

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **KIBWORTH HIGH SCHOOL**

Kibworth Beauchamp

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120273

Headteacher: Mrs Aileen Pyle

Reporting inspector: Mr Robin Coulthard  
11746

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 249212

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 14
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Smeeton Road Kibworth Beauchamp Leicester
Postcode:	LE8 0LG
Telephone number:	0116 2792238
Fax number:	0116 2796400
E-mail address	KibworthHigh@Comcentre.Fsnet.co.uk
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mark Peberdy
Date of previous inspection:	19.05.1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11746	Robin Coulthard	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion	The school's results and pupils' achievements  What should the school do to improve further?
9053	Vivienne Phillips	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  How well does the school work with parents?
3674	Grace Marriott	Team inspector	History	
15208	Anthony Briggs	Team inspector	Music	How well is the school led and managed?
15075	Bryan Stephens	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	How well are pupils taught?
32331	Peter Barnes	Team inspector	English	
29742	Patricia Fyans	Team inspector	Science	
2501	Raye Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art	
2495	Bryan Munden	Team inspector	Design and technology ICT	
25073	Stuart Jordan	Team inspector	Geography Religious education	
27226	Richard Cribb	Team inspector	Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
30800	Betty Colley	Team inspector	Citizenship Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18072	Joan Stephens	Team inspector		

32352	Valerie Malcolm	Team inspector	Mathematics	
-------	-----------------	----------------	-------------	--

The inspection contractor was:

**e-Qualitas Ltd**  
 Langshaw  
 Pastens Road  
 Limpsfield Chart  
 Oxted  
 Surrey  
 RH8 0RE.

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
 Inspection Quality Division  
 The Office for Standards in Education  
 Alexandra House  
 33 Kingsway  
 London  
 WC2B 6SE.

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
 <b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	 <b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
 <b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	 <b>13</b>
 <b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	 <b>15</b>
 <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	 <b>17</b>
 <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	 <b>18</b>
 <b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	 <b>19</b>
 <b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	 <b>22</b>
  <b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	  <b>24</b>
   <b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN SUBJECTS</b>	   <b>28</b>

## **SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Kibworth High School caters for pupils aged 11 to 14 with 683 pupils on roll and similar numbers of girls and boys. It is situated south of Leicester and mainly serves three commuter villages. The school is oversubscribed; and attracts pupils from a wide area. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. Almost all pupils are of white UK origin and no pupils with English as an additional language are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is slightly above average and the number with statements of special educational need is half of the national rate. The main needs relate to dyslexia, emotional and behavioural problems and speech and communication. There have been recent staffing difficulties in English, design and technology, music and religious education. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry is well above average.

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

Overall, the school educates its pupils very well. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well above the national average overall. Teaching is very good, and the school makes very good extra-curricular provision. Day-to-day organisation and management are good, but there are weaknesses in the leadership and planning for long-term development. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Results are high in mathematics and science in Year 9 and all pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching is at least good in all subjects, and overall provision in mathematics, science, art, geography and music is very good.
- Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- Pupils behave very well, have very good attitudes to their work and maintain high attendance.
- Assistant heads, year heads, heads of department and other staff with posts of responsibility carry out their duties well.
- Pupils are very well cared for and their personal development is very well supported.

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

- Some teaching does not encourage pupils to develop independent minds and working habits.
- The school is not providing properly for the new subject of citizenship or for pupils' spiritual development.
- Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are too generous in design and technology, geography, information and communication technology, music, physical education.
- The headteacher and governors contribute too little to the school's development.

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

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

The school was last inspected in May 1997. The issues noted at that time have been effectively dealt with. Movement of pupils around the school is now efficient and little teaching time is lost. Standards and pupils' achievement in art are now strengths of the school. Pupils now have significantly more opportunities across the curriculum for being imaginative and working creatively. Setting arrangements mean that pupils, including the higher-attaining are generally challenged appropriately. However, some teaching is excessively teacher-directed and does not enable pupils to develop enough independence in their work or to develop their critical thinking by challenging the ideas they encounter. In 2000, the



school gained an Excellence Award for results at the end of Year 9, and has been awarded Investors in People status and a Sportsmark award.

## STANDARDS

*The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 based on average point scores in national tests.*

Performance in:	compared with				Key	
	all schools			similar schools		
	2000	2001	2002	2002	well above average	A
English	A	B	A	C	above average	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	average	C
Science	A	A	A	B	below average	D
All core subjects	A	A	A	B	well below average	E

Pupils' results in the 2002 national tests were well above average for pupils gaining both Level 5 and the higher levels. Girls have achieved better results than boys in English and Science and very similar results in mathematics. Pupils have achieved very well when their standards in Year 9 are compared with what they could do when they joined the school in Year 7. Results were very high when compared with schools whose pupils achieved similar results in Year 6, and better overall than schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The results have improved at a similar rate to the national results. The school came close to achieving its target for the percentage of passes at Level 5 and above. In science, it slightly exceeded its target.

Standards are well above expectation, overall. Current work is above expectation in English, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages and physical education. Work is well above expectation in mathematics, science, art, geography, history, music and religious education. No judgement could be made about standards in citizenship. Pupils who are gifted and talented achieve well, but some could attain more highly. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Standards across the curriculum are good in literacy and satisfactory in numeracy. Overall provision for ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils are very willing to work hard and they respond very positively to the best teaching. They take part wholeheartedly in the very good range of extra-curricular activities offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils understand the consequences of their actions on others and are generally very thoughtful. Relationships amongst pupils are very good, and pupils relate very constructively to their teachers.
Attendance	<b>Well above average.</b> Pupils are punctual to school, and lessons generally start on time.

The new system for managing the behaviour of some pupils through the use of an exclusion room has been very effective. Short term exclusions have reduced over the past two years and no pupil has been permanently excluded.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9
	Very good

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

Teaching is very good overall and much improved since the last inspection. More than eight in ten lessons were at least good. Almost four in ten were very good or excellent. Teaching was very good in mathematics and science and good in English. Teaching was very good in art, geography, ICT and music, and good in other subjects. The national strategy for teaching in Years 7 to 9 has been effectively introduced and has improved teachers' planning and the effectiveness of pupils' learning. Most lessons have effective starter activities to focus pupils' attention and establish a good pace of learning.

Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully. Teachers also have very high expectations of pupils and working relationships are very good. Pupils learn very well. They are well motivated and active in their learning, and they work at a brisk pace, collaborating purposefully in groups and pairs. Pupils are placed in sets by ability for most subjects and this enables work to be set which matches the abilities of each group. However, teachers did not always extend the ablest pupils and planning did not always reflect the range of ability within a group. Sometimes teachers' carefully targeted questioning gave pupils excellent opportunities to develop their speaking skills but at other times teachers spoke for too long and spoon-fed pupils with information. Overall, pupils have too few chances to challenge the ideas they encounter. Literacy is well taught and numeracy is developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. The use of computers is satisfactory and improving. Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to pupils' progress. Marking is inconsistent and does not relate pupils' attainment closely enough to National Curriculum levels.

The quality of teaching and learning of students with special educational needs is very good overall. They achieve well in mathematics and science, but, in English, work is not always sufficiently adapted to meet the differing needs of pupils within a set.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Good.</b> The school provides a varied and appropriate curriculum in all subjects, except for citizenship, for which provision is not yet adequate.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils are well supported and achieve well. Procedures for reviewing their progress and needs are excellent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory because pupils are not given carefully planned regular opportunities to reflect on a rich range of meaningful experiences. Assemblies do not do enough to foster spiritual awareness. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Very well.</b> Form tutors and year heads know pupils very well and provide very good support for their welfare and development. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good. Teachers maintain good records of pupils' achievement to identify under-achieving pupils, but the

	accuracy of assessment varies between departments.
--	--

Parents appreciate the quality of education their children receive and support the school well. Senior managers provide good opportunities for parents to consult them through regular ‘surgeries’ The school provides parents with satisfactory levels of information, but parents do not have opportunities to attend assemblies when merit awards are given out. The school works very closely with the parents of pupils with special educational needs.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Good.</b> The day-to-day management of the school by the senior management team is effective despite unduly heavy workloads. Leadership and management of subjects are good. The leadership of the headteacher is unsatisfactory because virtually all management responsibility has been delegated to senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> The governing body does not have a clear understanding of the management of the school and does not monitor the work of the headteacher enough. They are effective in ensuring the school meets statutory requirements except the provision of citizenship and a daily act of collective worship.
The school’s evaluation of its performance	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> The senior managers monitor teaching and learning effectively but inconsistencies at the highest level have resulted in unsatisfactory performance management. Some teachers have not been monitored for over three years.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Very good.</b> The school has managed its resources very carefully to improve facilities, increase computer resources and extend the curriculum. The governors and business manager apply the principles of best value very well to providing the best possible level of staffing and facilities.

Following a period when it was difficult to recruit suitable staff in some subjects, staffing levels are appropriate, except in music, which is understaffed. The small amount of non-specialist teaching elsewhere is not having an adverse effect on pupils’ achievement. The school is a pleasant, stimulating and very well maintained learning environment, with good specialist accommodation. Despite some shortages in science, resources are satisfactory overall and good in most subjects. The provision for using computers cross the curriculum is satisfactory.

## PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Teachers expect pupils to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about asking questions.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents do not feel as well informed as they might be.</li> <li>• The school does not work as closely with them as it could.</li> <li>• Homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. The school could do more to keep parents informed and work closely with them. There is some inconsistency in the way homework is set and homework diaries checked.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Pupils' attainment is well above average on entry to the school. At the end of Year 9, in comparison with all schools nationally, the school's results are well above average in each of English, mathematics and science, and well above average for all of the core subjects together. Over the past five years, the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects have risen at the same rate as the national trend. English results dropped between 1999 and 2001, due to staffing difficulties, but standards are now rising again. Boys' and girls' attainment in the school exceeds the standards attained nationally by a similar amount. The difference in girls' and boys' attainment is similar to that found nationally. In comparison with schools whose pupils achieved similar results at the end of Year 6, the school's results at Level 5 and above in 2002 were above average in English, well above average in science, and in the top five per cent nationally in mathematics. The percentage gaining Level 7 or above in mathematics and science is high, 36 per cent compared with 20 per cent nationally in mathematics, and 19 per cent compared with 11 per cent in science.

2. Work seen in English during the inspection was above average and pupils were achieving well in relation to their starting points in the school. Standards seen were well above average in mathematics and science, and pupils were achieving very well. Teacher assessments were generally accurate for the percentage of pupils gaining Level 5 or above in the core subjects. Teachers underestimated the percentage who would gain Level 6 or above, particularly in science, where 54 per cent gained that level, when teacher assessments predicted that 38 per cent would do so.

3. Standards are well above national expectation in art, geography, history and music, and well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. In design and technology, ICT, French and physical education, standards are above the national expectation. In relation to their attainment when they join the school, pupils achieve very well in art and well in other subjects, except German, where a limited allocation of time adversely affects their achievement. No judgement was possible of the standards pupils are reaching in citizenship. Teacher assessments were an overestimate in most of the non-core subjects. Pupils who are gifted and talented achieve well, but some could attain more highly.

4. Literacy is well developed across the curriculum, with good attention to the use of technical language, and appropriate opportunities for extended writing and debate. Provision for numeracy is satisfactory.

5. Pupils with special educational needs do very well overall when compared with their previous attainment. Their needs are assessed when they enter the school, and their progress is regularly checked subsequently. They make very good progress because of the intensive early individual support, assistance and care they receive. A significant number do not need special support by Year 9. Statements, use of individual education plans (IEPs) and regular reviews ensure the accurate recording of their achievement. Teachers and learning support assistants maintain efficient records, which helps them to track closely individual pupils' progress.

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

6. Standards in attitudes, values and personal development have improved since the last inspection because of recent attention to managing behaviour more decisively. A clear lead in this has been given by the assistant head responsible for overseeing this. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They are very willing to work, particularly when interesting teaching motivates them to put great effort into what they are doing. This was evident in a Year 8 geography lesson, where groups of pupils worked

with real purpose to prepare presentations for or against proposals to deal with coastal erosion in Suffolk. Pupils have fewer opportunities than is usual for pupils with their obvious abilities to think critically about ideas presented to them and to work things out for themselves. As a result, their intellectual curiosity is muted. There is a strong work ethic rather than a zest for learning. However, when teaching is inspiring, pupils rise to the occasion, as in a Year 9 top set English lesson that required sharp use of critical thinking skills for searching discussion and analysis of poignant fairy tales.

7. Behaviour is very good, particularly in lessons, where pupils' willingness to listen, sometimes for long periods, and to do what is asked of them, make a significant contribution to the standards they achieve. On occasions when pupils lose interest or concentration, it is usually because teachers' explanations are long-winded or the work is not matched precisely enough to the needs and talents of each pupil. Around the school, pupils generally behave very well. In the main, they show good levels of courtesy and respect for others, particularly those they have learned to trust and value, such as pastoral staff and assistant heads. However, there are instances when they show less consideration for others than might be expected. For example, teachers or inspectors struggled with piles of books and closed doors while pupils walked past without thinking to offer help. In several cases, pupils were unresponsive to efforts to engage them in friendly conversation. Exclusion rates were higher than usual for a school like this for a period of time while staff tried to redefine the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and deal with a few more challenging pupils. Fixed-term exclusion rates have now fallen from their peak of about two years ago, as responses to new behaviour policies and procedures have brought about improvement in conduct. Pupils are very clear about the consequences of bad behaviour and of the school's zero tolerance of aggressive behaviour or defiance. There were no permanent exclusions in the year prior to the inspection.

8. Personal development is good, all in all. When given the chance, pupils discuss their own feelings and responses thoughtfully, as in personal and social development (PSD) lessons on 'relationships' in Year 7, and in a Year 8 history lesson on 'slavery'. Pupils know very well what the effect of their actions is on others; indeed, as one pupil said, 'I know if I ask questions, it will really wind up some teachers, but others like to have a discussion'. Their respect for others' feelings, especially those of their classmates, is generally good. Usually, they listen to what others have to say very maturely. Pupils have a well-developed knowledge of the different ways of life of young people in distant places, for example the hardship of street children in South America. However, their respect for other values, beliefs and lifestyles is not developed to the same high standard as their factual knowledge. Pupils express concern and compassion for children suffering in places such as Brazil, Belarus and Kenya at the same time as making comments such as 'I don't see why we have to learn about other religions and customs'. Their lack of awareness of the extraordinary, diverse, multicultural society on their doorstep, and why it should be important to them, is why their personal development, though good, is less assured than it might be. Pupils are happy to take responsibility when given the chance, but have less encouragement to show initiative and independence than might be expected, given their willingness to co-operate and work hard.

9. Relationships among pupils within the school and between staff and pupils are very good, in general. The way in which pupils work together very productively in lessons and relate very constructively to their teachers helps them to learn very effectively.

10. Attendance is well above average. Pupils and parents recognise the importance of regular attendance for success at school. This is evident in the way that parents consider the issue of term time holidays and negotiate with the school over the least harmful way of organising such visits when they are unavoidable. Punctuality to school is usually good, providing that buses run on time. Lessons do not always start promptly because sometimes staff or pupils arrive late from the previous session. On occasions, this reduces the time the teacher spends at the end summing up the key points of the

lesson, which is a particular disadvantage for those pupils who need these prompts to reinforce their learning.

11. Attendance procedures have improved lately as the result of diligent work by office staff to check on absences and help tutors to be more rigorous in marking registers accurately. While, as office staff know, some inconsistencies remain to be ironed out, procedures work well to support high attendance.

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

12. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good, which represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The proportion of good or better lessons at 84 per cent is a substantial increase on last time. Thirty-eight per cent of lessons observed were very good or excellent. Teaching was most effective in Year 8, where teaching in almost half of the lessons observed was very good or excellent. Teaching was good in English, design technology, history, physical education and religious education. It was very good in other subjects. No judgement could be made in citizenship, which is not yet formally established as a separate subject. The specialist teaching in music is very good, but this standard is not maintained where non-specialist supply teaching takes place as a result of a specialist teacher shortage.

13. The Key Stage 3 Strategy has been successfully introduced, and, where appropriate, teaching is guided by its principles. Lessons generally follow the three-part structure, with a stimulating opening activity that recalls and reinforces previous work. Teachers employ a good range of appropriate teaching methods, and group pupils suitably for collaborative work. Time is generally carefully allocated to ensure a good pace of work. Links with other subjects are noted in planning. Lessons almost always finish with a review of what has been achieved.

14. Lessons in which teaching was very good or excellent were planned very carefully to include a variety of varied and interesting topics and activities. For example, in a lower-attaining set in a Year 8 science lesson a spectacular demonstration provided an excellent start to a lesson on respiration which encouraged pupils to achieve very well. In history, a very good lesson on 'the slave trade' challenged pupils to think about issues of human rights as well as teaching them about facts about the development of slavery. Teachers displayed very good subject knowledge. In mathematics, teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm ensured that pupils achieved very well in relationship to their ability. In music, most of the teaching was characterised by excellent subject knowledge resulting in pupils producing highly creative practical work. The teachers' management of pupils was effective in all lessons, creating a very good work ethic and good relationships amongst pupils and with teachers. In very good lessons teachers had very high expectations of pupils' work, which encouraged pupils to have very positive attitudes to work.

15. Pupils learn very well. They were very actively involved in their learning. They worked purposefully on their own and collaborated effectively in groups and pairs. In physical education, for example, teachers encouraged pupils to become independent in their learning, by providing opportunities for them to choose warm-up activities and to work in pairs during stretching routines. Very good examples of independent learning occurred in geography, music, physical education and science. In many very good lessons, and particularly in music, science and geography, pupils concentrated hard on the work set, displaying very positive attitudes and working for extended periods.

16. There were many examples of the constructive assessment of pupils' work in progress, especially in art, geography, history and music. Teachers' constructive advice and encouragement supported pupils' learning and helped them to progress. Resources, including ICT, are used well to enhance learning. In English, the use of computers was very effective in enabling pupils to edit their work and present it attractively. In a lesson on 'Elizabethan England' pupils researched, evaluated and



applied information from the school's Intranet. In geography, very good use was also made of both the Internet and Intranet to support enquiry work, enabling pupils to develop their confidence and skill in research.

17. In several subjects, pupils in Year 9 worked on bridging work produced in collaboration with the main receiving upper school. Intensive courses, undertaken after the completion of national tests, challenged them very well, kept them focused on work and prepared them for the demands of work in Year 10. Several subjects made effective use of the very good resources in the library.

18. In a minority of lessons there were some areas for development in teaching. Teachers did not always extend the higher-attaining pupils in English, mathematics, science and religious education. Occasionally, too few opportunities were provided for pupils to work independently, for example, in mathematics. Sometimes, teachers spoke for too long, spoon-fed information and missed chances to enable pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. On a few occasions, in science, opportunities were missed for enabling pupils to develop high level writing skills. In lessons which had weaknesses, pupils lacked independence and did not sufficiently develop the critical thinking skills of analysis and synthesis. Overall, pupils are not encouraged to sharpen their powers of debate by challenging the ideas they encounter.

19. Literacy skills are taught well. There is a whole-school approach to the development of literacy across the curriculum. Provision is very good in English, mathematics, geography, history and religious education. In geography and history, literacy strands are clearly identified in teachers' planning. In other subjects, the development of literacy is sometimes inconsistent but is always at least satisfactory. The library is very welcoming and well organised with a good range of resources to support the development of literacy.

20. Numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics, where lessons often include a mental starter activity. Opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects across the curriculum are varied, however. In science, graphs are used to display data-logging and balancing chemical equations. In music, good links with numeracy are made with the patterning of rhythms. However, in physical education, opportunities to support the development of skills in numeracy are missed.

21. Teaching in ICT lessons is very good, and the use of computers in most other subjects is developing well. However, computer-based work in art, music and design and technology lessons, is not as strong as in other subjects due to lack of planned access to computers.

22. In most subjects, homework was set regularly and work was marked effectively, which gave pupils a clear idea of how they were performing and indicated areas for improvement. Marking was sometimes inconsistent, however, in English, design and technology, history, mathematics and science. Overall, pupils are not familiar enough with the levels of attainment contained in the National Curriculum.

23. A few pupils speak English as a second language. None of these pupils is at an early stage of learning English, and they achieve in line with their peers.

24. The quality of teaching and learning for students with special educational needs is very good overall. These pupils achieve well in mathematics and science, but in English there is insufficient adaptation of work within sets to cater for the spread of ability. As a result, the progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well in most main school lessons because they are grouped according to their needs and previous attainment and teachers are aware of their particular needs. Learning support assistants help pupils by checking understanding of tasks, reinforcing instructions and maintaining pupils' concentration. These assistants are attached to individual pupils but they are not always aware of the subject targets and the content of

lessons. Targets in individual education plans are not fully used in the planning of a minority of lessons. In some subjects, this is an area for improvement so that pupils' targets are reflected in what they are required to do in lessons. When there is good planning and liaison between the subject teacher and the teaching assistants, this works well and in some cases very well. For example, in mathematics, pupils worked close to the expected National Curriculum levels in Year 8. In French, teachers modify tasks appropriately so that pupils achieved well in the lessons. In the learning support area, literacy skills are intensively taught. Specialist teachers are skilled at focusing pupils' attention and managing their behavioural difficulties. Teachers in learning support use questioning well to make pupils think and work independently. Assistants build up trust and good relationships with their pupils. Assistants concentrate on confidence-building, which brings about a rapid improvement in pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are quickly reintegrated into main school classrooms.

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

25. The curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities to meet the needs and interests of all pupils. Most statutory requirements are met. However, there is no provision for a collective act of worship through assemblies and tutor time, and the development of citizenship has been too slow. The curriculum is very good in mathematics and geography. It is good in English, science, history, religious education, art, music and in the specialist ICT course. In physical education, design and technology, French and ICT across the curriculum, it is satisfactory. In citizenship and German, provision is unsatisfactory. The time allocation to individual subjects is appropriate, except for German which, with only one period a week in Years 8 and 9, does not have a sufficient allocation of time to enable pupils to learn satisfactorily. The teaching of German has a negative impact on these pupils' PSD because the time is taken from their PSD allocation. The overall time allocation to mathematics is good. However, the timetabling of a third of Year 8 pupils to have two periods of mathematics and French on the same day adversely affects the continuity of their learning.

26. Pupils of all levels of attainment benefit from the learning opportunities available to them. There is very good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Setting is widely used to concentrate pupils of similar ability together so that their needs can be appropriately met. Some classes, in practical subjects are reduced in size to improve the efficiency of pupils' learning. Sets containing lower-attaining pupils contain fewer pupils so that teachers can give more individual attention. Gifted and talented pupils have suitable opportunities to extend their knowledge in lessons and are encouraged to attend special classes on Saturdays and examination course preparation at the upper school. Places on external courses, specially designed to extend their skills and talents, are offered to these pupils.

27. Good planning matches, and builds on, pupils' strengths and needs. Regular reviews of the curriculum enable the school to respond to national initiatives and school priorities, but, citizenship is not established or sufficiently identified on the curriculum. Learning opportunities in ICT are good. The use of computers to support the teaching and learning in general subjects is good overall, but with some inconsistencies. In some subjects, for example geography, there are very good opportunities for using computers. In art, music, and special educational needs, the use of ICT is unsatisfactory.

28. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are taught in setted groups. Their lessons follow the National Curriculum. Pupils have full access to the curriculum and courses meet their needs. Learning support assistants frequently support them. Their individual education plans (IEPs) are reviewed twice yearly, and sometimes more frequently, to check on the changing needs of pupils. Pupils withdrawn to the learning support unit, mainly in Year 7, spend a small proportion of their timetable in the unit and are integrated into lessons for the remainder. Integration varies according to a pupil's needs. Literacy is well targeted for improvement and teachers have the cooperation of parents in the completion of work. Pupils with special educational needs value the

support they receive from homework clubs. Pupils' behavioural and emotional needs are addressed well so that they are successfully integrated and encouraged to achieve.

29. A very wide range of extra-curricular activities is available. These include activities in most areas of the curriculum. Regular events enhance pupils' learning in subjects such as science, history, art, music and geography. These include activity visits and residential weeks. Extra-curricular provision is excellent in music where a good range of musical groups rehearse regularly. Provision is very good in physical education, where pupils are provided with a wide choice of activities. Regular trips to France take place. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme is popular with pupils. The provision for PSD is good because it is well planned, led and managed. Lessons are closely focused on pupils' needs. For example, pupils in different year groups have the opportunity to explore such topics as friendships, peer pressure and decision-making. Due attention is given to drugs and alcohol abuse. Sex education is well taught within science lessons. The teaching of PSD varies in quality as some form tutors are not as assured as others in teaching the range of topics. Where teaching is good, it strongly supports the work of the pastoral staff in encouraging all round individual development.

30. The school has a very good range of links with its main feeder schools and local upper schools. This ensures smooth transition of pupils. The school benefits from its links with the local community. Links with the church and an old peoples' home give pupils a sense of belonging to a community and of being useful to it. Local magistrates, police officers and young offenders contribute to the PSD programme. Wider links have been forged, for instance with a community in Belarus, and gifts and information have been exchanged so that pupils find out about the similarities and differences between the two communities; this is shared through displays and assemblies.

31. Careers education is good. Extensive consultation takes place in Year 9 between the school, parents, the upper school and pupils to ensure that pupils have access to appropriate courses. Pupils have the opportunity of assistance from the Connexions service adviser who visits the school regularly. Focus days, for example army days, enable pupils to benefit from outside speakers and the expertise they offer. The careers library provides a good source of information. The library is accessible at all times of the school day and is well organised. Information is available through a variety of sources including box files, videos and software as well as books. Pupils with special educational needs have extra guidance from the Connexions adviser on career prospects.

32. The school's focus on the different strands of pupils' personal development has not sharpened or improved as it might have done. The school has been slow to direct attention and action to its duty to teach pupils about their responsibilities as young citizens in an ethnically diverse society. While relevant policies are in place, including that for promotion of racial equality, not enough has been done by the leadership to ensure that the whole school works actively to counteract the scepticism of pupils that such matters have anything to do with them and their everyday lives.

33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The school fosters spiritual development inadequately, but gives good attention to moral, social and cultural development. In spite of the school's mission statement and commitment to strive for the highest standards in pupils' personal, social, spiritual and moral development, what it offers in terms of inspiration and reflection falls short of expectations. This area of its work has not been thought through, co-ordinated and led well. While examples of excellent practice exist, the approach to key aspects of personal development and related work in citizenship is piecemeal, rather than the result of coherent planning. The arrangements for assembly undermine the importance of reflection and spiritual awareness, with only two opportunities for collective worship each week that are not as meaningful as they might be.

34. In isolated lessons and work in some subjects, individual teachers strive to provide pupils with golden opportunities to reflect on profound issues, such as the value of human life. There are wonderful, moving, personal accounts of what it felt like to be a migrant, resulting from interviews conducted by pupils with family members, which brought alive their range of hopes and fears and those small acts of kindness that reflect the best of the human spirit. In a Year 8 art lesson, pupils were actively encouraged to imagine how it feels to live, work and be someone like Van Gogh. Unfortunately, in spite of some concern among staff that pupils are not good at reflecting on issues, at valuing qualities rather than possessions and relating to people whose circumstances are different from their own, such work is the exception. During the inspection, many opportunities were missed in lessons and assemblies to hold pupils spellbound with an inspirational idea or image, or to help them develop a sense of curiosity about how different people live their lives.

35. The school encourages a very strong sense of right and wrong, so pupils have a very clear grasp of the difference. Within lessons such as those for PSD, they discuss issues, such as justice, in relation to the life of Nelson Mandela and what happened in the Holocaust. In geography, they are encouraged to consider moral and environmental issues within project work such as that on the rainforests and Aswan and Yangtse Dams. Such work also contributes to pupils' developing ideas of people's rights and social responsibilities, helped by the school's clear code of conduct and strong relationships. Pupils have some very good opportunities to develop social skills and a sense of being part of a community, particularly on residential visits, such as those to Northumberland and Norfolk. Their chances to take responsibility and use initiative have not developed particularly well since the last inspection. Unusually for such a school, there is no school council, although year councils exist, but pupils do not feel that these give them a real voice and chance to contribute fully to school life. Year 8 pupils enjoy the chance to shine at their hobbies and talents festival. Year 9 pupils have useful opportunities to help and work with appreciative local primary children and elderly residents.

36. The school curriculum offers the expected range of opportunities for pupils to learn about their own cultural heritage and other traditions. In particular areas, this is taken much further to encourage pupils to enjoy art, music and different kinds of craftsmanship to the full. For example, in mathematics, pupils have imaginative opportunities to explore the properties of Celtic knots. They have produced vibrant masks based on Peking Opera's 'Day of the Dead'. Geography portfolios show a rich range of lively work, including diaries and play scripts illustrating what life is like in different communities around the world. The strong threads of cultural awareness have not been pulled together yet to ensure that separate pieces of very high quality work are turned into much greater appreciation and respect for the contribution of world faiths, literature, arts and music to 21st Century British society. The school's policy for promoting racial equality focuses more on dealing with racism than promoting understanding, particularly within the immediate and wider community. Pupils lack the opportunities to visit and mix with the rich range of different cultural and religious groups on their doorstep. However, their awareness of the challenges faced by less privileged children in places such as Belarus has led to great responses to appeals for donations of gifts for charity.

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

37. Child protection procedures, which had been unsatisfactory, were urgently reviewed and improved at the end of the inspection, and they are now satisfactory. The named child protection officer has undergone all the necessary training. Since the inspection, all teaching and non-teaching staff have been familiarised with procedures. The staff induction programme ensures that most are aware of their responsibilities. However, the procedures are not yet fully described in the staff handbook.

38. The school has good health and safety procedures. The member of staff with overall responsibility for this has received the required training. The local education authority team has

completed a three-day risk assessment of the whole school. The premises checked regularly, and faults are dealt with quickly. Off-site activities are thoroughly assessed before permission is given for them to go ahead. Six staff have been trained in first-aid, and, overall, the school is a safe environment. Risk assessments are carried out within departments. Some hazards noted in the design and technology department were remedied as a result of the inspection

39. The support given by form tutors and year heads to pupils is a strength of the school. They know the pupils well and provide very good support for their welfare and development. The heads of year are the main link with parents. Pupils' records, kept centrally on a computerised database, are thorough and provide year heads and tutors with the necessary information to play a key role in supporting pupils' academic or personal progress. The heads of year have developed good materials for this programme. The programme plays a crucial role in the very good progress made by most pupils, and, in Year 9, it helps pupils to prepare very well for transfer to high school.

40. Procedures to promote good behaviour and to deal with the occasional incidents of poor behaviour are very good. A reward system for positive behaviour, including good work, is very effective. This system has contributed to the considerable improvement in pupils' attitudes over the last two years. As a consequence, the number of pupils who have been excluded from school is considerably reduced. Certificates of excellence awarded in assemblies, and honours boards are used to very good effect in rewarding good behaviour and attitudes. The use of an isolation room for pupils who are disrupting learning in class is generally seen by staff and pupils as a strong incentive to good behaviour.

41. The school has very good procedures for responding to incidents of oppressive behaviour, including harassment and bullying. Pupils are generally confident that they will be supported. They confirm that the school takes firm and effective action to counter this behaviour. The ethos of the school promotes mutual respect for others well and this helps to create secure environment for all pupils.

42. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress are good, overall. Pupils' academic records are conveniently stored on a database so that the school can easily identify under-achieving pupils and take action. However, the school's use of assessment is not yet consistent across all departments. The 2002 teacher assessments of pupils' attainment levels at the end of Year 9 in most non-core subjects were higher than standards found in the inspection.

43. Marking is inconsistent and does not always follow the school policy. When marking is very good, as in French and German and ICT, pupils have a very clear understanding of the National Curriculum level they have attained. Comments by teachers show pupils the steps that they need to take in order to improve on their performance and what the next level requires of them. Whilst assessment of what pupils can do is generally good and often very good, only in modern foreign languages and ICT have data been systematically used to plan pupils' work.

44. Pupils with special educational needs are identified as soon as possible. The process is helped by good liaison with feeder schools, the local education authority and other outside agencies as appropriate. Statements of special educational need fully reflect the individual needs of pupils. Reviews take place as required by the new code of practice; these are excellently organised and completed. Some Year 9 pupils are included in transition plans to help them find employment. Consistency is a key factor in the department's philosophy. Socialisation is an important consideration in the development and integration of special educational needs pupils. Teachers and assistants are frequently available to help with homework and address any concern pupils may have.

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

45. The school has tried to improve its links with parents through better information that is tailor-made for them and provision of senior management 'surgeries'. Parents generally think that the school is offering their children a good education. They are pleased with the progress their children make, with their growing maturity and with the school's expectations that pupils will work hard and do their best. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or questions. They believe that the teaching is good. About a quarter of parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them, keep them well informed about their children's progress or give the right amount of homework.

46. In general, the school's links with parents work effectively and parents' involvement with school life is good, particularly in terms of fund-raising and support for specific activities, including help with sports fixtures. Not all parents feel as much a part of the school community as others. The school has been slower than other secondary schools to ensure that consultation and involvement of parents are as wide as possible. For example, it does not use annual questionnaires to check on parental satisfaction, or discussion groups for those not active on the governing body or PTA. Recent efforts to redress the balance of rewards and sanctions to counteract a 'growing sense of negativity', noted in the school, by parents have resulted in regular awards for effort, excellence and improvement, but parents are not invited to the celebration assemblies or sent letters about their children's personal achievements, as a matter of course. The availability of senior management surgeries is very helpful in building bridges with parents. Clearly, parents feel that the senior staff will listen to them. The onus is often on parents to make contact with the school initially, which is appropriate in matters such as ringing in on the first day of absence, but not always with pastoral matters, such as the effect of bullying or changes in behaviour. Pupils reported that problems are dealt with very effectively, once staff are told about them. The school works very well with parents of pupils with special educational needs.

47. The school provides a useful range of information for parents. It has made good efforts to ensure that the governing body's annual report gives the required information in a lively and colourful leaflet that is more likely to be read. Reports on progress are satisfactory. The school was aware of the need to improve these and has modified the format it uses to try to help staff to present the key information in a digestible way. This has not yet resulted in consistency of information about exactly what pupils have learned, whether this is what would be expected for the individual or the year group and precisely what the pupil needs to do to improve. Therefore, parents' comments sometimes include questions such as 'what can we do to help?', 'how much progress has been made towards the targets set?' or 'what level has (s)he reached?' This explains why some parents do not feel well enough informed about their children's progress. Otherwise, the school keeps parents reasonably well informed about its life, although there is scope for more frequent, high quality information about pupils' personal achievements and contributions to the life of the school and wider community.

48. Parents make a very significant contribution to children's learning because they want them to do well at school. They ensure that their children come to school regularly with the equipment they need. Pupils' work reflects a good range of experiences outside school that parents have organised, not just holidays abroad, but trips to places of interest nearby. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson, pupils were able to discuss the local locks system and other features of canal building and the industrial revolution, having visited and then discussed them at home. The high number of pupils with computers, quality of resources, such as kit for cricket matches, and responsiveness to meetings involving their children, shows the very strong support parents give to all aspects of learning.

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

49. The leadership and management of most senior managers and key staff of the school is generally effective because they work very hard. The headteacher has delegated virtually all management responsibility to the other members of the senior management team. These staff share a determination to improve the school and carry out their roles well by working very hard. They deal effectively with all aspects of the day-to-day running of the school and financial management is very effective. The unusually high level of responsibility delegated to senior managers, results in their having to cope with a huge workload. Despite this, they maintain a good level of efficiency because they work closely together with clarity of view and a common purpose to provide the best possible education for the pupils.

50. The disproportionately high level of delegation has resulted in the headteacher becoming insular and too far removed from important aspects of the management of the school. During the inspection week it became clear that the headteacher is not sufficiently aware of many important aspects of the operation of the school, relying too much on the other senior staff for information on matters where the headteacher might be expected to have first hand knowledge, for example the school development plan. Professional communication is poor. The headteacher is not seen as leading by example and does not inspire and empower the staff by communicating a clear educational vision to drive the school forward. She is not well known to pupils. They, and the staff, comment that they have very little contact with her, and that she lacks presence round the school.

51. These unsatisfactory aspects of leadership and management inhibit the efficient running of the school in many areas. The other senior managers do not have the authority to make the final policy decisions, which results in many important plans not being carried through. For example, the performance management procedures for teachers are unsatisfactory, the new subject of citizenship has not been properly introduced, and procedures for child protection were unsatisfactory, because effective training had not been completed by all staff, but this has now been remedied

52. The chair of governors has a detailed and accurate knowledge of the present working of the school. Some governors have effective links with individual departments and make occasional visits to monitor the work in lessons to gain first hand information. Overall, however, the governing body does not have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the school and how to improve it, nor provide strategic guidance, nor hold the school sufficiently to account in many areas of its operation. The headteacher has no job description, targets are not challenging enough and the governing body has not monitored the effectiveness of leadership and management or taken action to address weaknesses, even though some governors are aware of these. Governors are generally effective in ensuring the school fulfils statutory requirements, except in relation to citizenship and a daily act of collective worship.

53. The senior managers' knowledge of the broad strengths and weaknesses of the school has allowed them to draw up sound priorities for its development. However, planning for the future development of curricular issues is not linked closely enough to financial planning. The one-year school development plan lacks detail and contains very little costing of any new initiatives. Departmental development plans are appropriately linked to whole-school issues, generally forming a coherent overall structure for development. However, some subject plans have target dates that are far too distant.

54. Subject departments are generally well led. Leadership and management in mathematics, science, art and music are particularly strong. They are good in almost all subjects, and unsatisfactory only in citizenship. Department heads monitor the teaching and learning within their areas well but this is not consistent. Staff with responsibility for the care and guidance of pupils work effectively. Assistant headteachers and heads of departments monitor teaching and learning systematically and as a result of this good practice, the quality of teaching is very good. However, inconsistencies at the highest level have resulted in some teachers not being monitored for over three years. The staff handbook contains some redundant information and some out-of-date policies. In particular, the curriculum policy makes too little reference to recent developments, including the Key Stage 3 Strategy, the use of ICT across the curriculum and the requirement to introduce citizenship into the curriculum.

55. The management of the school's finances is very good and shows a very clear understanding of the financial direction of the school. The successful bidding for external funding has enabled many new initiatives to succeed. The school has used funds very well to increase the number of computers that are available. Several subjects have not made enough use of computers in the past, but the increased resources are allowing this problem to be remedied.



56. The plans to improve buildings and resources are imaginative; an example is the transformation of a disused site manager's house into a purpose-built drama studio and amphitheatre. Financial systems are very effective and carefully monitored to ensure the pupils get the best possible resources. The school is making good use of modern technology systems to ensure smooth operation. The principles of best value are rigorously applied to maximising the impact of budget in terms of staffing, resources, premises and facilities, but less effectively applied by the governing body when evaluating the quality of education and planning for improvement.

57. Overall, staffing is good except in music, where there are not enough specialists, though in most areas where there are non-specialist teachers, as in history and religious education, this has not had a detrimental effect on standards. The school has experienced difficulty in the past in recruiting subject leaders in several key areas, notably English, and special educational needs. Recent appointments have improved the situation and these areas are now fully staffed. Teachers are well-qualified and have very good subject knowledge and understanding that enhances pupils' learning. Support staff play a valuable role in supporting pupils' learning and contributing to the values and ethos of the school. Learning support assistants contribute significantly to the social development of pupils. The library staff and technical staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, but the school does not have enough technicians to support the work of the science department fully.

58. Staff development is good in many respects though there are weaknesses in performance management. The school has Investors in People status and training is effectively linked to whole-school and departmental priorities. There is an effective programme for inducting new staff. Newly-qualified teachers are supported well and all statutory requirements are met. External courses are evaluated thoroughly and good records are kept but there is insufficient monitoring of the effectiveness of training in raising standards of teaching and learning across the school. Performance management is unsatisfactory. The policy meets statutory requirements but requires updating. Targets are frequently unfocused and lack challenge with many staff unaware of their designated appraiser. In the light of recent staff changes, the system needs to be improved if it is to impact positively on standards. At present, it is not linked to other school monitoring systems and is incapable of providing accurate enough judgements to inform progression on the upper pay spine.

59. The well-maintained, high quality building provides a stimulating learning environment. The accommodation for specialist teaching is good, with particular strengths in design and technology, ICT and learning support. The majority of departments have suites of rooms and a new humanities area will be available in September. Good progress with building adaptations have been made due to the careful planning. These have enabled increased numbers of students to be accommodated. Central storage is a current problem for science and mathematics. Accommodation for science, physical education, art, and modern foreign languages is satisfactory at present. However, the planned increase in numbers will put further pressure on these areas in September.

60. Overall, resources for learning are satisfactory. Resources are good in mathematics, religious education, physical education, design technology, ICT and learning support. History and religious education have a particularly good range of artefacts and use external resources well. Whilst the overall provision of computers is good, music and art do not have sufficient access to computer-aided learning. The science department has been using up stock and this is now running out. A shortage of some equipment can mean six or more pupils sharing some equipment, which impairs their learning. The learning support unit is well resourced and provides very good accommodation for learning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. To raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

(1) develop the effectiveness of teaching by:

- i) enabling pupils to acquire skills in thinking critically, in challenging ideas they encounter, and in showing more initiative in their work, *(paragraphs 6, 18, 85, 145)*
- ii) making more constructive use of National Curriculum levels a) to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve, and b) to guide teachers' planning, *(paragraphs 22, 43, 47, 66, 86, 93, 121, 125, 127, 137, 145)*
- iii) matching work to pupils' needs more closely within sets, *(paragraphs 24, 66, 75, 79, 85)*
- iv) raising the attainment of boys in subjects where girls outperform them, *(paragraphs 63, 89, 107, 123, 127, 128, 142)*

(2) improve the curriculum by:

- i) incorporating meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their self-awareness, and their capacity to explore spiritual issues and understand their own and others' beliefs, and by meeting requirements for daily collective worship, *(paragraphs 25, 33, 53)*
- ii) introducing, in accordance with statutory requirements, a formal course in citizenship for all pupils, *(paragraphs 3, 12, 25, 27, 33, 51, 52, 54, 86, 95-98, 114, 146)*

(3) introduce more accurate testing at the end of Year 9 to evaluate pupils' progress in non-core subjects, *(paragraphs 3, 42, 99, 107, 115, 127, 134)*

(4) ensure that leadership drives the school's work forward in a co-ordinated and clear educational direction by:

- i) seeing that all areas of responsibility are allocated and developed appropriately, *(paragraph 49)*
- ii) establishing procedures for monitoring all developments for success, *(paragraph 50)*
- iii) improving strategic planning and including costs, timescales and success criteria for all objectives in the school and departmental development plans, *(paragraph 53)*

(5) develop the effectiveness of the school's management by:

- i) maintaining continuous constructive dialogue between the headteacher and members of the senior management team, *(paragraph 50)*
- ii) improving communication amongst all staff and the co-ordination of school improvement through regular, full staff meetings, *(paragraph 50)*
- iii) allocating responsibilities to the headteacher and other senior staff which are appropriate to their status, thereby reducing the current excessive level of delegation, *(paragraphs 49, 50)*
- iv) providing the headteacher and others with posts of responsibility with up-to-date job descriptions, *(paragraphs 49, 52)*

- v) setting appropriate targets for the headteacher and monitoring their successful completion against an efficient timescale, (*paragraph 54*)
- vi) improving the effectiveness of performance management, (*paragraph 51*)
- vii) revising and updating policies and upgrading the staff handbook to provide a thorough and usable source of guidance for all school procedures and national requirements, (*paragraph 54*)

62. The governors may wish to include in their development planning the following less significant objective:

- i) consult with parents and, where appropriate, pupils on proposed developments in the school's provision. (*paragraph 46*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 9	107
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		43

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 – 9</b>							
Number	6	35	49	15	1	1	0
Percentage	5	33	46	14	1	1	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y9
Number of pupils on the school's roll	683
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	19

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y9
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	78

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

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9
---	---

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	7.8

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	102	113	215

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	76	86	86
	Girls	102	97	100
	Total	178	183	186
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (76)	85 (84)	87 (84)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	42 (36)	67 (63)	54 (47)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	79	88	84
	Girls	105	97	102
	Total	184	185	186
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	86 (86)	86 (85)	87 (83)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (57)	60 (56)	38 (38)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

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

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
646	40	0
1	0	0
9	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	1	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
15	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

***Teachers and classes*****Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y9**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	35
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5

**Education support staff: Y7 – Y9**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	317

**Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y9**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.5
---	------

**Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y9**

Key Stage 3	24.3
-------------	------

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	1,519,972
Total expenditure	1,447,424
Expenditure per pupil	2,183
Balance brought forward from previous year	55,639
Balance carried forward to next year	72,548

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12.4

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**

Number of questionnaires sent out	683
Number of questionnaires returned	233

#### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	53	9	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	47	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	64	7	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	55	19	3	3
The teaching is good.	30	64	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	57	22	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	51	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	39	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	18	52	20	7	3
The school is well led and managed.	23	60	4	4	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	59	4	1	3

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

35	47	9	1	8
----	----	---	---	---



## PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN SUBJECTS

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Results were well above average in national tests in Year 9 in 2002.
- The head of department exercises very good leadership.
- Teaching is good overall and pupils learn effectively because teachers manage classes well.
- The schemes of work are excellent and incorporate very good opportunities for using ICT.

#### Areas for improvement

- The planning of some lessons does not take enough account of individual pupils needs within a set.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Boys' attainment remains below that of girls.
- The quality of marking varies in its usefulness in telling pupils how to improve their work.

63. Results in the national tests, at the end of Year 9 in 2002, were well above the national average and average for similar schools. Eighty-three per cent of pupils achieved Level 5 or above compared to a national figure of 66 per cent. Results were above the average results for pupils with similar end of Year 6 test results. Therefore these results represent good achievement. The trend in results over the last five years has fluctuated. English results have been below those in mathematics and science. The trend is now one of improvement. Teacher assessments reflect the national test results. Girls achieve better than boys, especially at the higher levels.

64. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is above national expectations. Pupils learn to organise and draft written work and have the opportunity to study a wide range of literature. Pupils carry out a good range of written tasks with some particularly imaginative assignments. These include a comparison of 'Wuthering Heights' and 'Great Expectations' and effective multicultural work on the film 'Bend it like Beckham'. Pupils are strongest at speaking and listening and can debate, argue, discuss and justify. This was seen in a very good lesson on fairy tales where pupils discussed in a mature way the author's intention and choice of language. Standards of writing are above average. Higher-attaining pupils write concisely, imaginatively and often with flair across the range of genres. Extended accurate writing is a problem for lower-attaining pupils, however, who are unaware of how to use tone, structure and sentence variety to create effect. Literacy books have been introduced to help these pupils but it is too early to judge their impact. Most pupils have sound reading skills and can read and understand quite complex texts. Middle and lower-attaining pupils would benefit from a more systematic approach to the teaching of reading skills, as few can see suggestions or implied meanings in text.

65. Overall, the teaching observed was good, ranging from outstanding to a small amount that was unsatisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and manage behaviour well. Lessons are generally calm and productive. There is a good variety of activity within lessons but few opportunities for pupils to become increasingly independent as learners. Time is used well and a good variety of appropriate resources is used. In the majority of lessons, pupils were clear about what they were studying and how they should proceed, but sometimes learning objectives were not communicated explicitly enough. The use of computers is very effective, as careful thought has been paid as to how their use will improve pupils' learning. This was seen in a good lesson on 'Elizabethan England' where pupils had to research, evaluate and apply information from the school's Intranet. In less successful lessons, pupils were unclear about what they should learn and an over-directive

teaching style inhibited learning. In these lessons, pupils easily became distracted and little progress was made.

66. As a result of the good teaching, learning is good. Pupils rapidly acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding. Attitudes and behaviour are consistently good and the vast majority of pupils come to lessons well-equipped and eager to learn. Pupils are grouped in sets according to attainment but there is no individualised work catering for the spread within each group. This means the progress of pupils with special educational needs is only satisfactory. Monitoring and assessment are currently satisfactory but standards of marking fluctuate across the department. The most useful marking identifies weaknesses in pupils' work, explains how these might be improved and sets targets for improvement. However, especially in Year 8, marking is too general, overall, and does not tell pupils specifically enough what they must do to improve.

67. The leadership of the newly appointed head of English is very good. The department has a clear sense of direction and excellent schemes of work, cross-referenced to both the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy. The department has skilfully blended both the traditional and modern in its organisation of the curriculum and the result is innovative and original. This is particularly evident in the very good incorporation of the National Literacy Strategy into all aspects of departmental planning. Liaison with the upper school is good, with useful cross-phase work. Within English, limited opportunities for drama and spiritual development are provided, but provision for social, moral and cultural development is good. The management of the department is good. This is a new team with significant potential, but at present too little responsibility is delegated. As a result, the monitoring and development of teaching are currently unsatisfactory. The development plan does not indicate with enough precision how it will enhance different aspects of pupils' learning. Centralised records of pupils' progress are good, but there is little evidence of them being used directly to improve teaching and learning. After significant turbulence in recent years, staffing is now good, accommodation is satisfactory and resources appropriate, although some textbooks are in need of updating. Liaison with the library is very good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

68. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Achievement has remained good and there have been improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Speaking and listening have shown very good improvement. Planned opportunities for drama, over-directive teaching and the systematic development of reading skills were all areas for development at the last inspection, however, and remain relatively weak aspects of provision.

### **Key skills across the curriculum: literacy**

69. Approaches to improving literacy are well embedded into English teaching. The successful incorporation of the National Literacy Strategy and the clear sense of progression in the Year 7 to 9 curriculum have resulted in the systematic development of pupils' literacy skills. The development of literacy is guided by a useful whole-school literacy policy and each department has contributed to whole-school training on the use of non-fiction texts within the curriculum. Much good practice exists across the school with provision for literacy being very good in mathematics, geography and history. In mathematics, key words are highlighted in every lesson and teachers explain the literacy skills required for success. In geography and history, literacy strands are clearly identified with texts used purposefully and the intended audience and purpose of the writing carefully considered. Writing frames and key words are successfully incorporated into planning. In other subject areas of the curriculum, literacy development is not always consistent but is always at least satisfactory. The library is very welcoming and well organised with a good range of resources to support the development of literacy and a good range of suitable reading material. The literacy co-ordinator is clear about the importance of promoting literacy across the school and where improvements are needed. The literacy development plan, however, lacks precise targets, success criteria and an appropriate timescale. There

is no current system for monitoring progress in each subject area or for monitoring and disseminating the success of literacy teaching strategies.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is very effective and enables pupils to attain very high standards.
- Teachers manage classes very well and use their very good subject knowledge to provide worthwhile learning opportunities.
- Lessons incorporate very good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy.
- The subject is very well managed and teachers work together very well as a team.

### Areas for improvement

- Pupils have too few opportunities to develop independence in their learning.
- Some of the ablest pupils are not stretched enough.
- The quality of marking varies and sometimes does not tell pupils what they have to do to improve their work.

70. In 2002, the results of the national tests for 14-year-olds were well above average compared with all schools and with similar schools. Results in mathematics in 2002 were in the top five per cent nationally in comparison with schools whose pupils had achieved similar results at the end of Year 6. Girls and boys attain equally well. Over the past four years standards have improved at a faster rate than the national trend.

71. Standards seen in the inspection are well above average throughout the subject. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 8 successfully tackle work usually set in Year 9. By the end of Year 9, pupils are very good at presenting and interpreting data in graphical form. They confidently factorise expressions, apply Pythagoras' theorem in solving 2-dimensional problems and plot a graph from a formula. Pupils' basic number work is very good and pupils of all levels of attainment show very good mental skills and avoid undue reliance on the calculator.

72. Standards on entry to the school are well above the national average. In relation to these standards, pupils' achievement over the three years is very good. Pupils make very good progress overall, and the highest-attaining pupils in particular make excellent advances in their learning. In all years, the pupils' oral work is impressive. They show a confidence in asking relevant and probing questions. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for with an extra teaching group enabling them to receive close individual attention. One Year 8 group was seen successfully using cut-out shapes to find the equation to calculate the area of a triangle. The standard of work was average for their age and their achievement.

73. The attitudes of pupils towards their work are very good. Pupils show great interest, listen attentively and arrive at lessons keen to learn. Behaviour is good and motivation is well sustained. Pupils stay on task very well in lessons and their written work indicates that they maintain a very good work rate. They are keen to complete their tasks and clearly enjoy the subject. The element of competition in a Year 7 class conspicuously stimulated pupils into improving their accuracy and standard of work when drawing and measuring angles. All pupils are respectful, appreciative of help and are prepared to listen to other pupils' answers. They use equipment carefully and with respect. They take pride in their work and many examples of well-produced work are on display and in books.

Pupils are articulate and, given the opportunity, are always willing to take part in question and answer sessions.

74. The quality of teaching is very good. This enables pupils to learn very well. In all lessons teaching is sound or better, with over three quarters being good or better. Over a third of lessons seen were very good. During the inspection, the most consistently good teaching was of older pupils, with Year 9 pupils receiving very good teaching from all teachers. The work seen in books showed that teaching is consistently challenging and thorough. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They are enthusiastic about their subject and this, along with suitably high expectations of both behaviour and achievement, ensures pupil knowledge and understanding are secure. Overall, teaching methods are not varied enough. In particular, at present pupils have too few opportunities to develop independence in their learning.

75. Lessons are pitched at the right level and the use of probing questions directed at the individual is very effective. Homework is used appropriately to consolidate and extend work done in class. A particular strength is the way all teachers use humour to enthuse the pupils so that they participate wholeheartedly in lessons. In one Year 9 lesson, the banter between team teachers held the pupils' interest very well. As a result, they rapidly developed their understanding in the formulation of hypotheses for an investigation to test physical reaction times within the group. In another lesson, with pupils of a lower set, the teacher used time limits for activities very effectively to maintain the pace of learning. Despite very good overall learning, in a number of lessons, the opportunity to extend pupils further who had completed tasks was missed.

76. The schemes of work are very good. These include very good opportunities to use computers. For example, a very good range of materials enabled pupils in Year 7 of all levels of ability to learn very effectively about the interpretation of databases. The resources produced for use at the end of Year 9 to introduce them to the expected levels of work at the upper school are very good and used very effectively to stimulate and extend the pupils after they have completed their Year 9 national tests. The curriculum benefits significantly from the school's links with partner schools.

77. The development of literacy in lessons is very good. Keywords are emphasised clearly and are often illustrated to assist pupils' learning. In one lesson, the teacher used a colon and took the opportunity to check that the pupils knew what it was and when it was used in writing.

78. Pupils are regularly tested to assess their attainment and to check that their progress is maintained. Results are recorded and compared against predictions for each individual pupil. The consistency of marking of pupils' work and its use to inform how they can improve varies. In general, teachers include too few constructive comments in books to help pupils with their revision.

79. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The day-to-day management of the department is very strong and the team work hard together to improve standards. The head of department provides an excellent role model through her own teaching. The planning in the schemes of work do not contain enough details of how the work is to be assessed, or how it can be adapted to meet the differing needs of pupils within each set. Gifted and talented pupils are able to attend master-classes at the local upper school to extend their understanding of mathematics. The adoption of the Key Stage 3 Strategy is almost complete, but the use of short, sharp starter activities to recall or revise previous learning is under-used. Teachers' planning is well monitored, and the head of department, on occasions, teaches other groups to monitor the pupils' progress. Monitoring of teaching is regularly carried out to assist teachers' development.

80. Accommodation is generally very good. However, the lack of a central store for resources and records is unsatisfactory. The special needs room is also unsatisfactory for the teaching of mathematics, as the noise level and interruptions are not conducive to good learning.

81. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with standards rising faster than the national average.

### **Key skills across the curriculum: numeracy**

82. The development of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. The numeracy co-ordinator, who was appointed last September, has drafted guidelines to assist heads of department in incorporating opportunities for numeracy within their subjects. A review has been carried out to discover where numeracy is developed across the curriculum. At present skills in numeracy are developed inconsistently. In science, graphs are used to display data logging and balancing chemical equations. The pupils measure accurately. In music, good links with numeracy are made when pupils devise rhythmic patterns. In geography, the development of numeracy is well planned. For example, pupils interpret data from graphs and find grid references with ease. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to use numerical skills within literacy lessons. Numeracy skills are taught very well in ICT. For example, pupils sort numbers and use balance sheets. Physical education does not formally include the development of numeracy, and worthwhile opportunities for this are missed at present.

## **SCIENCE**

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

### **Strengths**

- Results in national tests are well above the national average.
- Very good teaching enables pupils to make very good progress in lessons.
- Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work.
- Very good leadership and management enables the teachers to function very effectively as a team that is well supported by the technician.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Assessment and marking are not specific enough in the advice they give pupils on how to improve.
- Work is not always well matched to the range of ability found within a set.
- Opportunities are missed for pupils to develop extended writing.
- Class sizes are too large because of the staffing level and the amount of accommodation available.

83. In the 2002 national tests, Year 9 results were well above average. Boys' and girls' results were similar. This standard of achievement has been maintained for the last three years, and the percentage of pupils gaining Level 6 and above has increased.

84. On entry to the school, the attainment of pupils is well above average. In sustaining this level of attainment, pupils are achieving very well. Work seen during the inspection confirmed these standards. All pupils acquire and recall factual knowledge well. Higher-attaining pupils apply their knowledge and understanding effectively to solve problems and link ideas together, as in a Year 8 top set lesson on crystallisation in igneous rocks. Groups worked well on two different aspects and then discussed their results in order to link their ideas to explain crystal size in rocks. They were clearly delighted as they made the links to explain their observations. All pupils keep very good records of their work and value their books. However, in view of the overall high ability of the pupils, there were insufficient examples of extended writing or research work.

85. Overall, learning is very good because teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan clear, well-structured lessons. They use the three-part lesson consistently so that pupils stay clearly focused on task, giving the lessons a very good pace. Pupils are very positive in their attitude to science and behave very well in response to their teachers' high expectations. Teachers use question and answer sessions very effectively to promote and check learning throughout lessons. They often target their questions to ensure that all pupils are included in the oral work. Good use is made of word walls, writing frames and technical vocabulary to promote literacy skills. Teachers use a very good range of activities to stimulate pupils of all levels. In a lower-attaining set in Year 8, for example, a spectacular demonstration provided an excellent start to a lesson on respiration which inspired pupils to achieve very well. Learning assistants are used well, enabling pupils with special educational needs to keep up with their peers. If appropriate, they unobtrusively offer help to other pupils in need. A joint project with the upper school, to which the majority of pupils go, helps to keep Year 9 pupils well focused after the end-of-year national tests. In some lessons, even when teaching was very good, opportunities were missed to stretch the thinking skills of abler pupils.

86. Leadership and management in the department are very good. The teaching and technical staff work very well as a team, sharing ideas and collaborating on producing the scheme of work. The scheme of work identifies good opportunities for literacy, numeracy, ICT, and social and moral development. Although the audit on citizenship has been done and aspects of it were taught well, this remains an area for further development. Although a relatively recent appointment, the head of department, has given a clear lead and identified appropriate targets for development. Data is well used to track performance so that borderline candidates can benefit from revision classes. It is less well used to guide curriculum planning. There are inconsistencies in the marking of work and the few comments written do not help pupils to understand how to improve their work.

87. Staffing and accommodation are satisfactory. Whilst the quality of staff is very good, class sizes are large, with sometimes as many as 33 pupils because the school has only four science teachers. The few smaller groups are closer to the normal number of 23 in a group. All teachers, apart from the head of department, have other major responsibilities in the school. This, coupled with heavy timetabling, means that the department cannot offer as great a range of extra-curricular activities as it would like. Having only four laboratories for a school this size means that they are heavily used. Clearing up between lessons poses problems and can be distracting. In one Year 9 lesson, with 33 pupils in the room, space was restricted because of ICT equipment previously in use could not be cleared away in time. Only the very good classroom management of the teacher and the pupils' good behaviour prevented this session becoming a possible health and safety risk. One technician is too few for a department of this size. Resources are just satisfactory. The department has been using up stocks, which are now running low. In one Year 7 lesson, pupils had to work in groups of seven because of the limited supply of oil lamps. This reduced their involvement in practical tasks and affected the development of practical skills.

88. Since the last inspection, high standards have been maintained and more pupils are achieving at higher levels. Teaching is now very good. Pupils' oral skills are now very good. Improvement has therefore been good.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Pupils achieve well throughout the subject and their attainment is well above expectation in Year 9.
- Very effective teaching ensures very good learning.

- Pupils have very good attitudes, they are very well motivated and learn very well independently.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The use of National Curriculum levels to help pupils evaluate their work and set themselves targets for improvement.
- The use of ICT.

89. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 some have limited experience of art and have not kept a sketchbook. The majority attained standards in art and design that were broadly average but lower than their attainment in the core subjects. They respond well to the very good teaching. Teacher assessments in recent years show that by the end of Year 9 attainment of boys and girls was well above expectation. Although boys performed less well than the girls, as is the case nationally, like the girls their attainment was well above expectation.

90. The work by current Year 9 pupils, seen in lessons and in the samples of work provided by the school, confirms that standards are well above expectation. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are working at or above Level 5 and are making very good progress. Pupils' language and literacy skills develop well. Work in sketchbooks is annotated, pupils read to gather information about artists and their work and are given opportunities in lessons to practise subject-specific language when explaining their work. Numeracy skills receive appropriate attention, for example when pupils enlarge work, when they visualise and plan two-dimensional images and realise them as three dimensional sculptures and models. The curriculum units are planned very well to incorporate these skills alongside pupils' creative, imaginative and aesthetic development. More than 50 Year 9 pupils have chosen to take art and design or graphics as an option subject in the upper school and their experiences in Years 7 to 9 are very good preparation for the next stage of their learning.

91. Pupils achieve very well. They are curious and very well motivated and they learn very well independently. Key features of their achievement lie in the teachers' ability to foster very positive attitudes to learning and to develop skills of experimentation and reflection. As a consequence, pupils gain the confidence to refine, modify and improve their work. These qualities were evident in all year groups. In a Year 9 class, pupils applied the lines and patterns they had carefully recorded from observation and research to the surfaces of their sculptures and clearly understood how the forms and shapes had been enhanced as a consequence. In a Year 8 class, pupils' understanding of Matisse's work was raised through the teacher's very effective questioning. Pupils were able to identify aspects of the composition, the impact of primary and complementary colours and how they might use similar techniques in their own work. Pupils in a Year 7 class were very excited by the large-scale work they were producing and gave thoughtful explanations of their use of symbols and pattern making. They showed a growing awareness and sensitivity to artists' work, remarking on the stern facial expression in a self-portrait by Frida Kahlo and the use of pattern in work by Gustav Klimt. Sketchbooks are generally used well, particularly by older pupils. However, a minority do not give enough consideration to overall presentation. Occasionally work is left unfinished, or not sufficiently well organised for pupils to recognise what has been achieved and to be able to build on it in future weeks.

92. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and they plan lessons very thoroughly. These qualities have helped to bring about the significant improvements since the time of the last inspection where pupils' learning and achievements were causes for concern. Lessons begin promptly, pace is brisk and time is used to the full. Teachers make very good use of their own work to demonstrate particular skills and to raise expectations. This reinforces positive relationships, encourages pupils to value others' work and fosters their interest and curiosity. While pupils are working, teachers time their interventions well. Questioning is particularly effective where it is probing and requires extended

responses from pupils. The teachers' questioning techniques allow pupils to suggest why things are as they are and effectively consolidate knowledge and understanding. They also strengthen pupils' confidence and willingness to experiment with unfamiliar materials and processes. Homework is set regularly and, although the quality and standard of work is at times weaker than that produced in lessons, it supports the curriculum units well and encourages independent work.

93. Teachers give very detailed oral feedback to pupils on how well they are progressing and both pupils and teachers use these assessments to plan future work and set targets. In the main, however, pupils written evaluations are too brief. They give insufficient information, in relation to National Curriculum levels, about what has been achieved and what they could do to improve. Insufficient information is communicated to pupils to enable them to be more involved in tracking their progress and set sharper targets.

94. The quality of leadership and the management is very good and has ensured very good improvement since the last inspection. The department development plan has correctly identified areas for improvement, including on-going staff development and the purchase of additional computers. Very good use has been made of information from school data and teacher assessments to modify the curriculum and raise attainment. Visits to galleries, workshops for pupils with particular skills and aptitudes and the links with other arts subjects combine to give pupils access to a rich and exciting range of learning opportunities. The skills of the head of department, to reflect on what is working well and tackle effectively what needs to be improved, have been key factors in building a popular and successful department.

## **CITIZENSHIP**

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

### **Strengths**

- Pupils have opportunities to participate in activities and share responsibility in school which are appropriate to the learning of citizenship.
- Good opportunities occur across the curriculum for discussing controversial and topical issues which assist pupils' understanding of 'community'.
- Appropriate research has taken place across the curriculum to identify areas related to citizenship in different subjects.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Planned opportunities for pupils to discuss and learn about citizenship.
- Suitable systems for ensuring monitoring of provision of citizenship, both as a self-contained course and through other areas of the curriculum.
- Planning by senior management to implement statutory requirements for the subject.

95. Currently, some aspects of citizenship are taught within PSD and within a few subject areas. Pupils do not record any of the work as 'citizenship' to indicate their accumulated knowledge in this subject, nor is written work about citizenship collected together.

96. Most pupils have one lesson of PSD with their form tutors each week. Citizenship is incidental within such lessons. Although some planning in year groups show blocks of citizenship to be taught, these are not always taught as such and so may not be identified as such by pupils. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards. Standards of teaching in PSD vary widely, which has an important bearing on the pupils' understanding of all elements of PSD, including those related to citizenship. Teaching was satisfactory where elements of citizenship were implicit but not a clear focus. For example, in history pupils understood the necessity for censorship during the Second World



War, and could relate this to present day events, such as the conflict in Iraq, but this was not sufficiently identified for pupils as citizenship. In a science lesson on human fertilisation, responsibilities as parents were made clear to pupils, as well as the responsibilities of parenthood in the community, but pupils could only record this as science because no system exists in the school for them to identify aspects of citizenship in written work across the curriculum.

97. Many opportunities already exist for developing citizenship. In some subjects, groups of pupils are encouraged to work together, for example in physical education and PSD. Year 9 pupils prepare a newspaper in understanding the role of the media. The library lends good support to citizenship under different headings. Pupils have a strong base of support within the pastoral team and assemblies encourage them to be responsible citizens, although this is not always stated clearly. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, take part in assemblies and presentations. Pupils are given opportunities to share experiences, take responsibility and gain from social experiences on residential courses and as part of a mini-enterprise scheme. They take part in many extra-curricular activities. The school has good links with the community which lead to visits by speakers on a variety of community topics clearly related to citizenship. Year councils have been developed so that pupils can experience the responsibilities and equality of opportunity offered by a democratic system of representation on a decision-making body, but this is not as effective as it could be. Discussions with pupils in Year 8 show that the newly elected year councils are not valued as a forum to help pupils to understand the nature of democratic decision making. In most subjects, objectives and the contribution to learning in citizenship are not made clear so coverage of these components is incidental.

98. Overall, the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. New leadership of the subject has led to an analysis of where citizenship might be taught but this has not yet led to a scheme of work. Possibilities of coverage are included in the aims of some subjects. An action plan exists that sets out objectives for full implementation of a course. At present too little is done to train teachers in this subject, to plan how provision may be monitored and pupils' work assessed.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is good and pupils attain standards that are above average.
- Pupils enjoy their work and collaborate well together.
- Accommodation and resources are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Computer-related work, and particularly computer-aided manufacture.
- Departmental targets are not reviewed purposefully or regularly enough.

99. In 2002, the results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were well above those reported nationally. Current work indicates that standards are lower than this but still above the national average.

100. The current standard of work in Year 9 is above average and pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school, which is average. In Years 7 and 8, pupils develop their knowledge and making skills in textiles and resistant materials. In Year 9, pupils have more opportunities to develop both designing and making skills in all of the design and technology subjects. By the end of Year 9, pupils have opportunities to work to design briefs, carry out some research and investigation and develop their own ideas. They use a range of recording skills when presenting ideas, for example, by making flow charts of their production methods. Higher-attaining pupils produce very good, well-presented folder work, and the work of middle and lower-attaining pupils, including those

with special educational needs, is good because it is well structured and organised. Finished practical work is good. Pupils use computers for some aspects of their work, but this is an area for further development.

101. Teaching is good, overall. All teachers have good subject knowledge and teach the required skills well. Overall, planning is generally effective and in most lessons teachers have suitably high expectations of what pupils can do. Overall, pupils and resources are managed well. Teachers provide good individual support for pupils. Marking of work varies in quality and consistency. In general, pupils are not familiar enough with marking criteria to be applied to the homework they do for all homework to be of the maximum value to them. Pupils' learning is good and they work at a good pace. They follow instructions well and carry out guided activities, which enable them to acquire knowledge and practise basic skills. However, they have limited opportunities to practise their designing skills and develop creative ideas, which can be used in individual solutions. Pupils enjoy practical work.

102. Literacy, numeracy and computer skills develop satisfactorily. Attitudes and behaviour are good overall, and are often very good. Pupils respond very well to the learning opportunities provided and some good cooperative small group work was observed when mixed groups of boys and girls, of different ability levels, planned and made snack bars.

103. Although the curriculum is satisfactory, the availability of specialist teachers and the limited time allocated, is adversely affecting the proportions of the design and technology subjects being taught, and the designing and making experiences which pupils have.

104. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The department functions well on a day-to-day basis. Development priorities lack precision. At present, the designing and making aspects of the National Curriculum do not receive appropriately balanced coverage. Departmental targets are not sufficiently reviewed within the faculty or through regular effective meetings with the line manager.

105. Accommodation and resources are good overall, with a good range of machines and equipment for working in a wide range of materials. However, the management of the resistant materials rooms does not make the best use of the available spaces and equipment, and more effective use could be made of computers. Although the department has a number of areas that require development, improvement since the last inspection has been good, overall.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

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

### **Strengths**

- Pupils respond very well to the very good teaching and this results in very good learning.
- Overall, pupils, and especially girls, achieve well.
- Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to their work.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The attainment of boys is markedly below that of girls.
- The department development plan that does not specify how improvements are to be achieved.
- Assessment provides insufficient guidance for pupils as to how they may improve their work.

106. Pupils join the school with knowledge and understanding that are above average. In 2002, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 showed pupils' attainment to be very high when compared with national expectations.

107. The standard attained by pupils currently in Year 9 is well above national expectations, which indicates that teacher assessments in 2002 were a slight overestimate. The difference between the attainment of girls and that of boys is significantly higher than reported nationally. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of places and themes. In a lesson on Japan, pupils recalled factual knowledge in response to questioning and used technical language accurately. They appreciate how processes and relationships can affect the environment and offer explanations to support this, as, for example, when higher-attaining pupils discussed the future of farming in Japan. Pupils draw on a wide range of skills to complete their enquiry work, and develop well the ability to interpret questions and support their conclusions with evidence and examples. This is because a very strong emphasis is placed on the development of both literacy and subject skills in all years. When standards on entry to the school are taken into account, the achievement of pupils at the end of Year 9 is good.

108. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because teachers are aware of their requirements, give very good support and select appropriate tasks and resources for them. Where support assistants are available, they contribute a great deal to the learning and enable the full participation of all pupils. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on coasts, that involved role-play, pupils with special educational needs played a significant part in the presentations.

109. The teaching and learning observed were very good. A particular strength was the acquisition and application of subject skills. For example, all Year 7 pupils use grid references accurately. Pupils use geographical terms confidently. This is because teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding of course requirements. They have high expectations of their pupils, encouraging high standards in map, graphical and written work. Lessons and topics are very well planned to allow pupils to consolidate work done previously and to build upon it. In this way their understanding of the relationship between process and change was developed, for example in Year 9, when pupils studied the development of Antarctica and assessed its possible impact on this fragile environment. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers maintain very good records that enable them to monitor the pupils' progress closely. National Curriculum descriptors and targets are not used sufficiently, however, to inform pupils of what they should do to improve.

110. Teachers manage pupils well. Relationships are very positive, and pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm to the very good teaching. In an excellent lesson on the impact of building coastal defences, pupils in Year 8 achieved a very good appreciation of the complexity of the relationship between human activity and the natural environment. They applied to good effect the knowledge gained on a field excursion to Norfolk. Behaviour in all classes was very good. Pupils are courteous. They value the support of their teachers and are very willing to contribute in lessons. Regular homework supports classroom learning, and pupils make good use of the well-equipped library. They have many opportunities to practise and apply their numerical skills. For example, all are able to construct and interpret a variety of graphs. The practice and application of pupils' ICT skills is a further strength of the teaching and learning. Very good use is made of both the Internet and Intranet to support enquiry work.

111. The head of department provides informed and focused leadership and manages the well-qualified and enthusiastic team of teachers very well. The monitoring and planning of teaching and learning are good, though the departmental development plan fails to show how improvements are to be achieved and what timescales are involved. The resources provided are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the department has the commitment and capacity to improve still further.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Standards are well above average and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn effectively.
- Pupils enjoy history and show good attitudes to their work.
- History makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and to their understanding of citizenship.

### Areas for improvement

- The marking and assessment of pupils' work does not give them enough guidance on how to improve.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to develop independent writing skills and to use source materials.
- ICT is not used extensively enough in teaching and learning.

112. By the end of Year 9, the overall standard of work is well above average and pupils are achieving well. This is reflected in the teacher assessments in Year 9, though these tend to give most weight to pupils' factual knowledge rather than their ability to evaluate source materials. Work in lessons and in pupils' files shows similarly very good levels of knowledge. The average and above-average attaining pupils write detailed factual accounts of major historical events. The best work in Year 9 shows that the highest-attaining pupils apply their knowledge very well. They had clearly understood the reasons for and against the Appeasement Policy of the late 1930s and had written very persuasive speeches in support of the different points of view. The work on attitudes to the treaty of Versailles demonstrated good understanding of the differences in the responses of France and Germany. Some pupils are better at explaining their knowledge orally than in writing. Lower-attaining pupils, and many of average attainment, tend to rely very heavily on the prepared writing guidance. Some of their work, for example on the Battle of the Somme, showed that they did not always fully understand it. Some pupils make appropriate use of ICT skills in both researching and presenting their work, but this is not extensive.

113. The teaching and learning observed were both good. In most lessons a lively approach and interesting activities motivated the pupils well and engaged their interest. Teachers explained the objectives of the lessons clearly so that pupils understood what was expected of them. A very good lesson on the 'Slave Trade' really challenged pupils to think about issues of human rights, as well as teaching them facts about the trade. In other lessons, the teachers made very good links with current events, discussing issues of democracy and dictatorship. Most pupils were able to put forward their own point of view and also to understand that there might be legitimate differences in attitudes. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and provide good individual support in lessons. Regular assessment provides information about progress pupils are making and the standards being achieved. Work is marked frequently and teachers give encouragement, but marking does not often give pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, but where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, the pace of lessons was slower. On occasion even in good lessons, pupils sometimes spent too long on activities which consolidated their knowledge, rather than developing it further. The use of writing guidance which gives pupils very clear guidance on how to structure their work is very effective in developing pupils' literacy skills and ensuring that they acquire good knowledge. The guidance is, however, sometimes too prescriptive and does not give pupils enough opportunities to develop independent writing skills or to use and evaluate source materials.

114. The teaching and the curriculum make a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and to citizenship, through lessons and extra-curricular activities, such as the

annual residential trip to Northumberland. Pupils are given many opportunities to work together and to discuss sensitive issues and test their ideas in a structured manner and in a safe atmosphere. The leadership and management of history are good and the department is well-placed to continue to improve. The schemes of work are designed to support both specialist and non-specialist teachers effectively and are being systematically updated and improved, though the use of ICT in teaching and learning tends to be too dependent on the interests of individual teachers. Provision is therefore inconsistent. Opportunities to use ICT are not always made specific enough in the planning. The subject has improved well since the last inspection. Standards are higher and the teaching is better. The priorities for development are clearly related to raising standards still further and to improving the range and quality of books.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching is very effective and enables pupils to learn very well.
- Teachers are showing increased confidence and skills in using ICT across the curriculum.
- The leadership and management of ICT are very good.
- The school is very committed to developing the use of ICT.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The consistency in the use of computers in subjects other than ICT.
- The level of resources.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress against National Curriculum levels.

115. In 2002, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were well above those reported nationally. Current work indicates that standards are above the national expectation, which indicates that teachers' assessments were slightly generous.

116. Pupils join the school with varied but, overall, above average experience in the use of computers. Current work in Years 7 to 9, together with experiences in other subjects, indicates that pupils have access to a good range of activities, which cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. Tasks include processing text and images, graphics, desktop publishing, use of the Internet for research and use of computers for measurement and control. All pupils learn how to use spreadsheets and then use their knowledge and skills to simulate the running of a small business. The value of this simulation work is further enhanced by regular references to the effects and influences that computers are having in everyday life.

117. Pupils extend their experience of using computers in the work they do for other subjects and there is also significant work from other subjects included in ICT lessons. Regular use of computer-based research, followed by well presented, word-processed coursework takes place in geography and religious education lessons. In ICT lessons, there are extended exercises in the use of computers for control, for example when pupils model sequences for the control of traffic lights. The use of computers provides good reinforcement of numeracy and literacy skills for all pupils. For example, the exercise on spreadsheets set suitable mathematical challenges for highly-attaining pupils and reinforced basic numeracy for the lower-attaining. Higher ability, and more committed pupils, some of whom have special educational needs, use opportunities to produce good quality, more individualised project work, and often complete extension tasks. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress.

118. The use of computers in most other subjects is developing well but computer-based work in mathematics, art, music, history and design and technology lessons, is not as strong as for other subjects due to lack of planned access to available computer resources. The school's audit of

computer-related work in other subjects indicates that a significant amount of this is planned. However, it tends to be limited to researching and use of existing presentation skills rather than extension of pupils' computing skills to a higher level.

119. Teaching in lessons observed was very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and this is used very effectively in well-planned lessons with clear objectives. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are high, and pupils respond very well to the very good range of teaching methods used. Teaching time is used very well. Pupils have many opportunities to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills and very good references are made to the way in which computers are used in modern society. Work is marked regularly and well. Good use is made of homework to reinforce learning. As a direct result of very good teaching, pupils' learning is also very good. Pupils gain knowledge quickly and are becoming confident when using computers for a variety of purposes. They develop skills quickly and after completing initial exercises show good levels of creative thinking in applying learned techniques in more extending exercises. Pupils are keen and work at a very good pace. Higher-attaining and more committed pupils move onto extension tasks very readily because they have good understanding of their own learning.

120. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Very good working relationships are established in which the contributions of individual pupils, and the support given by teachers, are valued. Pupils follow instructions well and all show good levels of concentration in lessons. The confidence that pupils gain through successful use of computers has a very positive effect on their personal development.

121. The programme of work for Years 7 to 9 is good in the separate ICT lessons and satisfactory across the curriculum. Lesson time is limited, but used well, and National Curriculum requirements are met. Leadership and management of ICT are very good. There is very good subject documentation. The good start made to implementing the Key Stage 3 Strategy for ICT has resulted in good planning for the use of computers in other subjects, although there is more to be done. Assessment is good overall, but does not make sufficient use of National Curriculum levels to identify specific points for development. Record keeping is very thorough, and data is used effectively to guide curriculum planning, but teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, are not yet sufficiently rigorous.

122. Accommodation is very good and is to improve further in the near future. Resources, although of good quality, are currently average. The number of computers, and opportunities for other subjects to use these facilities, is due to increase in the next academic year, when the current development plan is implemented. The learning resource centre and other areas are used increasingly and effectively, and overall access to computer resources is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teachers have good linguistic skills and subject knowledge.
- In French, pupils acquire good standards in speaking and listening.
- Teaching is good and relationships between teachers and pupils are productive.
- Teachers plan well together and systematically share ideas and materials.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The allocation of time for German.
- Timetabling in French prevents proper continuity of learning in Year 7.

- Schemes of work in French are out of date.
- The use of ICT and resources in the library.

123. Pupils' standard of French on joining the school varies. Some pupils have learned the language in clubs at their primary school and some have no prior knowledge. In 2002, teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 show that standards were above average, with girls outperforming boys. Teacher assessments over the last two years have risen. German is taught for one lesson a week to a small number of pupils in Years 8 and 9. Their attainment is satisfactory in view of the small amount of time allocated.

124. Standards in French in Year 9 are above national expectation. Pupils' listening skills are generally good. Pupils coped well in a lesson conducted almost entirely in French by a native speaker of the language. Speaking skills in French are generally high. Pupils participated well orally and had good pronunciation. In several lessons, pupils successfully took part in role-plays. In one class of lower-attaining pupils, however, pronunciation was anglicised and pupils only managed single-word responses. In the Year 9 German class, pupils understood basic classroom commands and had well-practised and accurate pronunciation. Pupils' reading and writing skills are satisfactory in French. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 write accurately and use past, present and future tenses. Middle and lower-attaining pupils copy words and phrases accurately and write longer texts when strongly supported. The presentation of written work is generally good. The written work in German is very basic and mainly consolidates oral work. Achievement in French is good. Achievement in German is satisfactory considering the small allocation of teaching time.

125. Overall, the teaching and learning of French are good. They were very good in several lessons observed. The teaching and learning of German are very good. Teachers' linguistic skills in both languages are good and they have a good knowledge of the National Curriculum. They use National Curriculum criteria for assessing pupils' end of unit tests and refer to National Curriculum levels in teaching, which helps pupils to know in detail how well they are achieving. Teachers have high expectations, lessons are well planned and objectives are made clear to pupils. In most lessons, pupils have good opportunities to practise the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Homework is used well to extend and consolidate class work. Teachers monitor and correct pupils' oral contributions rigorously but sensitively, which creates a confident learning environment. They mark pupils' written work regularly and thoroughly, which positively affects standards. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs well and they also challenge higher-attaining pupils to achieve their best. Pupils are generally well motivated and settle quickly to do written tasks. They listen attentively to the teacher and to recorded texts. Occasionally, however, a few pupils were observed not paying attention for short periods, or were quietly off-task when given written work. All teachers are trained to use ICT and some use is made of it in lessons and for homework. Overall, however, the use of ICT is unsatisfactory.

126. Leadership and management are good. Teachers work together very closely, and there is a systematic sharing of ideas and materials. However, new schemes of work are needed in French. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the head of department is carried out thoroughly. Resources, with the exception of ICT, are good. Accommodation and display are very good for French, but unsatisfactory for German. The arrangements for teaching German are unsatisfactory. The time allocation for French in Year 7 is low and the distribution and frequency of lessons sometimes impedes learning. The library provision is unsatisfactory. The annual visit to France is very well planned and helps raise standards of oral and written work. Links with the high schools are very good and pupils complete a bridging course which facilitates transfer into Year 10. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## MUSIC

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

### **Strengths**

- Standards are consistently well above average and pupils achieve well.
- The teacher shows great enthusiasm and has excellent subject knowledge.
- As a result of very effective leadership, the subject has shown very good improvement.
- Pupils develop their performance skills very well through the excellent musical opportunities provided.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Staffing, to provide all pupils with the same high quality specialist teaching.
- Assessment procedures have resulted in over-generous results in Year 9.
- Resources for ICT are inadequate.

127. Teacher assessments in 2002 reported standards, at the end of Year 9, as very high in comparison with those reported nationally. Girls achieved substantially higher results than boys. However, the assessment of pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 have been too high because assessments have not taken into account all aspects of musical ability when applying the National Curriculum levels to pupils' work.

128. At the end of Year 9, standards are well above average. All pupils achieve well considering their wide variation in musical ability when they enter the school. Girls consistently attain much higher standards than boys. Pupils who receive instrumental and vocal tuition from the visiting tutors achieve very high standards of performance. Opportunities to incorporate their skills into the lessons are frequent. For example, in one excellent Year 9 lesson, two clarinettists a flute player and a cellist performed purposefully with the keyboard players to create a well-structured, imaginative, minimalist performance, based on the 'X Files' theme. Standards of theory work, such as recognition of modes and chromatic harmony, are higher than that normally found.

129. The more musically talented pupils have a highly developed vocabulary of technical musical language which they use very well to describe the music they play and hear. Lower-attaining pupils use technical language well and accurately notate their pieces using note names. In discussion, they clearly understand melodic shape, texture and timbre. They are not as secure in performing their own parts accurately within groups. A good emphasis is placed on the use of literacy. Key words are displayed on walls and technical language is used constantly. Satisfactory opportunities are provided to develop numeracy. Pupils do not use ICT enough because the school has insufficient music software.

130. Pupils learn very well because the teaching is consistently very good and on occasions excellent. Teaching is characterised by excellent subject knowledge, very good planning of lessons and an enthusiastic focus on highly musical and creative practical work. Lessons are carefully prepared and well-structured with an introduction that includes a review of previous work. Learning objectives are made clear. Pupils' understanding is checked at the end of each lesson. Pupils generally benefit from tasks carefully modified to suit their abilities, but occasionally the more musically talented pupils are not challenged enough and do not always work as hard as they could.

131. Pupils do not receive a consistently high quality musical education because, as a result of a shortage of specialist teachers, non-musician supply teachers teach a fifth of the lessons each week.

132. Pupils show very good attitudes to their work and are keen to learn because relationships within lessons and extra-curricular activities are excellent, creating a superb environment to encourage learning and build pupils' confidence. Lessons are exciting and engaging. Pupils are taught well to listen to and respect the views of others. Very good opportunities are provided for social development



through pupils working together and taking part in the excellent extra-curricular activities. The quality of the tuition provided by visiting instrumental teachers is very good and pupils achieve very well in these lessons.

133. Leadership and management are very good and have resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection. The head of department is very enthusiastic and hard working. She has built up a department that is now one of the most successful in the school. The standards of the musical groups she directs are excellent because of her relentless commitment to ensuring the highest possible musical quality. The department's development plans demonstrate realistic and well thought out aims. Schemes of work are clear and ensure a high quality musical experience for all pupils. The head of department has not been monitored as part of the performance management programme for over three years. Enthusiasm for music is very high and the very varied musical activities are valued highly by pupils. The music department contributes well to the personal and musical development of pupils throughout the school by regular performances throughout the community and foreign concert tours every two years.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching is good leading to good learning and achievement.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic in lessons and many are keen to join in the very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The accuracy of procedures for assessing pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9.
- The monitoring of teaching to ensure the sharing of good practice.
- The detailed use of National Curriculum levels for target setting.

134. The results of teacher assessment, at the end of Year 9 in 2002, were very high in comparison with those reported nationally, for both boys and girls. Standards in lessons observed during the inspection were above average, as were assessment records gathered over the last three years, which indicated that teacher assessments were too high. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average. Therefore, they achieve well.

135. Teaching and learning are good. This shows a marked improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally very good, particularly in technical events such as discus, javelin and hurdling. Teachers give clear instructions and have high expectations of pupils. In several lessons, teachers gave very good demonstrations themselves or made very good use of some pupils' higher level skills for this. This is a key factor in helping all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to raise their standards and make good progress. Tasks are usually well planned to challenge pupils at their own level of skill. There has been a general improvement in lesson planning since the last inspection. Instructions and coaching points are given at a good pace. In a javelin lesson in Year 9, the teacher's very good planning and very good analysis of the pupils' skill development ensured that very good progress was made by all.

136. Teachers sometimes encourage pupils to become more independent in their learning by providing opportunities for them to choose warm-up activities and to work in pairs during stretching routines. They analyse the performance of their classmates to improve their oral skills and develop accurate vocabulary. The majority of pupils analyse their own work and that of others well, making

good use of appropriate terminology. This shows that they learn well, when given these opportunities. However, such opportunities are not planned for in every lesson.

137. Assessment is carried out regularly, and good record keeping means that teachers are very clear about pupils' skill levels. Pupils, however, are not so clear because their knowledge of National Curriculum levels is not detailed enough. They have not the knowledge required to set themselves specific targets and reach higher levels of attainment.

138. Satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop socially are provided in all lessons through co-operative activity in pairs and teams, but the opportunity for girls and boys to work together is often missed. Similarly, opportunities are missed for pupils to use their number skills in lessons through measuring and timing activities, although a good athletics lesson did enable every pupil to use a stop watch and record times for a partner. Non-performing pupils were well involved in the lesson.

139. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. As a consequence, pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards physical education are very good. The teachers' enthusiasm for their subject and encouragement of the pupils are the major reasons for this. This was seen at its best in very good teaching in Year 9 athletics, where pupils responded very energetically, whatever their level of performance, and clearly enjoyed the work. The up-take of extra-curricular activities reflects the very high level of interest and enthusiasm of pupils and teachers. The numbers turning out to play in the girls' Year 9 badminton competition and their highly committed approach exemplify this. Pupils are supportive of one another and work well in groups. They show a very strong sense of care for their classmates. Slow registration and changing, particularly in the girls' classes at the start of some lessons, occasionally results in off-task behaviour and limits the time available to review their work at the end of the session.

140. The department is well managed and led. The schemes of work are well planned so that pupils have a wide range of challenging activities. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when breadth and balance were limited. National Curriculum requirements are met well. However, opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and number skills, though well covered in the department's handbook, are not reflected in schemes of work. Priorities for development are appropriate, with good plans for monitoring teaching to enable good practice to be better shared. Accommodation is well used, but will be insufficient as numbers increase, particularly for changing and for gymnastics.

141. The extra-curricular programme is very extensive and very well organised. A wide-ranging programme is open to all pupils. Inter-class, inter-school, district and county sports fixtures enable pupils to take part in competition at an appropriate level. Many pupils have gained honours at district and county level, in particular in rugby, netball, football, cricket and athletics. The tennis matches and badminton competitions observed during the inspection provided an excellent opportunity for pupils to improve their skills. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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

### **Strengths**

- Good teaching enables pupils to learn well, which leads to good standards and achievement, particularly by girls.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the value of religious education.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The use of assessment levels to judge standards and provide information for pupils on their progress.
- The standards attained by boys.
- The subject knowledge of non-specialist teachers to ensure that pupils learn from religions other than Christianity in Years 7 and 8.

142. In 2002, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 confirms these judgements. However, while pupils' knowledge of major faith groups is very good, learning from these religions is less well developed. This is because, particularly in Years 7 and 8, they have too few opportunities to view their own attitudes and spirituality against the values and beliefs of others. The difference between the attainment of girls and boys is significantly higher than is usually found.

143. When compared to their attainment on entry to the school, which is average, pupils' achievement is good. In a Year 9 lesson, all pupils studying 'Cohabitation or Marriage?' achieved a very good understanding of the characteristics and implications of the different relationships. They were thoughtful and articulate in expressing and sharing their views. Their written work reflects increasing maturity. It provides good opportunities to make informed responses to people's religious values and commitments, for example in considering the Buddhist response to suffering. In this way, they make good progress in understanding how different religions impact on the views and lives of individuals. They enjoy the work on moral issues. The majority of pupils can make judgements and present evidence in support of their views. When moral issues are covered, such as birth control, the religious perspective is sometimes neglected.

144. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the good knowledge teachers have of their requirements and the appropriate work which is set. Teachers support these pupils well and have appropriate expectations of them. However, the department is aware of the need to refine its adaptation of tasks to different levels of ability.

145. Overall, the teaching observed was good. Lessons were thoroughly prepared and had clear learning objectives. The teachers, only one of whom is a specialist, have satisfactory subject knowledge, though, in dealing with other religions, placed greater emphasis on fact rather than underlying values and beliefs. All teachers question pupils skilfully to check and extend their understanding. In the better lessons, pupils were given time to reflect upon their contributions. In one magic moment, a Year 7 pupil recognised the symbolism of the rising of the sun, viewed through the east window of a church, in relation to the coming of Christ and his Resurrection. The teaching usually makes good intellectual and creative demands on the pupils, as is clear from their previous written work. Teachers support pupils' learning very well. They deal very effectively when controversial subjects are tackled, taking care to remain objective. Some lessons are excessively dominated by the teacher, which allows pupils too little opportunity for working independently and for questioning ideas they encounter. Literacy skills are very effectively developed. Good progress is being made in developing the use of ICT. Assessment is satisfactory, but teachers do not make enough use of assessment levels to provide pupils with precise information on their progress and specific advice on how to improve their work.

146. Pupils' behaviour in all lessons was good. They listened carefully to the views of others and worked diligently to complete their work. They respond with interest and enthusiasm to the supportive and informed teaching. Relationships with teachers and other pupils were very positive. The department makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, cultural and social development. However, pupils are not made aware of the contribution of religious education to developing an understanding of citizenship.

147. The temporary arrangements made for the management of the department are satisfactory. However, more specialist assistance is required to help the department achieve a clear view of where further improvements in teaching and the curriculum need to be made. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.