tracking pupils' attainment and progress. The head of department provides good leadership and management in establishing clear priorities for development and in leading a team of hard working and committed teachers. Taking into account the improvements in teaching and the rise in standards, the subject has made good progress since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths

- Good learning that is promoted by good teaching.
- Resources used effectively to support the understanding of historical events.
- Discussion activities that involve pupils of all abilities in finding out why events occurred.
- Good use of testing, linked to the setting of targets for all pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of the most able pupils through the development of additional learning activities.
- Teaching pupils how to learn by themselves and to improve the quality of their own work.
- Sharing the good teaching through more systematic classroom observation made by the head of department.
- The quality and quantity of resources to support the learning of the lower-attaining pupils.

123. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations. Pupils' achievement is good in relation to their attainment on entry. The overall attainment of girls is similar to that of boys. Girls, however, achieved slightly more of the higher levels in the 2002 teacher assessed tests. Few pupils reach the highest levels because additional learning activities to challenge the most able are not fully developed. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive good support in class. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 11 is average. Pupils achieved GCSE examination results in 2001 that were well above the standards achieved by all schools. Boys' attainment was above that of girls and pupils with special educational needs performed well because all were awarded a pass grade. In 2002, many pupils achieved results that were similar to predictions, but the overall standard in the A*–C grade range was below standards reached in previous years.
124. Pupils make good progress in history and by the end of Year 9 they have a sound knowledge of key events because teachers encourage the accurate recording of information through the use of written work and diagrams. There is good development of pupils' understanding of chronology as teachers' focus pupils' attention on the important events within the time period being studied as well as linking the events to other time periods. Work completed by Year 8 pupils shows good use of timelines to show the sequence of monarchs during the 15th century. Very good use is made of focussed questions, for example, 'why?' to make pupils think of the reasons for historical events and how they can be interpreted in different ways. The available textbooks are used effectively to support pupils' knowledge of events with good use made of additional sources of information. There are, however, insufficient resources to support the learning of all pupils fully in the lower-ability classes, although teachers

do adapt their teaching approaches to meet the needs of these pupils. Pupils' enquiry skills are positively developed through lessons in which several pieces of evidence are considered before they reach a judgement about the most likely interpretation of events. Good use is made of group-work and paired activities, with boys and girls encouraged to work together. In a Year 9 lesson, good planning enabled pupils to either collect information or pose questions from several pieces of historical evidence, which was then used to support a teacher-led discussion about changes during the Industrial Revolution. There is a sound focus on pupils recognising bias in the accounts that they read. The development of this skill, from Year 7, is supporting the good understanding of historical events that many pupils show by the end of Year 9 and supports understanding in later years.

125. The work completed by pupils currently in Year 10 and 11 shows that standards are improving. Pupils in these years show that they are able to use the skills they developed through earlier work to support the analysis and understanding of historical events. This enables them to cope with the demands of the examination course. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils were able to read and discuss the reasons for different accounts of a historical event and then to work out individually the most appropriate interpretation. Pupils in Year 11 successfully analysed information about the use of propaganda during the Second World War with good teaching promoting a feeling for the attitudes that existed at the time. However, in this lesson, as in many others, additional learning activities are not provided to raise the attainment of the most able pupils. Many of the more able pupils show the ability to write at length both fluently and analytically, for example, when writing up a coursework investigation. Good use of mixed ability group-work tasks is effective in supporting the understanding of lower-ability pupils and their full involvement in the full range of activities.
126. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers show in-depth subject knowledge and this is used effectively to describe to the class complex historical events. In a lesson about the start of the Russian Revolution, the teacher's clear explanation of the events, supported by written accounts and video clips, enabled Year 10 pupils to consider three interpretations of an individual event and to speculate about which one may be nearest the truth. In the analysis of pictures about the event, some pupils showed empathy with the situation, but this aspect of the subject is not always sufficiently promoted to support understanding of how and why people respond in a particular manner. Good use of questions by teachers ensures that pupils of different abilities contribute to discussions. This approach ensures that pupils with a special educational need are fully included in all learning activities. It helped one boy provide information within a whole-class discussion about the power of Henry VIII. Although lessons provide pupils with a range of learning activities, the opportunities for pupils to learn independently of the teacher are less well developed. Good opportunities were provided in a Year 11 lesson where pupils used information gathered as part of a homework research task, plus an Internet search, to create an individual presentation. This is a strategy that teachers do not sufficiently employ to enable pupils to learn more independently from Year 7. The tasks set provide good support for all pupils' literacy standards through the way in which teachers encourage the accurate use of key historical terms in discussion and written work. Good use is made of written evidence and pictures to support pupils' understanding, for example, Year 8 pupils use diagrams to work out the different causes of Henry VIII's conflict with the Church.
127. The head of department provides good leadership and management of the subject and has effectively developed a range of tasks that involve and interest pupils of all abilities. The topics studied match statutory requirements. There is good planning in place for the introduction of new approaches to learning, including the increased use of ICT. Visits are used to provide first-hand experience of a different time period, for

example, a Year 7 visit to York. The department is providing pupils with good information about their progress as a result of regular tests and the setting of individual targets. This is supporting the rise in standards that has occurred by the end of Year 9. Insufficient time is provided for the head of department to monitor teaching and then sharing the existing good practice. The issues raised at the time of the last inspection in relation to standards achieved by the end of Year 9 and the progress made by pupils with learning needs have been addressed and history has become a subject that many pupils enjoy.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is excellent.

Strengths

- Standards overall, particularly in GCSE examinations, are consistently well above average.
- The quality of leadership and management are excellent and very good progress has been made since the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning are generally very good; pupils achieve well and attain far better standards than would be expected given their attainment on entry to the school.

Areas for development

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers to control events, particularly within design technology.
- Some subjects do not get enough access to the computer rooms because of the demand made by the planned use of ICT throughout the school.
- The time available for formal monitoring, by the head of department, of the quality of provision for ICT within other subjects.

128. Standards by the end of Year 9 are well above national expectations. There are no significant variations in the standards attained by boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic groups. In the GCSE examination in 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher A*-C grades was well above average with a significantly higher proportion of pupils gaining A*-B grades than the national average. These very high standards were maintained in 2002. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, do better in ICT than any other subject in school.
129. Achievement is very good when compared to the average levels pupils achieve when they join the school in Year 7. Pupils study ICT through all their subjects in Years 7 to 9. Through the well-designed schemes of work and excellent guidance from the ICT co-ordinator, all subjects carefully build the use of ICT into their work, so pupils get lots of opportunities to use computers. By the end of Year 9, all pupils, including those with special needs, achieve competence in the basic ICT skills of desktop publishing, use of the Internet, simple spreadsheets and databases and use a range of electronic resources such as scanners and digital cameras. ICT is particularly well used in mathematics where pupils have the opportunity to use dedicated computer equipment without having to change rooms. However, there is only limited opportunity for pupils to use computers to control design and manufacturing within the design and technology course. Overall, the contribution of other subjects to pupils' ICT skills is very good.
130. Standards by the end of Year 11 are significantly above average; this represents a very good level of achievement given pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, pupils can either opt for the full discrete GCSE course or a cross-curricular

GCSE short course. Both of these courses are popular and very successful. All pupils studying ICT are eager to learn and enjoy the practical opportunities. Pupils are very good independent learners and can also work collaboratively in pairs. Pupils have good access to the Internet, which helps to develop their research skills. Year 11 pupils show good evidence of research skills and the ability to select and combine information from various sources. Coursework folders contain good evidence of a range of ICT skills to a very high standard. These include the use of databases, desktop publishing and spreadsheets to process and present data. Pupils' keyboard skills are generally very good. Higher-attaining pupils work independently and complete tasks faster than others, though the small numbers of pupils whose skills are well above those of the rest of the class do not always receive sufficiently challenging work to move them forward during lessons. They use more advanced program functions or include more complex procedures in their projects. Lower-attaining pupils occasionally spend too much time ensuring their work looks colourful and appealing by incorporating word art and background colours and designs rather than focusing fully on the actual task.

131. Pupils learn very well because the teaching is generally very good. In Years 7 to 9, ICT is taught by non-specialist teachers within their subjects. In one Year 9 geography lesson exploring the devastation caused by a volcano, the teacher used worksheets well to guide pupils through the work, helping them to focus on mastering the various functions of the software as well as achieving the main sections of the task. Pupils learn well, but do not make as much progress as they do when taught by the specialist teachers in Years 10 and 11. Planning for ICT is excellent and ensures that all pupils make very good progress. Pupils are taught to be good independent learners through the excellent schemes of work and the very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher's explanations were clearly given using interactive equipment to demonstrate procedures and to take pupils through them step-by-step. However, in some lessons, lengthy introductions with too much information resulted in pupils becoming passive and the pace of learning dropping. While pupils work at their own pace through the tasks, teachers carefully intervene to support or challenge well. In the better lessons, instructions are kept brief and lessons end with a good recap of what has been learnt. Pupils gain good practice in reading from a range of sources, such as the Internet, textbooks and prepared worksheets. Links with numeracy are very strong with much use of spreadsheets and creating formulae.
132. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Far more pupils gained A* and A grades in the GCSE examinations than ever before. The school has prioritised funding to significantly improve the computer network system. Since the last inspection, access to computers has doubled. The school is committed to training staff in ICT skills and nearly all staff have received some training. There are more up-to-date computers in the school than found nationally. This has had an excellent impact on pupils learning and the delivery of ICT throughout the school. The improved resources and high-quality planning has enabled the use of ICT in other subjects across the curriculum to develop very well. There is now a very effective school assessment scheme to record achievement in ICT. However, the increased emphasis on ICT courses has made it difficult for some departments to gain access to the facilities, particularly to use computer-controlled equipment.
133. The leadership and management of ICT are excellent. The clear vision of the ICT co-ordinator ensures that ICT has an outstanding positive impact throughout the school. The documentation and schemes of work ensure that excellent results are achieved and that ICT is a key feature throughout all the subjects of the National Curriculum. There is a whole-school approach to Internet safety and clear guidance within the

departmental ICT policies to ensure this. Good support from the newly-appointed technician has allowed the co-ordinator more time to develop the subject. However, despite each subject having an ICT link person and regular steering group meetings, the co-ordinator does not have enough time to formally monitor the quality of ICT learning throughout the school and ensure that subjects are complying with statutory requirements.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is satisfactory.

Strengths

- There is a shared commitment to raising standards.
- Strategic planning and lesson preparation are both good.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- Target setting provides clear guidance for pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- The department is well led and managed with a strong sense of direction.

Areas for improvement

- The standards in GCSE results are too low.
- More consistency in the use of spoken French and German by teachers in the classroom.
- More formal tracking of pupils' progress, especially for boys and pupils with special educational needs.
- Use made of ICT, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Ensuring pupils can work independently of the teacher.

134. The standard of pupils' work by the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations in both French and German. These standards have been in decline over recent years, but have shown a slight improvement in 2002, since the appointment of new staff. Girls perform better than boys in both languages. Pupils with special educational needs mostly achieve well. However, by the end of Years 11 only one third of pupils gained an A*-C level GCSE pass in French in 2002 and only one-sixth did the same in German. This means that standards were below national expectations in French and well below in German. The overall trend is the same as for the end of Year 9, with a general decline over years, but a slight improvement very recently. Almost all pupils, who enter the GCSE, obtain a grade from A*-G, only one candidate failed in French and there were no failures in German, but the numbers taking the course have been small. The languages department has set sufficiently demanding, yet accessible, targets for future progress.

135. Standards of work in all years seen in the department during the inspection were in line with national expectation. This is because, although previous results were below or well below national expectations, improvement has since taken place. In addition to the improvement since the last inspection outlined below, the appointment of a new head of department and second in department in charge of German has already made a positive difference to the department's performance overall. The introduction of a pilot scheme in Years 7 to 9 for modern languages is well supported by the Local Education Authority. This is resulting in more effective planning and delivery of material, refreshed impetus to raise standards and greater pupil enthusiasm. Standards are, therefore, now in line in Years 7 to 9 and slightly above expectation in Years 10 and 11.

136. Teaching and learning overall are good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the course of the inspection. Almost half the lessons seen were good and about one third were very good. Pupils learn particularly well when teachers set specific targets for the lesson and ensure that classes understand assessment levels and expectations. These targets are well set and used in Years 10 and 11 where the majority of pupils know what is required to attain their target grade at GCSE. The department has outlined plans to continue this good practice into Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for on a practical level, although there is a need for a more formal plan to ensure that these pupils' work is monitored. This need for a more formal, thorough scheme of tracking pupil performance also applies in recording information on how well boys perform in modern languages. The high quality of relationships in classes results in both pupils and teachers striving together for improvement. For example, in a Year 11 German lesson, the teacher's examples meant that pupils progressed from producing simple phrases to an extended passage describing their home town. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good in both French and German. In a Year 7 French lesson, a combination of repetition, chanting, mime, lip-reading, songs, games and word play all ensured that pupils learned days of the week, months of the year and dates in a most enjoyable session.
137. Good classroom management is widespread across the department, as is sharing clear objectives with learners and providing a succinct recap so that pupils are aware of their own progress. In the best lessons, teachers made extensive and consistent use of French or German as the functional language of the classroom and encouraged and challenged learners to do the same. Less favourable experiences were observed when the use of the foreign language was inconsistent or when English was overused. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and often combine this with pace and challenge to provide stimulating learning. Where the pace was pedestrian, learners were not motivated to participate and did not fully develop their language. The situations, which provided a 'chance to learn', were typified by a high level of expectation and a wide variety of activities, which challenged and matched pupils' abilities. However, when teachers provided an unnecessarily high level of support, pupils were not able to extend their own language development sufficiently. At times in Years 10 and 11, the pace of lessons dropped as lessons were too long for pupils to sustain concentration. A similar lack of challenge occurs because there is not enough opportunity for pupils to be independent learners. However, the team is aware of this and already has plans to use additional funding to purchase CD ROMs for independent practice. There are also plans to implement an extended reading scheme.
138. The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a strong sense of team spirit, shared commitment and willingness to pool resources and share materials and good practice. A newly established resources bank is being developed. The head of department's reorganisation of stock has made access to materials easier and has begun to address the imbalance in areas of shortage.
139. Since the last inspection, pupils have benefited from a revised timetable under which they can now dedicate all their language time to a single language in Years 7 to 9. This is already resulting in more opportunity to consolidate knowledge and skills. The quality of accommodation has also improved since the recent refurbishment. The quality of display is very good, being a combination of pupils' work, key phrases and commercially produced materials – all of which enhance learning and are effectively used by staff in lessons. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, as has the deployment of staff, resulting in a much more focussed atmosphere within the department. Classes now have specific time set aside in which

to benefit practically from modern technology in Years 7 to 9 and a departmental priority will be to extend this good practice into Years 10 and 11. A recently revised scheme of work and syllabuses are also developing a sense of shared purpose. The subject now makes a good contribution to pupils' development of literacy skills and, to a lesser extent, their numeracy skills.

140. Teachers offer a range of additional learning support activities such as revision sessions. There is an established exchange visit to Montelimar in France and another to Lunneberg in Germany that is well supported by parents and the local community.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Consistently high standards in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils achieve very well as a result of very good, enthusiastic teaching.
- The very good leadership of the subject has led to substantial progress since the last inspection.
- The subject is very popular so there are high numbers of pupils receiving instrumental lessons and partaking in the wide range of high quality extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' personal development.

Areas for development

- The use of ICT is not sufficiently incorporated into lessons.
- Standards of singing are not as good as other aspects because pupils do not get enough opportunities to sing in lessons.
- Provision to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the department.

141. By the end of Year 9, standards are well above national expectations. This represents very good achievement given pupils' musical attainment on entry to the school. During Years 7 to 9, pupils make very good progress, rapidly improving their knowledge, skills and understanding of all aspects of music through a well-planned series of topics and enthusiastic teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are presented with relevant and challenging work and achieve good standards in relation to their previous levels of attainment. The music department also has a very good record of GCSE examination results, which have been well above the national average for the last three years. Boys and girls do equally well. These high standards were maintained in 2002.
142. The more musically talented pupils in all years have a well-developed vocabulary of technical musical language, which they use well to describe the music they play and hear. They achieve high levels of performance and can read and write rhythmical notation very well. Lower-attaining pupils have limited performance skills and do not always accurately maintain their own part when performing with others. Pupils enjoy singing, as was seen in one Year 8 lesson, but the quality of their singing is generally weak with many struggling to maintain accurate pitch of the melody.
143. Standards by the end of Year 11 are well above average; this represents a good level of achievement given pupils' level of attainment at the end of Year 9. Pupils' results in music are better than almost all other subjects within the school. The majority of pupils in Year 10 and 11 are reaching high standards in performing. In one Year 10 lesson, a girl violinist gave a very musical performance of an Allegro by Handel. The other pupils listened carefully and felt comfortable to appraise the performance and

suggest possible improvements. Pupils use the Internet to research their projects and demonstrate good ICT skills in their presentations. Composition work is generally very good and pupils can compose confidently in a variety of styles, many using computer software to notate their pieces. Pupils are supportive of each other and work productively at a very good pace in lessons.

144. Pupils learn very well because the teaching is very good and on occasions excellent. Music teaching is enthusiastic and characterised by excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject, high expectations and very good relationships with pupils. Time and change of activity are managed crisply to maintain good pace that ensures all groups of pupils are challenged and make good progress. Pupils are encouraged to utilize their instrumental skills within the classroom, resulting in high levels of performance. The management of pupils is very good; they participate well in lessons and take pride in their work. The high pace of learning and the variety of tasks ensure that there is a good match between hard work and enjoyment. Contributions to literacy skills are good with reference to key words and good use of musical vocabulary. Pupils are encouraged to research information and a variety of writing styles are used. Numeracy is less developed, but links are regularly made during lessons. Classroom performances are recorded to ensure there is evidence of progress in practical work. Pupils enjoy music lessons because of the enthusiastic teaching. They are keen to learn and strive to do well in lessons and extra-curricular activities.
145. The leadership and management of music are very good. The head of department has a clear vision for the future of the subject and is committed to raising standards and encouraging pupils to take part in music making. The schemes of work are very effective, but need to incorporate more use of music technology to allow pupils to create, manipulate and refine sounds within lessons. The quality and effectiveness of assessment is generally good, but needs clarifying to ensure pupils are fully aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. There is no formal structure for the head of department to monitor teaching, including that of the instrumental tutors, or of sharing good practice.
146. Approximately 180 pupils take part in the wide menu of extra-curricular musical activities. Over 100 pupils receive good-quality instrumental and vocal tuition from the local education authority music service teachers. Performances are very popular and see several past-pupils and teachers returning to take part. The headteacher and several other staff produce the highly valued school musical concerts each year. The department has excellent musical links with the partner primary schools. This results in the music department having a positive impact on the ethos of the school and the local community.
147. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have significantly improved. Teaching is now very good with lessons catering well for the needs of the lower-attaining pupils. Homework is now regularly set. Numbers of pupils opting for the subject in Years 10 and 11 have increased.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The overall quality of teaching is good and results in effective learning for all groups of pupils.

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good – this helps to promote a positive learning atmosphere in which all can make progress.
- Very good extra-curricular provision extends learning opportunities for many pupils.

Areas for development

- The declining percentage of pupils achieving GCSE A*-C grades and the low proportion of girls achieving the expected standard by the end of Year 9.
- Insufficient planned and structured opportunities in practical lessons for pupils to be involved in evaluation by observing and supporting one another.
- Little formal opportunity for the head of department to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- Not all schemes of work meet the requirements of the National Curriculum to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

148. In lessons seen, standards are average by the end of Year 9 for all groups of pupils. In hockey, for example, pupils have secure individual skills and techniques and are developing well their understanding of tactical awareness in small-side games. This represents good achievement since the start of Year 7 where attainment on entry is below that expected for their age. In the course that all pupils take in Years 10 and 11, standards at the end of Year 11 are typical for their age. In both association football and netball, for example, pupils' tactical awareness and teamwork skills are good. Achievement for all groups of pupils by the end of Year 11 is satisfactory.
149. Across all years, pupils have a secure grasp of the principles and procedures of preparing for physical activity and often lead this themselves. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support that enables them to integrate well and to make good progress. Physically talented pupils achieve very well in lessons and are provided with further opportunities through taking part in school teams.
150. GCSE physical education is an optional subject taken by some pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grade passes has declined since the last inspection and in 2001 was broadly in line with the national average with pupils achieving as expected. In 2002, results declined further with fewer girls than boys taking the course. A scrutiny of pupils' theory folders as well as observations of their practical lessons shows Year 11 pupils are learning well and making sound progress. In their theory lessons, for example, they are developing a secure knowledge and understanding of the principles of training and have used ICT to produce and present their work. In their practical lessons, pupils are successfully improving their tactical skills in basketball. They are, though, not gaining sufficient experience in evaluating their own and others performance.
151. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection - it is now good and results in effective learning. As a result, progress in lessons is good for all groups of pupils. Lesson planning provides for a variety of structured and progressive activities and helps ensure pupils remain motivated. Most lessons start promptly and efficiently; this results in pupils being quickly involved. Pupils respond well to this, which helps to promote a positive learning atmosphere in lessons. For example, they work well as pairs and small groups and show clear respect for the capabilities of one another. In a Year 7 gymnastics' lessons, for example, pupils worked well together in this respect. In a Year 10 GCSE theory lesson, pupils worked very well together as pairs when questioning other pairs about their knowledge and understanding of the different types of joint movement. Pupils responded well to the high expectations of the teachers in a Year 7 association football lesson, which resulted in good-quality learning and improvement of their communication skills in small-sided games. Required skills are

clearly demonstrated and broken down into steps by teachers; pupils are, therefore, aware of what they have to do to make progress. Pupils are then made aware of their capabilities because teachers circulate well and offer constructive praise and criticism. Effective questioning enables teachers to assess what pupils know and understand and also enhances pupils' speaking and listening skills.

152. However, there are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in evaluation by observing and supporting one another; thus, they are not always deepening their knowledge and understanding of the activities as they should. Often, teachers tend to give a short evaluation at the end of lessons rather than to also ask pupils for their responses as to what they feel they have achieved; thus, pupils are not fully actively involved in assessing the quality of their learning. Lower-attaining GCSE pupils are being given insufficient structured guidance in how to organise and complete their work; thus, they are not achieving their full potential.
153. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has been extended in Years 10 and 11 with GCSE physical education. Not all recently introduced schemes of work for the common course fully reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum in relation to the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. A very good range of extra-curricular provision continues to extend opportunities for pupils. These include matches against other schools as well as recreational activities. As a result of the enthusiasm of teachers, a number of boys and girls are individual district athletics champions, others have achieved county representative honours in rugby union and hockey and one boy is a regional hockey player. The recent appointment of a sports co-ordinator bodes well for developing links with feeder primary schools and improving standards of attainment on entry in Year 7. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory and developing well. Since her recent appointment, the new head of department has produced an improvement plan that has a clear focus on raising the standards and achievement of all groups of pupils. However, the structure of the school timetable allows for little formal opportunity for the head of department to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching that successfully involves pupils of all abilities in the learning activities.
- Well-planned schemes of work for pupils to learn about different religions.
- The involvement of all pupils in the discussion of both religious and moral issues.
- The sensitive use of religious artefacts to aid pupils' understanding of different faiths.

Areas for improvement

- Widen the range of teaching approaches to enable pupils to learn independently.
- The use of in-depth comments on pupils' work linked to a clearly defined subject assessment policy.
- Involvement of representatives from different faiths in the learning process, supported by visits to places of religious significance.
- The monitoring of non-specialist teaching in order to develop and share good practice.

154. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is in line with the expected standards for the North Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus. Standards have improved since the last inspection, but few pupils reach the highest standards because additional learning activities to support the most able pupils are not in place. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The small number of pupils that studied the full 2002 GCSE course achieved standards that are in line with predictions and all were awarded a pass grade. At the end of Year 11, the pupils, who studied religious education as a component of the personal and social education course, did not reach the standards expected for religious education because insufficient time is available for them to study all aspects in sufficient detail. The progress of pupils with learning needs is good as a result of the support they receive in lessons.
155. Pupils acquire a good understanding and respect for the beliefs of Christianity and other major world religions. By the end of Year 9, all pupils are able to describe and understand the significance of the customs and practices of individual religions because well-planned lessons enable them to understand the importance of ceremonies, festivals and the use of religious artefacts within the individual religions. Pupils develop good knowledge of the life and times of Jesus through reading different accounts within the Bible. The good quality teacher-led discussion, which is a feature of many lessons, supports pupils' understanding of the importance and religious significance of the readings. Through good use of video clips and a well-organised discussion, pupils in a Year 7 class developed a clear insight into the attitudes and feelings a young Jewish boy might have on reaching the most important religious milestone of his life. The very good use made of religious artefacts is a strength of the subject as it enables pupils to experience first-hand aspects of religious ceremony as well as developing respect for the customs and practices of individual faiths. For example, one boy, through wearing items important within the Jewish faith, was able to express what it feels like to the whole class. Good links are made between religious and moral attitudes, with pupils guided by effective teaching to think about these issues from both their own point of view and the viewpoint of others. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher read from the Bible to highlight Christian attitudes towards marriage, with pupils using this as the basis for developing their own set of marriage vows that will later be used within a role-play activity centred around the marriage ceremony.
156. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards the subject because teachers involve all pupils in a wide range of whole-class and group learning activities. This supports the standards that many pupils achieve by the end of Year 9 and in the good quality of the work seen in pupils' books and in the classroom displays of their work. Pupils respond positively to the many opportunities to work in groups and pairs. For example, groups of Year 8 pupils used the information they collected about the life and times of Jesus to create a newspaper report and used it as part of a presentation to the whole class. This represents a significant improvement in the situation that existed at the time of the last inspection. Higher-attaining pupils do not have sufficient challenging opportunities to work independently. Limited use is made of local religious leaders within lesson activities with the result that few pupils have encountered people from most of the faiths they have studied or through visits to different places of worship. The positive way that teachers include pupils with special educational needs in discussions with the introduction of some modified learning resources ensures that they make good progress over time. This needs to be further developed through the acquisition of textbooks matched to the needs of these pupils.
157. The provision for religious education has significantly improved with all Year 10 pupils now studying the GCSE short course and it is now in line with requirements. The

course is building upon the knowledge and understanding pupils acquire through earlier work and develops their understanding of moral and religious concepts more fully, for example, about morality from a Christian point of view. In one Year 10 lesson, both boys and girls reacted sensibly when asked to comment on a series of situations related to moral values as a part of a teacher-led whole class discussion. The course also gives pupils the opportunity to study in depth one of the major religions that form a part of earlier work. The positive attitude older pupils now show towards the subject is linked to interesting learning activities and good preparation in earlier years. The topics that Year 11 pupils study are appropriate as they form a part of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. They link with other elements of the personal and social education course and provide pupils with opportunities to consider issues that relate to their own lives. However, the time allocation is not sufficient for in-depth study or the full coverage of all aspects of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

158. The overall quality of teaching is good. The good subject knowledge demonstrated by teachers has resulted in well-planned lessons that involve pupils in a good variety of learning activities. Well-organised whole class lesson activities are ensuring that pupils understand the meaning and importance of the information gathered from books and occasionally the Internet. Some planning is in place for the use of ICT, but it is not yet used effectively to enable pupils to collect and record information. Teachers make appropriate use of the available books to ensure that pupils gather information from more than one source. Good use is made of extracts from the Bible, with pupils being encouraged to read aloud to the whole class and this is supporting pupils' literacy development. However, the range of books, including Bibles, is not sufficient to support the development of the independent learning activities that are needed to enable all pupils to achieve higher standards and for the most able pupils to complete additional tasks. In the best lessons, there is positive sharing of experiences linked to the lesson theme and this is supporting the positive attitudes pupils show and the sensitive manner in which they respond to comments and information provided in the discussion. In the less successful lessons, there is an over-dependence on lengthy teacher description, with pupils listening, but not involved in recording the information for later use.
159. The head of department provides good leadership and management of the subject and has provided a high level of support for non-specialist teachers, which has ensured that they are able to teach lessons where the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. No time is provided for the monitoring of non-specialist teaching or to develop and share good practice. Assessment methods do not inform pupils how they are achieving in the subject in relation to other subjects and, although marking is regular, the comments do not always indicate to pupils what has been done well or how to improve. The religious education club provides a good opportunity for younger pupils to create religious artefacts related to some of the lesson activities. The major issues requiring action following the last inspection have been addressed, resulting in the improved standards and the positive attitude pupils have towards the subject.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND OTHER CURRICULUM OPPORTUNITIES

160. As well as the GCSE courses being provided, some pupils in Years 10 and 11 choose to follow a life skills course. It has a comprehensive scheme covering a good range of topics that will help prepare pupils well for further training and the world of work.
161. GCSE business studies is a popular course with two classes of pupils following the subject in each of Years 10 and 11. In the 2001 examination, standards in business studies were below the national average as indicated by the points score achieved

and the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades. The proportion of A*-G grades achieved was above the national average. The results in 2002 significantly declined and are likely to be well below the national average. In addition, five pupils did not finish the course and failed to gain a pass grade. Several of the pupils, who took the course last year, failed to achieve their predicted grade and there was a high level of underachievement within the group.

162. The quality of work seen during the inspection indicates that current standards have improved as they are just above average in Year 10 and slightly below in Year 11. This is due in part to a greater proportion of more able pupils taking the subject, a change of examination course and improved planning and resources for the subject. There are good indications from the quality of present work to suggest that results should improve in 2003. There is still a wide range of pupil ability in each group and the teaching does not always provide a sufficient range of work to challenge all pupils or use suitable learning activities to meet their needs. For example, copying from the board was used inappropriately to record key concepts. Pupils generally have a sound understanding of the main business terms and concepts, though only the higher attainers express these well, both orally and in written work. Some pupils have satisfactory note-making skills, but this is not sufficiently taught or emphasised. Too little of the work is enhanced by good use of information and communication technology (ICT). Their good attitude to the subject is promoted by a positive relationship with the teacher, who encourages them with enthusiasm and good knowledge of the subject. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, with clear tasks being set and close monitoring of pupils' work. However, more varied strategies for improving pupils' recording skills have not been fully developed. For example, the type of exercise book used by the pupils restricts their recording of work. At times, the pace of lesson is too slow when tasks of a similar nature are used within the same lesson. The department is efficiently organised and has a clear development plan to identify priorities for improvement. There are currently insufficient links with local business to enhance the curriculum.