

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Moreton Community School**

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104397

Headteacher: Mr Tony Leach

Reporting inspector: Michael Merchant  
27368

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 249861

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Old Fallings Lane Wolverhampton WV10 8BY
Postcode:	
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr Ian Brookfield
Date of previous inspection:	March 2001

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9974	Daljit Singh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32223	Carol Hirst	Team inspector	English	
19528	Roland Portsmouth	Team inspector	Mathematics	
31441	Maggie King	Team inspector	Science	
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	Art and design Special educational needs	
17156	Ted Graham	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
4223	Garth Collard	Team inspector	Geography	
24127	Jim Kidd	Team inspector	History Citizenship English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11838	Derek Cronin	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Moreton Community School is a smaller than average-sized comprehensive school of 540 girls and boys aged 11 to 18 years. The school draws pupils mainly from a very economically and socially deprived area to the north of Wolverhampton. It is slightly smaller in size than at the last inspection in 2000 but this is now rising. A small proportion of pupils (12 per cent) are from minority ethnic groups and a very small number (seven) have English as an additional language. None are in the early stages of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register, including those, who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, is average. The proportion of pupils qualifying for free school meals (nearly 46 per cent) is well above average. The profile of pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very low compared to the national average. In 2001, the school joined the "Schools in Challenging Circumstances" initiative, a national scheme aimed at improving standards. The school is also part of the local Educational Action Zone. The school has attracted many new teachers recently. In the past two years, 20 teachers have left the school and 26 have joined. The numbers of pupils, who join and leave the school other than at the usual times, is high, with 32 pupils joining and 42 leaving in the last school year.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Moreton has made rapid progress and is now **an effective school**. It has moved from a period of decline to one of remarkable improvement and now offers its pupils **a good standard of education**. It has developed many significant strengths and is very well placed to address the areas still needing attention. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were very low, but current standards are higher, although they are still well below average. Standards are improving each year and pupils now make good progress and achieve well. GCSE results in the school are improving much faster than the national rate. Teaching and learning are consistently good with much that is very good or excellent. The headteacher is an excellent leader and his talented leadership encourages the staff to provide him with excellent support. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the effectiveness of the leadership team are very significant factors in the school's rapid improvement. This has promoted a good learning ethos that is leading to rapidly improved standards in most areas of the curriculum. The governing body is totally committed to securing improvement and has won the support of the parents. The school gives **good** value for money.

#### What the school does well

- Attainment is rising rapidly, especially in Years 10 and 11, and pupils make good progress because they now have the self-confidence to learn. They believe in themselves and have pride in the school.
- Pupils learn well and are eager to gain new knowledge and skills because their teachers treat them with the utmost respect and plan their lessons to meet the needs of all.
- Teaching overall is good with much that is very good and excellent.
- The leadership of the headteacher is of the highest order and has been one of the major reasons why the school has improved so rapidly. With excellent support from his talented leadership team, he has galvanised the school and has inspired all to give of their best.
- The school fosters a generosity of spirit and treats pupils with dignity. Consequently, pupils behave very well and relationships are mutually respectful, which fosters good learning.
- Pupils have been made to feel secure in school because they know that all staff care deeply about their welfare.
- The extensive range of out-of-class activities strengthens pupil-teacher relationships and has done much to create both self-respect and ambition in pupils.

### What could be improved

- Although the school has made great strides in improving attendance, it still remains too low and affects the attainment of a significant number of pupils.
- Attainment remains well below average overall and more still needs to be done to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils, to foster more independent learning and to make greater use of homework.
- The stock of books and computers in the library is too low and the library is not used as a learning resource centre for pupils.

*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 inspected in 1998 and put into special measures. In 2000, Her Majesty's Inspectors deemed the school to be making insufficient progress and it was threatened with closure. A new headteacher was appointed in 2000 and the school was re-inspected in 2001 by Her Majesty's Inspectors, who took the school out of special measures. Since that time, there have been considerable further improvements. Standards of attainment in national tests at age 14 have risen, but are still very low. Work seen during the inspection, however, shows standards have improved and pupils are making good progress but standards are well below average. Standards in the GCSE examinations were well below average in 2002, but the current work seen has improved, particularly in Year 10. Learning has improved and is now good as a result of the consistently good and often excellent teaching. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have greatly improved. Attendance rates that were very low are improving and are now below average. The strength of management is now far more secure across the school due to the excellent leadership of the headteacher and the leadership team and their very good management skills. The governing body continues to develop an increasingly proactive role in supporting and shaping the direction of the school. The last inspection left the school with six key issues and very good progress has been made towards realising all of them, although more time will be needed for them to be fully met. Attainment is rising faster than the national rate; there is a rigorous and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation; attendance levels have risen. There is an effective policy in place to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; a policy to implement pupils' numeracy skills has been implemented and the school now has a long-term development plan.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and by sixth-form pupils at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	<b>E*</b>	<b>E*</b>	<b>E*</b>	<b>C</b>
A-levels/AS-levels	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>*</b>	

<b>Key</b>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

*\* National comparison data for AS/A level results in 2002 are not yet available.*

*This data places the school in the lowest 5 per cent of schools in the country*

In the national test in 2002 at the end of Year 9, results were very low compared to all schools in all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, results were below average in English and mathematics, but average in science. Results in national tests show a decline to 2001 and remained the same in 2002.

GCSE results in 2002 were generally well below average compared to all schools, although they were generally above average compared with similar schools. These results show a trend of improvement, which is well above the average for all schools nationally. The school narrowly missed its GCSE targets for 2002, but is well placed to meet next years' targets. Most pupils, including those with special needs or English as an additional language, made satisfactory progress from Year 9 to 11 and achieved as expected. In all years, standards observed are now well below average overall and this represents good achievement given the very low standards most pupils have when they enter the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Satisfactory:</b> pupils are proud of their school, they respect their teachers and appreciate the importance of working hard to attain good grades at GCSE. Their very good attitude to learning is demonstrated by the way that they arrive early at lessons and their involvement in a very wide range of activities. Rates of attendance are still too low.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Good:</b> pupils are very well mannered. The school is now happy, harmonious and orderly and pupils are invariably polite, welcoming and friendly to adults, particularly visitors.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good:</b> the quality of relationships is a strength of the school. Opportunities for pupils to serve the school and community contribute very effectively to their development, to the promotion of constructive relationships and to race and community relations.
Attendance	<b>Well below average:</b> the school has worked tirelessly and has succeeded in raising its levels of attendance, but there is still more to do.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school with many **very good** and **excellent** features. Teaching is equally effective in all year groups. Teaching and learning are very good in art and design and drama and good in all other subjects. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons conscientiously so that the needs of all pupils are met. Very good relationships are established so that learning is supported well. ICT is taught well in **separate specialist** lessons, but is not used well in subjects to enhance learning across the curriculum. Assessment procedures are good and the use of assessment is excellent. Marking is regular and teachers give clear written feedback on how to improve. Homework is given irregularly and the quality is variable. Literacy provision is satisfactory, but the school's implementation of its numeracy strategy is inconsistent. Learning by pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds is good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is <b>satisfactory</b> and the school is developing vocational courses. The school does not meet the National Curriculum statutory requirements in ICT for ICT across the curriculum in Years 7 to 9.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Good:</b> pupils with special educational needs are very well supported when learning assistants are present. Pupils' confidence is built up by sensitivity and thoughtfulness on the part of staff, who carefully match work in class to pupils' specific needs, ensuring they make good progress. Individual education plans are variable.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	<b>Good:</b> the small proportion of pupils, who speak English as an additional language, are totally fluent in English and make the same good progress as other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Good:</b> the school makes good provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Very good:</b> staff are caring, committed and know their pupils very well. Together with very clear pastoral leadership, staff's attitudes make the quality of pastoral care very good, a clear strength of the school. Arrangements for child protection are effective.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Excellent:</b> the outstanding leadership of the headteacher is complemented by the talents of his excellent leadership team. The school is never complacent and has a very good capacity to improve further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Very good:</b> the governors continue to play a strong part in leading the school forward because they have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fully support the school's leaders in their drive to improve the school. Statutory requirements, however, are not met in respect of ICT for all pupils in Years 7 to 9.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Very good:</b> a comprehensive programme of classroom observations and reviews by the leadership team monitors teaching and learning very effectively. Each subject is reviewed constantly so that strengths are recognised and any weaknesses are quickly identified and remedied. The monitoring of teaching by heads of departments is developing.
The strategic use of resources.	<b>Very good:</b> the school's priorities determine all spending decisions through a careful match of whole-school and financial planning. The school applies the principles of best value well.

Accommodation and staffing are satisfactory, but the inadequate library means that resources for learning are unsatisfactory.

## 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>The strong leadership and management of the school.</li> <li>Teaching is good, pupils are expected to work hard and progress is good.</li> <li>Pupils enjoy school and they are helped to become responsible and mature.</li> <li>The school works closely with parents and listens to their concerns.</li> <li>Parents are well informed about how their child is getting on.</li> <li>The school provides an interesting range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Their child gets the right amount of homework</li> <li>End-of-year pupil reports with personal comments about progress in subjects.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' very positive comments about the school. However, whilst there is satisfactory provision for homework, some teachers do not set challenging tasks and do not always ensure that homework diaries are appropriately used. Inspection evidence indicates that parents would benefit from receiving end-of-year reports with specific written comments about their child's individual progress in subjects.

## ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

## MORETON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form in this below average-sized 11 to 18 comprehensive school is much smaller in size than most, with 47 students on roll. It has grown substantially over the last four years. Last year, about one third of the Year 11 students moved into the sixth form. There are broadly equal numbers of males and females in Year 13, but there are more males than females in Year 12. Nearly all students are of white British origin. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals and those on the special educational needs register is average. Students choose to follow predominantly GCE AS and A-level courses and a small number follow vocational courses. Entry requirements are not rigid, but students should have gained five A\* to C grades at GCSE in order to take GCE A-level courses. The 16-plus examination results of students when they enter the sixth form are below average and most students begin their sixth-form studies with below-average prior attainment. The school is part of the north-east Wolverhampton consortium, a group of five schools and a further education college offering between them a very wide range of AS, A-level and vocational courses.

### HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Moreton Community School has a developing sixth form, which is **effective** in meeting the needs of its students. Student numbers are rising and from very modest prior attainment most students make **good** progress and are currently working at standards just below those expected nationally. This is because teaching is **good** overall with much that is very good. Examination entries to 2001 have been too small to allow comparison with national averages. The sixth form is **very well** led and managed and systems to help students choose their courses and monitor their progress are **good**. The result is that the proportion of students, who complete their course of study, is **well above** the national average. The school is flexible in meeting individual needs within the cost constraints of a small school. Too many students, however, follow the AS and A-level courses and many are reluctant to follow vocational courses offered on other sites. The sixth form is **cost effective**.

#### Strengths

- The sixth form is very well led and managed. The deputy headteacher responsible for the sixth form has a very clear sense of purpose and has created a mature and supportive ethos for learning.
- The school does well for its students. They make good progress and work at standards just below the national average.
- Carefully planned and well-focused teaching leads to good learning. Most students work with energy and thought.
- Because students are treated with much respect by teachers and because teachers are genuinely concerned that their students do well, relationships throughout the sixth form are very good.

#### What could be improved

- There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop the key skills of number, communication and ICT.
- Too few students follow a vocational pathway post-16 if it is offered on another site, even if that is the most appropriate course for them.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.*

## THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	No students were entered for AS or A-level examinations in 2001. Current students, all of whom have begun their advanced studies without the necessary foundation of mathematical skills at GCSE, make satisfactory progress because of the consistently good teaching.
Product design	This is a new course. Good teaching on this challenging course means that students make good progress.
Art and design	Very good teaching by enthusiastic and committed teachers means that students make very good progress and are already working at levels close to the national average. Four students were entered for examinations in 2001 and all passed.
Physical education	In 2001, examination results were broadly in line with the national average overall, but below average at the higher grades of GCE A-level. Most students make satisfactory progress. Overall, teaching is satisfactory.
English literature	Students make good progress because of well-planned and carefully focused teaching.

In other subjects, work was sampled. Teaching and learning were good overall. Enthusiastic teaching leads to good achievement in travel and tourism and very good teaching leads to very good progress in drama in Year 13. No teaching was observed in ICT or health and social care because they were not taught during the week of the inspection.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	<b>Good:</b> students are very well inducted into the sixth form. The school maintains very high quality support and guidance throughout Years 12 and 13, so that that far fewer students fail to complete their course compared to national figures. However, not enough students choose to follow vocational courses, often offered on other sites, even though they may be better suited to their needs.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	<b>Very good:</b> development planning is strong and reflects the ethos of the school and its drive to push up standards very well. There are very good systems in place to evaluate teaching and learning and excellent procedures for monitoring the academic progress of students. Governors play an active part in the leadership of the sixth form.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sixth form meets their academic needs.</li> <li>All feel welcome.</li> <li>Relationships between students and teachers are very good and mature.</li> <li>All students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.</li> <li>Teachers give excellent support to students and give readily of their time.</li> <li>Careers advice is very good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More could be done to "sell" the sixth form to students in Year 11.</li> </ul>

Students feel very positive about the sixth form, especially the very good relationships they have with teachers and the guidance and care they receive whilst studying. Private study facilities are good and well looked after by students, who take great pride in their sixth form. Sixth formers have not isolated themselves from the rest of the school, but take all opportunities to join in (and take a lead often) in the life of the school. The inspection team fully concurs with their views.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

##### Strengths:

- In the 2002 results, pupils achieved **satisfactorily** from a very low baseline.
- Pupils currently make **good** progress and achieve well.
- Standards are keeping up with the rate of improvement nationally in Year 9 and are improving faster than the national average in Year 11.

##### Areas for improvement:

- Attainment overall at the end of Years 9 and 11 is **well below average**.

1. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their average points score in National Tests at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science is very low compared with the national average. Pupils, who were entered for tests and GCSE examinations in 2002, started in the school with very low levels of prior attainment. These pupils arrived at the school with particularly low levels of prior attainment in English, nearly one year behind where they should have been.
2. In the Year 9 National Curriculum Tests in 2002, the proportion of pupils gaining the target grade of Level 5 or higher was very low compared to the national average for all pupils in English, mathematics and science. Attainment, as measured by the average points score, was also very low. Standards have improved in mathematics and science, but have declined in English over the past four years. The 2002 test results were slightly lower than those of 2001, but the overall rate of improvement of pupils at the end of Year 9 is close to that seen nationally. Compared to similar schools<sup>1</sup>, attainment is below average in English and mathematics and above average in science. This represents satisfactory achievement. In science, pupils achieve well and make good progress and the school is teaching its pupils more knowledge, understanding and skills than might be expected. This is because skilful teaching in science in Year 9 gives pupils the confidence and skills necessary to do their best in the national tests. In English, standards are held back by the very low literacy skills that pupils have when they join the school. The school's effective literacy strategy is now beginning to redress these weaknesses. Pupils with special educational needs do as well as others in the school because of the effective support they receive from the special needs department. There is no difference in the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds nor of the small number of pupils, who have English as an additional language.
3. The standards of work seen in lessons and in pupils' written work are well below average and represent an improvement over last year's test results. One reason for this is that last year's test results, particularly in English, were depressed by the very large numbers of pupils, who were absent during the year and also absent for the test. The strong measures introduced by the headteacher to redress the high absence rate are beginning to have an impact on standards because more pupils are in school for longer.
4. Very good teaching is the norm in art and design and drama where pupils make very good progress. Effective teaching that motivates and inspires pupils leads to good progress over time in all other subjects.

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<sup>1</sup> Schools with similar levels of attainment in tests taken at the end of Year 6.

5. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were well below the national average overall. In 2002, twice as many pupils gained five or more grades A\* to C at GCSE as they had in the previous year, a big improvement. In 2001, the school did not meet its realistic targets in the GCSE examinations, but came very close to meeting them in 2002. The rate of improvement, as measured by the average points score, is much faster than it is for other schools nationally.
6. The higher results reflect the effective strategies the school has introduced to raise attainment in Years 10 and 11. These include;
  - the use of “learning mentors” to work with individual pupils;
  - intelligent and consistent use of assessment information to monitor the progress of pupils so that teachers know those, who are in danger of underachieving;
  - imaginative use of school rewards to motivate pupils to give of their best;
  - residential study weeks where pupils are immersed in learning with their teachers;
  - a very real focus on improving pupils’ reading and writing skills.

The school decided, entirely appropriately, to focus its attention on raising attainment in Years 10 and 11. A particular focus was the school's drive to push up standards in literacy in these years. This is one reason why work seen in English in Years 10 and 11 is of a higher quality than that seen in Years 7 to 9.

7. In all subjects, one of the main reasons for the well below average attainment has been the very low level of attendance of too many pupils over recent years. This interrupted learning and left too many pupils without the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to do well in the GCSE examinations. The problem was compounded because too many pupils failed to complete coursework in time. Also, a significant number of pupils (mainly girls) were not able to take the examinations for reasons beyond the control of the school.
8. The standards seen during the inspection overall were well below average in all years. This is an improvement over the examination and test results over the last few years, which have been very low and reflects the strenuous efforts of the school to improve levels of attendance and vindicates its strategies to raise attainment, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
9. Since the arrival of the headteacher and new leadership team, the school analyses its results very carefully to highlight any differences between boys and girls or teaching groups and also by ethnic group. This analysis and direct observation of work shows that all pupils achieve well. This is because the school takes great care to treat all its pupils equally. Attainment for the very small number of pupils with English as an additional language is similar to that of others in the school.
10. It must be remembered that pupils enter Moreton with very low levels of prior attainment, particularly with regard to reading, writing and number, and many face real obstacles to learning because of the social and economic problems that characterise much of the catchment of the school. **The school, therefore, does well for its pupils, who all, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority groups, make good progress and achieve well.**
11. **Reading** skills are sound and improving well. The school's development of a reading improvement scheme is helping pupils with very poor reading skills. Teachers use a

variety of methods to help pupils plan their **writing**. Marking is done conscientiously, but often pupils are given too many short-term targets to practise. Standards in **listening** are good. Pupils listen to each other's opinions and make thoughtful replies. Their **speaking** skills are developing well because of the good examples their teachers set.

12. Overall, the school's provision for improving literacy skills across all subjects of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. Progress has been most rapid in pupils' reading skills by encouraging the use of key words and helping pupils to express their views.
13. Standards in mathematics are well below average, but are rising over time. This is because teaching and learning are improving and, as a result, pupils are becoming more enthusiastic about mathematics. Standards seen during the inspection were higher than in national tests and examinations because a number of pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, have very poor attendance. Consequently, pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactorily in later years.
14. The effectiveness of strategies for the teaching of numeracy across all subjects of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. There is now a policy in place across the school to encourage the development of number skills, but it is not uniformly implemented. Geography has embraced number work extremely well and the school's policy is used extensively here to support data handling.
15. Standards in science are improving, although they are still well below national standards. All pupils make good progress by the end of Year 9. Standards seen in lessons are higher than those in national tests, especially in Years 10 and 11. This is due to the poor attendance of some pupils, to pupils' difficulties with retaining knowledge over time and to the relatively high numbers of pupils, who have alternative provision out of school. The progress made by those pupils, who are consistently present in science lessons, is good. Achievement is satisfactory overall.
16. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Pupils receive good levels of assistance from teaching and support staff both in their classes and during their occasional withdrawal from classes. There is an appropriate emphasis on improving pupils' reading and literacy skills. Satisfactory targets are defined in their individual education plans. Pupils receive very good levels of support to meet the social, emotional and behavioural needs arising from their learning difficulties both within classes and also from the very good support they receive in the learning support faculty. Arising from the good well-applied policy, the progress made by gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory.
17. The standards demonstrated by pupils in the use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum are below average because the provision **does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum**. Subjects find it difficult to use ICT in their normal work because they cannot easily gain access to the school's computers. In the separate specialist ICT lessons, the standards reached are average in Year 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11.

## Sixth form

### Strengths:

- Most students make **good** progress and work at a standard just below the national average.

**Areas for improvement:**

- The absence of planned provision to teach key skills and a patchy implementation of the school's numeracy policy are holding back standards.

18. Very few students were entered for AS A-level examinations up to 2001 and the results are not statistically reliable because of the low entry. The school's data on added value shows that students achieved **satisfactorily**.
19. The numbers of pupils leaving the sixth form is small. Only around 7 per cent of pupils leave the sixth form between Year 12 and Year 13. These figures mask the move that some pupils make from one course to another. Standards of work seen are **just below average** overall and most students are making **good** progress. In the focus subjects, the progress of students is currently very good in art and design, good in product design and English Literature and satisfactory in mathematics and physical education. Students' achievement in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE is **good** overall.
20. Students are not gaining satisfactory competence in the key skills of communication, numeracy and ICT because there is no planned provision for teaching the skills. ***This is a major cause for concern because deficiencies in these skills holds back attainment in many students.*** The fact that key skills are not taught and assessed as an integral part of all subjects in the sixth form impedes the raising of standards in these skills. Difficulties in gaining access to computers, especially in subject areas, in the sixth-form area hold back the development of pupils' ICT skills.
21. In English, students develop the capacity to use complex linguistic terminology and some show commendable skill in extended writing. The development of numeracy post-16 is satisfactory overall, but provision is patchy. While there are good examples of successful use of number skills in some subjects, for example product design, not all subjects have a policy statement on numeracy and the whole-school policy designed to co-ordinate its development is not consistently implemented.
22. In mathematics, careful consideration has been given to the needs of those students, who come from the intermediate tier of GCSE and are undertaking AS-level courses, although these students are not given extra teaching support. The A-level product design course makes extensive demands on the number skills of students. Numeracy is a key skill in vocational courses - travel and tourism, health and social care - and ICT has plans for the suitable coverage of numeracy.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development****Strengths:**

- Pupils have an **effective** attitude to learning, which promotes a spirit of enquiry and enhances their personal and social development.
- Most pupils value the school rules and system of rewards, which promotes consistent good behaviour.
- Relationships between pupils and with staff are consistently **very good** and inspire pupils to learn well in a welcoming, friendly and orderly environment.
- Most pupils serve the school in a very responsible and mature manner that contributes significantly to their care for each other and wider community.

**Areas for further development:**

- **Poor** levels of attendance, which affect all aspects of learning.

23. Pupils' attitudes to school overall are **satisfactory**. Behaviour is **good** and there are **very constructive relationships** and good opportunities to serve the school and so pupils learn in a friendly and tolerant environment. However, too many pupils miss too much time from school through unauthorised absence.
24. ***Pupils approach learning constructively and show an active interest in gaining new knowledge, understanding and skills.*** In English, mathematics, science and many of the foundation subjects, including religious education, pupils approach their tasks with enthusiasm and enjoy the challenge of good teaching, especially the high level of discussion, which was evident in most lessons. Pupils concentrate well, but in very few lessons learning and achievement is held back by time wasting. Relationships amongst pupils and between them and teachers are very constructive and purposeful and provide a solid base for group activities. This was particularly evident in drama and physical education. Where opportunities are provided for independent learning they are taken responsibly and the higher-attaining pupils exercise good levels of initiative. Most pupils take up the very good opportunities for extra-curricular activity, particularly sporting activities. They also enjoy residential visits and take an active interest in drama as well as rehearsals for the school play, information technology, art and music clubs.
25. ***Pupils are friendly, polite and respectful*** and there were very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour during the inspection. The headteacher and governors have appropriately used exclusions to make clear to pupils that disruptive antisocial and violent behaviour will not be tolerated. The policy has been extremely effective in helping to make the school an orderly place in which to learn. Although the number of exclusions has been significantly reduced, it is still well above the national average for similar schools. The school has taken positive measures to provide support and guidance to disaffected pupils. Particularly effective is the mentoring for Year 11 pupils as part of the school's participation in the Excellence in Cities. This has increased the attendance of these pupils and significantly improved their behaviour and attitudes to learning and staff.
26. Most pupils observe the school's code of conduct and respond very effectively to the system of very imaginative rewards. ***Pupils are invariably polite, welcoming and friendly*** to adults, particularly visitors. A small number of pupils in both formal and informal interviews expressed concerns about bullying and other types of antisocial behaviour, but also acknowledged the positive ways in which the school responds to their concerns. All teachers deal with incidents very promptly and effectively. Because teachers show great respect for the pupils in their charge, ***behaviour in classrooms is often very good and good around the school.*** Very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour were observed during the inspection.
27. ***The quality of relationships is a strength of the school.*** Opportunities for pupils to serve the school and community contribute very effectively to their development, to the promotion of good relationships and to good race, gender and community relations. Pupils in Year 9 played in a five-a-side soccer match, which involved both boys and girls, for example, an activity that assisted them in combating sexist stereotypes and encouraged an environment of equality. Most pupils enjoy working together, particularly those in Years 7 and 10. Pupils interact well socially and readily, participate enthusiastically in recreational activities and play an active role in assembly and inter-house activities. These pupils are prepared to listen to and respect the views of others, including those of different racial and cultural groups. This illustrates the quality of friendships that exist and reinforces a tolerant and welcoming learning environment. The very good quality of relationships between teachers and pupils provides pupils with confidence and raises their self-esteem. However, there are some missed



opportunities for pupils to use their initiative in some lessons where teachers direct learning too much.

28. **Good** opportunities are provided for pupils to serve the school as members of the school council, through work experience and through the support of various charities in the U.K and Africa. During the inspection, pupils eagerly participated in the excellent work of the school council and actively contributed to the drama and music performances in assemblies. These activities and opportunities are taken very seriously and responsibly and lend themselves very effectively to supporting pupils' personal and social development. This helps ensure that the school promotes the concept of good citizenship.
29. ***The persistent poor attendance of some pupils severely affects their learning, attainment and personal and social development.*** The existing level of attendance is five percentage points lower than the national average and both authorised and unauthorised absences are a consistent concern for the school. However, the school has made a significant improvement since the last report and has increased attendance levels from 70 per cent to 85 per cent. This has been brought about by:
- staff continuing to work diligently to foster a caring and sensitive ethos;
  - an effective system of imaginative rewards for regular and improved attendance, which pupils value. For example, pupils are given vouchers for good attendance, which may be redeemed in a number of local shops;
  - an alternative and flexible curriculum, including attendance at a local college for pupils to follow a work-related curriculum, which supports their learning and personal development;
  - early identification of persistent poor attenders, which enables the school to develop strategies to meet the needs of these pupils and offer very good levels of individual support and guidance;
  - registers taken at prescribed times and meeting with statutory requirements. All teachers monitor internal truancy by taking registers in lessons;
  - the very effective work of the educational welfare service.

There has been a significant improvement in the attendance of Year 11 pupils and a 25 per cent increase in the number taking external examinations. Timekeeping is generally satisfactory and continues to improve. The school and the welfare service, very effectively supported by local and national initiatives, have enabled the school to raise levels of attendance significantly. The school is aware that further improvements are required and is working hard and imaginatively to achieve new and improved targets.

### **Sixth form**

30. Attendance is above average and is significantly better than it is in the main school. Students express great pleasure about being in the sixth form because it serves their needs very well. They are very appreciative of the respectful way they are treated and the support they receive. This is borne out not only in very good attitudes towards their work, but also in the positive approach they show towards planning and running their own affairs and their readiness to take part in the life of the whole school. Sixth formers readily take part in paired reading with younger pupils and in the run-up to Christmas organised and took part in a whole-school pool championship, which did much to foster good relationships between pupils and students of various ages.
31. ***Relationships are very good.*** Sixth formers are expected to act as prefects. Students recognise that they should set good examples and most do so well. Some

vigorous leadership is given to the school council by sixth formers. Personal and learning skills are developed well.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

### Strengths:

- All pupils learn well and make good progress because teaching is **good** overall, with much that is excellent or very good.
- Enthusiastic teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan interesting and challenging lessons in which opportunities are given to all pupils to make progress.

### Areas for improvement:

- There are too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and an inconsistent approach to the use of homework.

32. ***The quality of teaching is good overall and much of it is very good and excellent. This leads to good learning and overall good achievement by all groups of pupils.*** Because teachers place great emphasis on meeting individual pupils' learning needs and because their overriding concern is to include everyone in what the various subjects have to offer, all pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment, are provided with many opportunities to make progress. This, coupled with the fact that teachers know their pupils very well, means that the quality of teaching is a major strength of the school and is very good overall. Teaching and learning are equally good in all year groups; it is consistently very good in art and design and drama and good in all other subjects.
33. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored very closely, and staff spend considerable time ensuring that teaching methods are matched to the learning needs of all the pupils in their charge. The result is that the proportion of very good and excellent teaching is higher than in most schools. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection. This improvement in teaching is having a great impact on the standards of work seen in class, but it has not yet raised standards in test and examination results in Year 11 because of the high rates of absence.
34. Teachers know just the right questions to ask and the right resources to use in order to provide a realistic challenge for pupils of all attainment levels because they have a secure knowledge of their subjects. Pupils with special educational needs, who often find the work difficult, are, therefore, well catered for and are effectively included in lessons. This good understanding of individual needs applies also to gifted and talented pupils, who are also exposed to teaching, which challenges them to think more deeply about the subject matter. In an excellent Year 11 art and design lesson, for example, the teacher expertly shared the technique of translating a two-dimensional image onto a three-dimensional model so effectively that pupils could not wait to try the method themselves and made excellent progress at acquiring this new skill.
35. The teaching of basic skills is **satisfactory**. Teachers increasingly take advantage of a well co-ordinated literacy strategy. Key words are displayed in most rooms to support knowledge, understanding and the use of relevant technical vocabulary. Numeracy is **satisfactory**, but is less well developed and practice across the school is inconsistent. ICT provision is developing, but departments find it difficult to gain access to computer suites and the ***school is not yet meeting statutory requirements for making sure that ICT is taught across the curriculum.***

36. A strong feature of much of the good, very good and excellent teaching is the teachers' very skilful choices of methods and very careful planning, which retain interest, develop confidence and offer pupils many opportunities to work in pairs and in groups. Most teachers plan well and this is one of the main reasons for the improvement in teaching and learning. Pupils respond very positively and adopt very mature attitudes to their studies. They work very well with their classmates, behave impeccably, enjoy the challenge of the assignments and are not afraid to display very high levels of industry. Many teachers, however, still direct learning too closely and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning through, for instance, research-based learning.
37. ***Pupils of all attainment levels rise to the challenge in lessons, respond very well to the dignified way teachers behave towards them, treat their teachers with real respect and produce work in which they have immense pride.*** Relationships between teachers and pupils are **very good** and teachers demonstrate that they have the utmost regard for their pupils and, as a consequence, have the highest expectations of what they can do.
38. The use of resources is **good** and pupils benefit also from the industry and skill of learning support teachers and the exceptional talent of the reprographics technician. There are very good visual displays in most classrooms and corridors, which engage pupils' interests and are often used to reinforce the learning content of lessons.
39. Assessment information is used well. ***The monitoring of pupils' progress is exemplary in geography*** and is a model of good practice: it is very good in English and science. Marking is good in all subjects and teachers offer extensive feedback to pupils on how well they are doing and on what is now needed for further improvement. Pupils' knowledge of their own learning is, therefore, good and they are aware of the levels at which they are operating in Years 7, 8 and 9 and the targets at which they are aiming for in GCSE examinations.
40. In some subjects, Spanish for example, homework is very well used to help pupils complete the course in the limited time available. ***But, homework in the school as a whole is set irregularly and is not always used well to develop and extend pupils' thinking, to reinforce what has been covered in class or to prepare for what is to come next.***
41. Teachers modify teaching methods and resources for pupils with special educational needs with good levels of assistance from support staff. This input enables the pupils to complete similar work to the rest of the class. As a result of this effective support, together with the good quality of teaching they receive in class, pupils with special educational needs learn well both when they are alongside their fellow pupils in the classroom and when supported by withdrawal in small groups from the classroom.

## Sixth form

### Strengths:

- Consistently good and often very good teaching and learning means that pupils make good progress.
- Learning is accelerated by the very constructive relationships between pupils and teachers.

### Areas for improvement:

- More opportunities for independent learning.

42. Teaching and learning are **good** overall and often very good. No lesson seen was less than satisfactory. The consistency of good teaching has improved since the last inspection and is a major strength of the sixth form.
43. ***The careful structure, vigorous pace and high degree of challenge of lessons are strong features of teaching in the sixth form.*** They result in students being prompted to give of their best, work with eagerness and enthusiasm and, hence, make good progress. Students put a great deal of intellectual and creative effort into their learning because teachers share their good subject expertise very effectively with students, making the subject real and relevant. Skilful questioning and effective pair work and group discussion characterise many lessons, especially in English, drama and art and design, and help students to learn rapidly. Teachers keep very good records of students' progress, which are used well to set realistic and challenging targets for students, based on their attainment at GCSE. In all subjects, very good constructive feedback is given to help students improve their assignments. This approach is particularly effective in English.
44. Teachers' planning is invariably **very good**. In English, planning always includes a stimulating starter activity that focuses on aspects of speaking and listening skills and a plenary section, which reinforces learning well. The result of this good planning is that students make good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills in their subjects. Opportunities for students to develop their independent learning and research skills, however, are rare. This is partly because there are very few resource texts in the sixth-form area and no computer network. Some teachers encourage independent research by ensuring students investigate aspects of the subject and then make presentations to the class. Good examples of this were seen in travel and tourism.
45. In some lessons, teaching was satisfactory rather than good because teachers sometimes talk too much and do not plan opportunities for students to be actively engaged.
46. The very positive and constructive relationship between staff and students, and the high esteem in which the students hold their teachers, adds to the effectiveness of lessons. In all lessons, there is a very high level of mutual respect and teachers have established a good working relationship with their students, which fosters good learning.

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

##### **Strengths:**

- The range of extra-curricular activities is **very good**.
- The school's liaison with the community and with partner institutions is also **very good**.
- There is **good** provision for performing arts, including the drama and musical productions, and for sports activities in school and within the local community.
- Effective careers advice and work experience in Year 10.
- The role of the learning mentors and the work they do to foster pupils' self-esteem.
- The increasing provision for vocational education.

##### **Areas for improvement:**

- There is no formalised programme for citizenship in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The school is not meeting statutory requirements for the delivery of ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9 and for RE in Year 11 and in the Sixth Form.
- There are some inequalities of time allocation, which affect science, music and

47. The quality and range of learning opportunities are **satisfactory** overall and the number of vocational courses offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is increasing; the result of the school's focus on a more coherent 14-19 curriculum. In this way, progression is fostered and courses are tailored to individual needs and wants. ***However, the school does not meet statutory requirements for ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9 and for religious education in Year 11.*** In addition, although there are many very effective, informal pathways to encourage pupils to become active and valuable citizens, there is ***no formalised citizenship course in the first three years.***
48. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is **very good**. The art club, for example, is a vibrant activity, very well supported by pupils and led on a regular basis not only by teachers, but also by a student in the Sixth Form. The main curriculum is augmented by a wide range of sports, drama and musical activities of which the annual school productions are a particularly strong feature.
49. The range of lunchtime and after-school activities is legion and there are, on average, nine separate activities each day, publicised in the pupils' bulletin. Teachers work long and hard to provide their pupils with experiences over and above their compulsory lessons and they are rewarded by high levels of attendance at all sessions. Pupils value these activities and they speak very highly of the adults and older students, who organise them. They make positive references, also, to the many competitions organised by the four school houses.
50. Although there is no formalised citizenship programme in the first three years, the overall provision is satisfactory because there is a well-planned course in Years 10 and 11 and the school offers many informal sessions to help pupils understand rights and responsibilities and social and moral issues. The assembly programme, the work of the school council and the tutor periods, including daily reflection and 'thought for the week', are all examples of how the teachers attempt to encourage their pupils to play a full part in both the school and the wider community.
51. There are no careers lessons in Years 7,8 and 9, but provision for careers education is **satisfactory** overall because there is a well-planned programme in the upper school, which includes two-weeks of work experience in Year 10. Pupils are prepared effectively for their placement. Documentation of work experience is of a high order and pupils benefit from a very well produced diary, which acts as both a record of their placement and preparation for application for full-time employment.
52. The school has **very good** links with the local community. In addition to the benefit provided by local employers during the work experience scheme, there is regular liaison with local businesses, the police and the neighbouring Education Action Zone. In addition, many organisations sponsor school activities. The Co-op, for example, welcomed Year 10 pupils last year to a regional training centre for team-building activities.
53. Relations with partner institutions are equally impressive. Teachers work extensively with feeder primary schools and organise assemblies, for example. As a result, pupils joining the school in Year 7 quickly settle down to their studies. Older pupils lead sports activities as part of the Community Sports Leader Programme and also officiate as referees in primary school competitions. Links with the Sixth-Form consortium are many and varied and over 200 students from the participating institutions visit the school for tuition in a variety of subject areas.

54. The school offers **good** provision for pupils with special educational needs, reflecting its **good** policy for equality of opportunity. It provides pupils with all subjects of the National Curriculum, including religious education, mainly within their classes. When necessary, pupils are withdrawn for a short while for support. Led by the good management of the head of learning support and the co-ordinator for special educational needs and supported by class teachers and support staff, individual plans express pupils' needs and suitably express the pupils' literacy needs. There are insufficient targets to meet their numeracy needs and to improve their self-esteem. These individual education plans are regularly reviewed with good levels of input from parents, teachers and specialists from agencies outside the school.

***Provision for Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.***

**Strengths:**

- Pupils' moral, social, and cultural development is **good** and supported by sound opportunities for spiritual development.
- School assemblies, residential and extra-curricular activities make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
- The school's ethos is very real and helps develop pupils' sense of morality and their appreciation of understanding between right and wrong.
- Social development is **good** and supported through residential visits, extra-curricular activities and the very constructive and purposeful relationships between staff and pupils.
- Cultural development is also **good** and is well promoted through all subjects of the curriculum.

**Areas for development:**

- More consistent opportunities for spiritual development through schemes of work, particularly in mathematics, history, geography and ICT.
- More visits to places of worship of other faiths, particularly to promote cultural and religious diversity.

55. ***Overall, the provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good*** and is complemented by sound opportunities for spiritual development, a significant improvement.
56. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is **satisfactory**. Spiritual dimensions were observed being explored during the week of the inspection through religious education, art, drama, English and some aspects of physical education lessons. Much of the spiritual development of pupils was evident in house and year group assemblies. For example, in a Year 7 to 9 and again in a Year 10 and 11 assembly, inspectors observed thoughtful and moving teaching of other faiths through prayer, music and role-play, which illustrated the theme of loneliness.
57. These experiences promoted diversity and understanding of other faiths and compassion and empathy for self, others and the wider world community. Pupils are encouraged to look beyond the 'here and now' and to express thoughts, ideas and creativity. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop an understanding of human values and emotions and the way they impact on people. Respect for one's self and others is well embedded throughout the school. Pupils are taught to value truth, love and beauty, which is delivered through music, art and religious education and supported through 'thought for the day' in tutorial time and extra-curricular activities. There are good arrangements to promote moral awareness. Many subjects as yet, however, do not plan carefully enough to include spiritual themes in their teaching and there are too few opportunities for pupils to visit other places of worship and so gain a deeper insight into the values and faiths of others.

58. Pupils are provided with many meaningful opportunities to discuss moral issues. Through work in many subjects, including religious education, English, drama, art and design, geography and design and technology, pupils discuss and explore the moral issues, which affect their lives and the society in which they live. These activities are strongly supported by the school's own code of behaviour, which appropriately links personal rights and responsibilities. The school helps pupils to understand what is appropriate behaviour through the implementation of this comprehensive behaviour policy. Moral values are very effectively emphasised in **excellent** assemblies and reinforced through the study of world faiths in religious education. Pupils support many fund-raising activities, responding to issues raised in the curriculum of the school. The school council provides very good opportunities for pupils to participate in the decision-making processes of the school.
59. The school's provision for pupils' social development is **good** and reinforces the moral and spiritual development. Teachers provide very good models of tolerance and understanding. Their relationships with pupils are effective and very purposeful. Similarly, relationships between the overwhelming majority of pupils are good. The school's response to misbehaviour helps to ensure pupils learn to take responsibilities for their own actions. Pupils are encouraged to work and actively participate in social and recreational activities, such as the recent pool competition between houses.
60. **Good** opportunities are also provided for the cultural development of pupils. Pupils are given a broad experience of their own and other cultures through geography, religious education and the celebration of various cultures in collective worship. Although opportunities are provided for pupils to study music, art and food from different cultural backgrounds, these opportunities of good practice can be further used to study the cultural heritage of contemporary multicultural British society. Since the last report, the school has made very good progress by ensuring a well written policy, which impacts very effectively on the existing provision for supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. ***Furthermore, it is a significant tool to ensure the very good attitudes, good behaviour and very effective relationships and opportunities for personal development, which are now a strength of the school.***

## Sixth form

### Strengths:

- There is a good choice of courses within the north-east Wolverhampton consortium.

### Areas for improvement:

- There is no planned provision for the development of key skills.

61. The quality and range of opportunities for students in the sixth form, within the north-east Wolverhampton consortium, are **satisfactory** overall. There is a satisfactory range of AS and A level-courses available, together with a growing number of vocational courses and useful re-sit classes to supplement these. This consortium also provides valuable breadth by enabling the school's pupils to take other courses elsewhere. The school, however, does ***not comply with statutory requirements to provide religious education in the sixth form and there is no planned provision for teaching key skills.*** It fails to ensure that all students have opportunities to develop number, communication and ICT skills up to NVQ Level 3.
62. The school is firmly committed to open access for all pupils, who wish to continue their studies into the sixth form. While many achieve well when compared with their prior attainment, a significant number struggle to cope with the requirements of both the

general and vocational advanced level courses. This is reflected in modest levels of attainment, but it is a tribute to the school and its guidance that a much lower number of students than average drop out of courses.

63. There are **satisfactory** enrichment activities available to sixth-form students overall. There are opportunities for work experience and a wide range of trips and field courses are available. A comprehensive range of social activities is planned and organised by the students during the year.

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

### Strengths:

- The provision for pupils' welfare and well-being is **very effectively** implemented and supports the **good** arrangements for child protection.
- Staff are extremely well led by a very strong and very caring deputy headteacher and ***provide very effective individual support and guidance for all pupils and disaffected pupils.***
- Constructive and meaningful links with specialist agencies and professionals ensure that pupils learn in a safe and secure environment.
- Health and safety policy and good practice are evident and are positive features of the school's work.
- There are good and meaningful strategies in place to monitor and achieve ***very good attitudes to learning*** and ensure a friendly environment.
- There is a **good** policy and action to monitor and discourage anti-social behaviour.
- The policy and procedures to monitor and raise attendance and implemented well by the school are good, and are valued by most parents and pupils.
- ***The use of assessment information to raise standards is a model of good practice.***

### Areas for improvement:

- ***Further action to raise attendance levels with the support from all parents.***
- To develop existing policies and procedures to ensure all known incidents of racism are recorded, monitored and reported to parents via the annual report from governors.

64. The arrangements for child protection are **good** and the **very good** provision for pupils' welfare and safety enable the school community to learn in a very caring and secure environment.
65. The child protection programme is effective, primarily due to the clear leadership, management, professionalism, commitment and caring work of the designated teacher. She is fully supported by the equally hardworking and committed headteacher and governors. Together they ensure that all aspects of the school policy and local authority guidelines are met and equal consideration is given to all members of the school community. Training for staff at all levels, including for new teachers and support staff, is good. All staff are aware of their responsibilities and value the work of the designated teacher and give good support. Constructive and very purposeful links are maintained with external specialist agencies and professionals such as the educational social workers, child psychologists and social workers. The very good levels of communication between the school, external specialist agencies, pupils and most parents ensures that pupils continues to learn in a safe, secure and sensitive environment. Health and safety are monitored closely.



66. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are **very good**. The school council, for example, encourages pupils to help each other and have a greater understanding of themselves and, thus, helps create a warm, trusting and friendly environment for learning. The school's whole approach prepares pupils for life as responsible citizens of the school and wider community and raises their confidence, self esteem and worth. Teachers, particularly heads of house and deputy headteachers, have a very clear and in-depth understanding of pupils' pastoral and academic needs, including a good understanding of the needs of those pupils from different class, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Teachers, support staff, the educational social worker, community youth worker and school learning mentors use information about pupils to work in a very purposeful and constructive manner. This ensures pupils' personal, emotional and social development needs are fully met. Pupils' concerns are addressed and their achievements acknowledged and celebrated in assemblies and through informal and formal contact time with the senior management team, heads of house and form tutors.
67. There are effective procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and the information is used in a constructive and purposeful manner to investigate, improve and raise existing levels of attendance. **However, attendance remains well below the national average for similar schools.** This is due to the lack of support from some parents, who condone absences.
68. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effectively implemented. Staff make very good use of rewards and celebrate pupils' achievements both inside and outside of the classroom. Pupils' positive response to this recognition creates a very purposeful and productive environment for learning, which has significantly improved since the previous inspections.
69. There are **good** procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Good implementation ensures that all types of anti-social behaviour are thoroughly investigated and monitored and information is used effectively to support pupils affected by bullying. There are effective measures in place to discourage bullying and create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance. These measures have enabled the school to reduce existing levels of exclusions. However, **the procedures to monitor, record and report incidents of racism are not in place.**
70. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the level of care and support it provides, but still more needs to be done to work with parents to further improve the attendance rate.
71. The school sees assessment as an essential and integral part of the learning process and its use of assessment is **excellent**. Intelligent use of assessment is made to diagnose and identify pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses and to evaluate the success of the staffs' own teaching. Perceptive and intelligent use is beginning to be made of data collected of pupils when they enter the school, for instance, average points from tests taken in Year 6. These provide a good overview of achievements by different groups of pupils (to identify differences between the attainment of boys and girls). Individual attainment targets are set and data is collated to show the value added to pupils as they progress through the school. These results are shared with parents in pupils' annual written reports. Subject teachers liaise very well with form tutors and departmental heads and construct a detailed description of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, including an indication of academic performance. Targets are then discussed and set for the future. Assessment targets are indicated on reports and a personal summary is written, which helps the pupils to discuss with the school

individual action plans, which are then written to meet specific targets. This is a major factor that has led to improved learning by pupils and is helping to push up standards.

72. Very good use of assessment is made to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to evaluate the successes of teaching. This enables the analysis of the attainment of different groups of pupils in the school and informs whole-school planning. The school, led by the assistant headteacher, has taken great care to ensure that all subject areas make use of data to:
- set individual targets for those pupils in danger of underachieving;
  - carefully monitor the progress of pupils towards meeting those targets;
  - intervene if pupils are in danger of not meeting their targets;
  - use that data to evaluate how effective their teaching and learning has been.
73. Overall, the assessment of pupils with special educational needs is **good**. The very good assessment procedures across the school supports this well. At present, it appropriately relies upon an assessment of the pupils' needs for reading where good support is focused to effectively meet this need. The assessments of the pupils' numeracy attainments, their self esteem and social, emotional and behavioural needs is insufficiently used to influence the targets in their individual education plans. Close links are made with the contributing primary schools where many pupils are initially assessed.
74. Pupils with special educational needs receive good levels of support in classes through the use of the school's very good assessment procedures. The school effectively uses test results, target setting and concerns expressed by class teachers to decide where extra support can be introduced. Good use is made of assessment information to group pupils according to their respective abilities. There are satisfactory reviews of statements yearly, but the individual education plans do not always fully interpret all the targets mentioned in the statements.

## SIXTH FORM

### Strengths:

- Sixth-form students receive good advice and guidance from the school and this is one reason why most students stay on their courses.
- Assessment procedures are excellent and contribute to the good achievement in the sixth form.

### Areas for improvement:

- Too many students are reluctant to follow vocational courses offered on other sites within the consortium.

## Assessment

75. Systems for assessing students' attainment and progress across all subjects in the sixth form are **excellent**. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of where they are and what they need to do to improve because of teachers' careful and consistent use of target grades, based on prior GCSE attainment, which are shared with the students and regularly reviewed by teachers. The school has invested in the A-level information service run by Durham University. Teachers make sensitive use of the grades predicted for students to motivate them, to carefully monitor their progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching.

### **Advice, support and guidance**

76. Provision for students' careers education and guidance is **good**. It forms part of a well-planned programme of personal development, delivered in the main through form tutors.
77. Students have a good knowledge of the routes to higher education, training or employment and they are well prepared for the choices that lie ahead. Students are confident in making decisions about their choices on leaving the sixth form because of the good guidance and support they receive from senior staff and their tutors. They understand the application procedures and how to succeed at interview. They believe that they were well guided in their choice of subjects on entry to the sixth form and have continued to receive good guidance on their future options. Students can plan realistically because they know how well they are achieving in relation to their personal targets. Their understanding of the demands of higher education is enhanced by good use of visitors, visits to universities and participation in sixth-form conferences.
78. The school works closely with careers staff to give good support to students seeking employment, through individual action planning, group work and guidance interviews on request. Not enough is done, however, to encourage students seeking employment to show initiative and take responsibility for their career choices. There is also a need to develop more extensive links with industry and commerce to the benefit of all students.

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

#### **Strengths:**

- Parents reported very positive views of the school, including **excellent leadership**.
- Levels of communication are **satisfactory** and the progress of pupils is reported satisfactorily through parents' evenings and interim reports.
- Most parents **satisfactorily** support their children's learning by providing finance for educational resources such as educational visits.
- **Good** links and relationships between most parents and the school supports pupils' learning and personal and social development, for example, support for concerts or sports events.

#### **Area for development:**

- **A significant number of parents do not support regular attendance of their child, which** affects the support they provide in the school and home.

79. Most parents report a productive relationship with the school. In the parents' meeting and through the parents' questionnaires, **the school received a very positive endorsement for the work it does and for the improvements in standards, particularly in pupils' attitudes and behaviour**. Parents rightly value the excellent leadership and management of the school and the good teaching and management of pupils, which was evident across the school. This enables most pupils to make good progress and develop in a mature, caring and purposeful and responsible manner was also evident. These parents perceive staff in a positive light because teachers listen and respond effectively to their child's concerns and continue to develop a happy and friendly environment for learning. This effective partnership between parents and the school ensures good channels of communication between school and home, which, in turn, supports pupils' achievements. The inspection team and the inspection evidence agree with the constructive views of parents. However, some parents expressed concerns about the provision of homework, which is generally satisfactory, but is not

given consistently by all teachers and is sometimes unchallenging. The inconsistency about homework affects pupils' ability to learn independently.

80. The school provides sound levels of information through its school prospectus, which enables parents and pupils to make informed choices. The school newsletters are colourful and celebrate pupils' and community achievements. They enable parents to keep abreast of events in the school and community.
81. Parents' evenings, interim reports and the pupils' homework planners provide parents with sound opportunities to assess their child's progress and personal and social development. There has been a recent increase in the attendance at parents' evenings and a constructive dialogue exists between parents and tutors. A significant number of parents make effective use of the planner to communicate information between home and school. Most parents value and appreciate their relationship and communication with staff.
82. Most parents make serious attempts to support the school and staff. They support the school's sports and recreational activities and provide a meaningful financial contribution to purchase educational resources to support their child's learning in both the home and school. However, a significant number of parents fail to encourage their child's regular attendance. This affects pupils' learning.
83. Since the previous report, the relationship between parents and the school has continued to improve. The school's relationships with parents now enhance the learning and the personal and social development of pupils. However, the low levels of attendance of some pupils continue to affect the work of the school and, therefore, the relationships between some parents and the school.
84. Parents are suitably informed about the progress of their children with special educational needs. The targets the pupils are trying to achieve are fully shared with pupils and parents.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

### Strengths:

- The ***outstanding leadership of its headteacher*** is at the heart of this rapidly improving school.
- The headteacher has created and motivated a talented team of senior and middle managers and inspired all to give of their best.
- The governors are truly committed to the school and play a pivotal role in shaping its direction.

### Areas for improvement:

- The role of middle managers as quality assurance managers.

85. The dedicated headteacher works tirelessly and delivers leadership of the highest order. He has galvanized the school and has undoubtedly contributed to the very good atmosphere for learning. His leadership has completely transformed the pupils' attitude to learning. Through the headteacher's approachability and highly visible presence around the school and the excellent communication between the leadership team and staff, a strong and genuine shared commitment to succeed has been created. Through the headteacher's superb interpersonal and very real coaching skills, staff have a great belief in themselves and what they can achieve for the school and its pupils. The great strengths of the headteacher are his skills in selecting staff, of building highly effective

teams, of truly delegating authority to those teams and of empowering staff to reach their goals. The headteacher has succeeded entirely in sharing his vision of where the school is going with staff and has totally won their support in helping him realise it. This vision is very well expressed in the school improvement plan, which is entirely appropriate with its twin emphases on raising attainment and improving teaching and learning. Thus, the headteacher, with excellent support from his highly effective deputies and the talented leadership team, has succeeded in establishing a community, which, whilst being proud of what has been achieved to date, is determined to further pupils' achievements.

86. The overall quality of leadership at middle management level is also **very good**. Leadership and management are excellent in geography and Spanish, very good in science, drama, mathematics, art and design and design and technology, satisfactory in music and good in all other subjects. All heads of departments have established a clear educational direction for the work of their departments and many monitor standards very effectively, driving up standards. This good practice is slightly uneven, however. Standards are improving the fastest in departments where the head of department provides a clear direction for the subject, motivates colleagues, monitors teaching and spreads good practice. These have been important factors in raising attainment in Spanish and geography. Where relative weaknesses exist, the monitoring of the work of the subject is informal, as it is in music for example, and the department policies and procedures are inconsistent. There is very good practice, for example, in geography, which consistently uses assessment across the department to monitor standards, to set targets for improvement and to support the planning of the teaching. ***The school does not give middle managers enough time for them to carry out their roles as quality assurance managers and ensure that their departments consistently achieve good teaching and learning.***
87. The effectiveness of the governing body is **very good**. It has a very good working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has played an influential part in working with the headteacher and senior managers to create a strong strategic direction for the school. Governors clearly understand the challenges facing the school and, although they are very proud of the school's achievements, are constantly striving for improvement. Governors give freely of their time and have developed highly effective, frequent formal and informal contacts with staff at all levels. A well-structured programme of faculty reviews and presentations ensure that governors understand clearly the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of the school. Hence, they are well aware of how well pupils are doing compared to those in similar schools and of the progress they are making. However, because pupils do not receive their full entitlement to ICT in Years 7 to 9, the governors are not fully effective in fulfilling all of their statutory duties.
88. Financial planning is **very good**. The school manages its enhanced budget, additional funds and grants very well, particularly to secure improvement in staffing, although resources for learning remain modest. The school applies the principles of best value very well. It consistently applies the principles of comparison, challenge, competition and consulting (especially pupils) over major changes in the allocation of resources. Because financial and whole-school planning are so closely woven together, a very good mechanism to evaluate the impact of its spending decisions upon standards in the classroom is ensured. The specific grants the school attracts are spent appropriately. Some of the funding for special educational needs helps to maintain small group sizes, particularly for lower-attaining classes. The costs of running this average-sized school are similar to other schools in the country.

89. Routine administration of the school's budget is **very good**. It is very efficient and ensures that the school runs smoothly. The school makes very effective use of new technology to monitor spending against the budget and to provide accurate up-to-date information. There are well-defined procedures to ensure best value purchasing.
90. The school is well staffed with a good range of experience amongst teachers, all of whom are qualified in their teaching subject or one closely allied to it. However, there are currently some difficulties in modern foreign languages where there is only one specialist teacher of Spanish. The teaching staff includes a mixture of those experienced and recently qualified. The school is also involved in supporting graduates in gaining qualified teacher status through the national graduate training programme and initial teacher training links.
91. Teachers work hard, both in timetabled time and in the time they give to extra-curricular activities. Two years ago, the teaching staff agreed to teach classes for colleagues, who, for whatever reason, were unable to attend work. It is, therefore, very rare for the school to employ agency staff. As a direct result of this decision, pupils benefit from **consistently** good teaching. A well-structured induction programme provides very good support for newly qualified and newly appointed teachers. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are effectively managed and systematically monitored. The school has established strong links with initial teacher training establishments and provides around four placements each year. The appraisal and performance management process for teaching staff is fully in place. Objectives are set and reviewed annually. An effective system of lesson monitoring by the senior team is part of the process, which has contributed significantly to the rise in the quality of teaching evidenced during the inspection week.
92. Within the special needs department, learning mentors and learning support staff make an important contribution to the work of the school. Learning support staff are valued and effectively used, but there are not enough of them to provide support throughout the whole school curriculum. All learning support assistants follow a course of training, which leads to an externally recognised National Vocational Qualification.
93. The administrative and other support staff serve the school very well. They make an important contribution to the ethos of the school and its smooth running. The administrative staff are most efficient and helpful and make a very welcoming first impression on visitors and parents.
94. Provision of resources to support learning is **unsatisfactory** overall. This is because substantial numbers of books in the library are out of date. Despite having good ICT resources, the library does not provide adequate support for work in subjects. It does not fulfil its expected role in developing literacy, though the school has invested in book boxes for each tutor group. Resources in subject areas are at least satisfactory and sometimes good. In addition to funding through a fair formula, extra support is available for initiatives linked to school and subject planning priorities. New subject leaders, for example in Spanish and religious education, have been particularly well supported. However, a lack of computers and software in departments affects the range and quality of provision as well as the capacity to meet statutory requirements for ICT.
95. The quality of accommodation is **satisfactory** overall and the school has learned to make very good use of what it has. Corridors are narrow, the dining hall is small and the learning resource centre is insufficient in size to meet the needs of the school. Most subjects are able to be grouped together in suites of rooms, encouraging staff to share good practice and develop a team ethos. The school looks after the site very

well and has created very good areas for learning. Classrooms are carpeted and provide a good base for learning through the imaginative use of display. However, many classrooms are too small, which sometimes limits the styles of teaching. The excellent use of pupils' work in classrooms and in corridors is one very good way in which the school compensates for its variable accommodation and provides a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment for pupils to learn.

96. The management for pupils with special educational needs is effectively performed by the head of learning support and by the special educational needs co-ordinator. A very good team approach amongst staff supports the overall good levels of provision for identified pupils. Funding for special educational needs is prudently and well used. Relevant training suitably supports staff working with pupils, who have special educational needs. The monitoring and evaluation of provision and teaching by the head of learning support and the special educational needs co-ordinator, assisted by the senior leadership team of the school, are effectively carried out. The governing body in its annual report to parents reports well on the implementation of the policy for pupils with special educational needs and on access for the disabled. There are very good links with the governor responsible for special educational needs and the school.
97. The school has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and is committed to including all pupils in what it does. The school's policies, practices and the work of the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors reflect their commitment to better race and community relations. This is reflected in the positive integration of pupils from all cultural and racial communities. However, there are no procedures in place to record, monitor and report incidents of racism to parents through the governors' report.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

98. The sixth form is **very well led and managed**. The school's aims are fully reflected in the planning of the sixth form. Procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the sixth form are good. Intelligent use is made of the school's analysis of value-added data both to set realistic targets for pupils and to help teachers gauge how effectively they have taught. The head of sixth form keeps good statistical information about the prior attainment and progress of sixth-form pupils. The number of pupils in the sixth form has risen over the last three years and very good induction procedures give Year 11 pupils early advice, guidance and written information about their future options.

### ***Resources***

99. Resources in the sixth form are **satisfactory**. Pupils benefit from good resources in product design and art and design and so teachers are enabled to plan for exciting teaching. There are not enough computers in subject departments and there is a severe lack of networked computers in the sixth-form area, which impedes the development of independent learning. The library provides a pleasant learning environment, but is inadequately stocked.
100. Accommodation is **satisfactory**. One room is used as a sixth-form social area with adequate quiet study space and other rooms used for teaching are adequate.
101. The balance of funding for the sixth form is well planned. The sixth form is cost effective and gives satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To further raise standards and improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should draw on the best practice already evident in the school and elsewhere to:

1. \*Further improve attendance by:
  - applying the same energy, intelligence and ingenuity to the problem of attendance that the school has applied to improving behaviour;
  - working actively with parents to encourage better attendance;
  - making use of ICT to analyse attendance figures and using this information to identify particular groups of pupils whose attendance is poor;
  - taking steps to find ways of improving the attendance of those groups identified above.  
(paragraphs 3, 7, 33 and 67)
2. \*Further raise attainment by:
  - continuing to support teaching and learning in a systematic way across all subjects, including the provision of opportunities to share good practice;
  - appointing, where appropriate, advanced skills teachers in key areas of the curriculum;
  - ensuring that all teachers use ICT better to improve learning;
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning;
  - ensuring that the numeracy policy is consistently applied across all subjects.  
(paragraphs 2, 13, 14, 35, 40, 47 and 79)
3. Improve learning resources by;
  - developing the library as a learning resource centre for pupils;
  - increasing the proportion of the school's budget spent on books and other learning materials.  
(paragraph 94)

\*indicates where reference is already made to these issues in the school improvement plan.

Minor issues for action: the governing body may also wish to include the following area in the action plan:

- Extending and improving the ways in which the school communicates with parents.

### Sixth form

- Ensuring that all students follow a key skills programme that will lead them to Level 3 in number, communication and ICT;
- Strengthening independent learning by providing better access to networked ICT in the sixth-form area;
- Encouraging more students to follow vocational courses where that will be a benefit to them. (paragraphs 20, 61, 78)

Minor issues for action: the governing body may also wish to include the following area in the action plan:

- Comply with the requirements to teach religious education in the sixth form.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 9 to 11	117
	Sixth form	11
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		68

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 9 – 11</b>							
Number	9	34	51	19	2	0	0
Percentage	7.8	29.6	44.4	16.5	1.7	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	0	2	4	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	18	36.4	45	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than nine<sup>2</sup> percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y 9 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	493	47
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	239	-

Special educational needs	Y 9 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	17	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	174	3

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	42

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	13.3
National comparative data	7.8

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	63	54	117

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	15	18	17
	Girls	19	16	18
	Total	34	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	29 (28)	29 (24)	30 (23)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	1 (6)	12 (9)	9 (8)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	17	20	24
	Girls	24	21	26
	Total	41	41	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	35 (35)	35 (23)	43 (14)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	9 (16)	5 (5)	9 (8)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	31	56	87

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	7	25	25
	Girls	14	40	44
	Total	21	65	69
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	24 (19)	75 (80)	79 (93)
	National	51 (48)	89 (91)	95 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	26.4
	National	39.8

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	33	73
	National		

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2002	2	4	6
Who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations				

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	2	4	6
	Average point score per candidate	5	7.8	6.9
National	Average point score per candidate			

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	2	2	4	0	2	2
	Average point score per candidate	5	9.5	7.25	0	6	6
National	Average point score per candidate	-	-	-	-	-	-

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
English Language and Literature	4	100	-	0	-	2.5	-
Art and design	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physical education	3	100	-	0	-	2.7	-
Product Design	2	100	-	0	-	4	-

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	465	117	1
White – Irish	-	-	-
White – any other White background	-	-	-
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	50	24	-
Mixed – White and Black African	-	-	-
Mixed – White and Asian	2	-	-
Mixed – any other mixed background	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	1	-
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	-	-
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	-	-
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	-	-	-
Black or Black British – Caribbean	15	-	-
Black or Black British – African	2	-	-
Black or Black British – any other Black background	-	-	-
Chinese	-	-	-
Any other ethnic group	-	-	-
No ethnic group recorded	-	-	-

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

### ***Financial information***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y 9 – Y 13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	34
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

#### **Education support staff: Y 9 – Y 13**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	31

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y 9 – Y 13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	63
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y 9 – Y 11**

Key Stage 3	24.3
Key Stage 4	22.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	2001 - 2
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	£
Total income	2,173,783
Total expenditure	2,297,095
Expenditure per pupil	4253
Balance brought forward from previous year	103,341
Balance carried forward to next year	- 123,312

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	20
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	26

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

Number of questionnaires returned

40%

493
198

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	32	2	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	73	22	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	30	4	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	58	28	10	2	2
The teaching is good.	78	18	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	20	4	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	10	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	94	6	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	74	19	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	82	14	1	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	19	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	23	3	1	3

## PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths:

- The department is well led and managed.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and so pupils have a positive attitude to their work and make good progress.
- Very good assessment systems mean that all pupils work towards challenging targets.

#### Areas for improvement:

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to become independent learners.
- The department does not use ICT enough.

#### Standards attained in 2002

	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b>Results in national tests</b>	Very low compared to all schools and below average when compared to similar schools. Boys and girls attained similar results.	Very low when compared to all schools nationally, but close to the average of similar schools. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
<b>Results over time</b>	Have slipped from 1998, but rose in 2002.	A dramatic rise in English language this year. Results in GCSE examinations have improved rapidly over one year. One significant achievement was that there were no boys with an un-graded result in English language.
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Results in English were similar to mathematics, but not as good as science.	Pupils gain slightly higher grades in English than they do in their other subjects.
<b>Achievement</b>	Pupils achieved unsatisfactorily in 2002 in relation to their attainment when they entered the school because too many pupils had a high rate of absence.	Based on their attainment at the end of Year 9, most pupils made good progress and achieved well.

#### Standards seen during the inspection.

102. Pupils enter the school with very low attainment in English compared to the national average in all schools. During Years 7, 8 and 9, they make satisfactory progress to attain standards of attainment at the end of Year 9, which are well below average. Boys and girls make similar good progress, but pupils with special educational needs make only satisfactory progress because the level of classroom support is not always sufficient to make up for the great weaknesses in reading and writing that many of these pupils face.

103. During Years 10 and 11, standards observed in lessons and in pupils' books show that good achievement is being made by most pupils. This reflects the great efforts that the department has made to improve standards at this level, which are below average overall. Successful strategies include:

- Entering higher-attaining pupils early for the GCSE examination. This increases pupils' motivation and spurs on learning.
  - Intelligent use of assessment information to set realistic, yet challenging targets for pupils and to monitor carefully their progress.
  - Very effective residential study visits in which pupils are immersed in English language revision for a week.
104. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Although teachers and support staff work tirelessly to make up for the very low levels of reading and writing of these pupils, as they do in Years 7 to 9, there are not enough classroom assistants to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
105. Reading skills are sound and improving well. This is because of the efforts of a co-ordinating group of senior teachers and the lead given by the English head of department to developments in literacy. The school's development of a reading improvement scheme helps pupils with very poor reading skills. A reading club and a supply of reading boxes in all tutor rooms encourage all pupils to read regularly and to practise reading aloud in front of an audience. The library is underdeveloped to support these initiatives. It does not have enough fiction and non-fiction books and learning materials, such as audiotapes, compact disks and a variety of computer programs, to support pupils' learning.
106. Writing skills are well below average, but are improving because of a focus on the techniques of writing. Teachers use a variety of methods to help pupils plan their writing, including giving pupils an outline to help them organise their ideas before they write. Pupils are given a rhyme to remember to remind them to use all their five senses during imaginative and persuasive writing. Marking is done conscientiously, but pupils are often given too many short-term targets to practise.
107. Presentation has improved since the last inspection, but the department does not use word-processing on computers enough to help pupils re-draft their written work.
108. Standards in listening are good. Pupils listen to each other's opinions and make thoughtful replies. Their speaking skills are developing because of the good examples their teachers set. All teachers speak clearly and use words precisely.

### ***Teaching and learning***

109. Pupils make good progress from Year 7 to Year 11 because they learn well as a result of good teaching. Teachers have adopted ideas from The National Literacy Strategy. Their use of these ideas and structures has made a firm foundation for the improvement of literacy skills across the school. The idea, which has been most successful, is the use of a four-part lesson, which gives all lessons pace and keeps pupils interested and involved. All classrooms display key words, which are referred to frequently to help pupils use words in a precise way.
110. Good relationships between pupils and teachers are a strength of the department's work. Because of well-planned, imaginative teaching, all pupils have positive attitudes to English. They behave well, settle to their work promptly and work hard. **In Years 10 and 11**, some pupils are less willing to share their ideas with others and more activities for encouraging pupils to learn from each other in pairs and in groups are needed. Most pupils put a great deal of effort into their coursework and are beginning to achieve standards that are approaching the national average, as the rapid rise in GCSE English Language results show.



### **Leadership and management**

111. The department is well led and managed. The newly appointed head of department has a good vision for the subject and is fostering effective team work. She has established effective links with primary schools and is well aware of the need for a better library. She and her departmental colleagues have begun to drive up standards, especially in Years 10 and 11. There is a good programme of staff development, including planned times for the newly qualified teacher and the graduate teacher to observe more experienced teachers. It has the potential and enthusiasm to become an excellent department.

### **Literacy in other subjects of the curriculum.**

112. The school has made good progress with its developments for literacy across the curriculum. The English head of department has led training for all staff on the use of key words and the three-part structure for all lessons. Both of these developments have helped reading and listening become better across all subjects, but less so for writing and speaking. Progress has been most rapid in pupils' reading skills, the use of key words and in the way pupils express their views. By helping pupils structure their work with outline frames, writing has begun to improve, but more support is needed in classes to help pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 overcome their writing weaknesses.

### **Drama**

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

#### **Strengths:**

- Very good teaching by enthusiastic drama specialists so that pupils clearly enjoy the subject, work hard and achieve very well.
- The subject is very well led and managed and the new head of department has a clear vision for the department and a good development plan.
- There is excellent accommodation, which is imaginatively used.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- Better use of recording diaries for Years 7 to 9.
- More attention given to the movement of boys in Years 7 to 9.

### **Standards attained in 2002**

	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b>Results in national tests.</b>	There are no national tests in drama at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessment shows pupils to be working at a level just below the national average.	Pupils entered for the GCSE in drama for the first time in 2002 achieved standards broadly in line with national ones. This is a very good achievement for this newly created department.
<b>Results over time</b>	Drama has only recently been introduced into the school's curriculum.	
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	The grades attained are slightly higher than the overall grades in English, which pupils attain at the end of Year 9.	Pupils attained higher grades in drama than in most of their other GCSE examinations.
<b>Achievement</b>	From a very low baseline, all pupils made very good progress and achieved very well.	All pupils, including boys and girls and those with special educational needs, achieved very well.

### ***Standards seen during the inspection***

113. Pupils enter the school with little experience of drama in their various primary schools. In Year 7, they begin to learn the basics of dramatic conventions and performance. Girls are more mature in their approach to drama at this stage. Some boys view drama as an opportunity to play and this affects their progress. This was illustrated in one lesson when boys concentrated more on movement than on how to show feelings through expressions. The teacher quickly brought them back to the task and made them think about how to show their feelings by gestures and looks. By Year 9, pupils' skills in expressing feelings have developed very well and are working at a level just below the national average.
114. The GCSE course followed in Years 10 and 11 is very well organised so that pupils make very good progress and work at levels above the national average. Pupils constantly review their work both verbally in groups and in their personal notebooks. This thoroughness in reviewing all aspects of the course ensures that pupils are well prepared for the examination at the end of Year 11. The new syllabus chosen for the present Year 10 pupils covers a wide variety of stagecraft skills. Pupils can choose from an interesting set of study topics, including the techniques of lighting, costume production and the uses of make-up in the theatre. In Year 10, pupils showed their understanding of the uses of make-up in a well-researched and neatly produced project. They had used the Internet for independent research and a computer to word-process the project.
115. Pupils have slightly higher speaking and listening skills than those displayed in English. This is because speaking and listening skills are the ones pupils practise all the time in drama.

### ***Teaching and learning.***

116. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Both specialist teachers enthuse the pupils, but they also rigorously plan every lesson and encourage pupils to work at full pace. Pupils clearly enjoy their drama lessons. Their speaking and listening skills are developed by working regularly in pairs and groups. By Year 9, they are mature enough to express their feelings through posture and facial expression. In an excellent Year 8 lesson, pupils were able to experience the effects of the playing of Adagio on their feelings. One pupil could explain clearly how music affects feelings and mood.

### ***Leadership and management.***

117. The subject is very well led and managed by a newly appointed head of department, who, with the other drama specialist, makes a very effective team. The well-produced handbook and very detailed development plan show that the new head of department is determined to enhance the status of the subject and to make it more popular as an option choice for Years 10 and 11. Accommodation is excellent; the theatre benefits from a projection room and editing facilities, which are very well used in teaching. With these good facilities, energetic and skilled teachers and keen pupils, the department is very well placed for future improvement.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths:

- The relationships between pupils and teachers have developed a positive working atmosphere to foster improvement.
- Good planning produces lessons, which are relevant, stimulating and at a suitable, but challenging level for pupils, leads to good learning.
- The mutual support of all teachers so that ideas for improvement are shared amongst the whole department leads to good practice being shared and teaching improved.

### Areas for improvement:

- Results in national tests and assessments.
- A further increase in the range of teaching strategies used to increase the involvement of pupils in lessons.
- The use of ICT within the curriculum.
- The range of opportunities for numeracy to be reinforced across the curriculum.

### Standards attained in 2002

	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b>Results in national tests</b>	Very low when compared to all schools, but below average when compared to similar schools.	Very low when compared to national figures, with boys achieving better results than girls. When compared to similar schools, attainment is just above average.
<b>Results over time</b>	Rising at a good rate.	Rising.
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Similar results to those attained in English, but worse than in science.	Compared to other subjects in the school, pupils attained lower grades in mathematics than in most of their other subjects.
<b>Achievement</b>	Pupils made unsatisfactory progress and underachieved because of poor attendance.	Satisfactory in relation to prior achievement at the end of Year 9, but good achievement in relation to their skills in mathematics when they entered the school.

### Standards seen during the inspection.

118. Standards of pupils' mathematics when they enter the school are very low. No pupils gained the higher levels at the end of Year 6. Work seen during the inspection indicates that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well to attain standards that are well below average overall. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls in Years 7 to 9. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 7 confidently study the measurement of time and the use of simple measures of turning. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 7 achieve standards close to the national average. Standards are rising and there are a number of pupils in the current Year 9, who are expected to achieve the higher Level 6 in the national tests. By the end of Year 9, higher-attaining pupils can use effectively a range of mathematical ideas from Levels 5 and 6 of the National Curriculum. For example, they use co-ordinates in all quadrants and analyse and display data in a variety of ways, which represents the expected level of attainment for pupils at the age of 14 years.

119. Pupils in Year 11 follow the intermediate level course leading to GCSE mathematics. Standards are well below the national standard as there are only a few pupils expected to achieve grade C or above. For instance, pupils understand the principles of correlation, can draw diagrams to show this and draw conclusions. Lower-attaining pupils follow the foundation course and use and apply a variety of number skills in practical situations. However, standards are rising. For example, some of the higher-attaining pupils in Year 10 are expected to follow the higher-level course at GCSE and are aiming for the higher grades A\* and A. This is a challenging target for teachers and pupils alike. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. The poor attendance record of many pupils in previous years has led to gaps in knowledge; this has hampered good, consistent progress. There has to be much consolidation on every topic before new work can be undertaken and this limits the overall time available for new work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the support they receive within classes. Pupils, who are able and talented, also continue to improve well.

### ***Teaching and learning.***

120. The good progress made by pupils in Years 7 to 9 is a product of good teaching. This good teaching is reflected in the positive response from pupils and hence good learning. All lessons seen in Years 7 to 9 were satisfactory or better with almost three-quarters good or better. One lesson seen was very good. In Years 10 and 11, all lessons were satisfactory or better, with most lessons seen being good or very good. Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge, plan well and hence meet the needs of all pupils. In a few lessons, some teachers tend to spend too much time on talking about a topic rather than getting pupils actively involved in the learning. A wider range of teaching strategies is now in use, which now includes practical work and pupils being encouraged to discuss their work with each other were evident. This is improving pupils understanding of mathematics and encouraging pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry. In a Year 10 lower-attaining set, the teacher made very good use of multi-link cubes with all pupils to give a very good visual demonstration of drawing three-dimensional objects in two dimensions. This visual representation enabled the pupils to easily see the final drawing.

### ***Leadership and management.***

121. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The current head of department has successfully built a mutually supportive team with a common desire for improvement. Many of the initiatives that have been put into place since April 2002 have not yet had time to have a noticeable effect; for example, the strategies to improve examination results by improving teaching and learning. The head of department gives good guidance and advice to teachers and there are regular schedules for assessment of pupils' learning. The head of department on a regular basis monitors exercise books and in the feedback to pupils there are indications of National Curriculum levels or estimated grades for GCSE. The accommodation is adequate, but some rooms are too small to enable a range of teaching methods to be used effectively.
122. This is a strong department with much potential, staffing has stabilised and there are signs that it is beginning to show a rise in standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The desire for improvement can only result in success for all pupils.

### ***Numeracy in other subjects across the curriculum.***

123. The development of number skills was a key issue in the last report and there is now a policy in place across the school. Most curriculum areas have a policy for numeracy in their scheme of work, but many, for instance science, do not fully implement it. The

head of mathematics has undertaken an audit of skills across the curriculum and has produced an excellent guide to the use and interpretation of graphs, charts and diagrams for other curriculum areas. This guide is used extensively in geography, for instance, to support data handling. Number work is regularly reinforced in mathematics lessons, but is infrequently practiced for skills to become effective in all areas.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths:

- Attainment in Years 7 to 9 is improving rapidly and achievement is good.
- Leadership and management are very good. Staff share a vision and established systems support continuing improvement.
- Very good assessment and tracking systems provide timely information about pupils' achievement over time and are used to inform actions to support individuals and groups.
- Very good planning, well-structured lessons and very good use of resources lead to pupils' good learning and enthusiasm for and enjoyment of science.
- Very good classroom management leads to pupils' very good behaviour and courteous, co-operative attitudes.
- The department evaluates its performance well and has, therefore, made good progress since the last inspection.

### Areas for improvement:

- Standards of attainment in Years 10 and 11 are not improving as fast as in Years 7 to 9.
- Use of ICT as a tool to support learning in science is underdeveloped.
- Curriculum provision does not yet fully accommodate pupils' very low levels of numeracy on entry.
- Pupils take limited responsibility for their own learning and show few independent learning skills.

### Standards attained in 2002

	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b>Results in national tests</b>	Results were above those for similar schools and very low in comparison to national averages. Boys and girls attained equally well.	Results were very low in comparison to national averages, but well above those for similar schools. Boys and girls had similar results.
<b>Results over time</b>	Standards improved substantially over the last two years.	Standards improved until 2001 and deteriorated in 2002.
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Results were better than those in English and mathematics.	Results were significantly worse than in other subjects.
<b>Achievement</b>	Very good for higher-attaining pupils and good for other pupils, including those with special educational needs.	Unsatisfactory. A significant minority did not attain any qualification in science.

### Standards seen during the inspection.

124. Observation of lessons and pupils' work during the inspection confirm that standards are improving, although they remain well below national standards. Pupils' very low standards of literacy and numeracy limit their achievements in science. Standards in

science are very low on entry to the school, but improve rapidly so that all pupils make good progress by the end of Year 9. In Year 9, higher-attaining pupils describe the causes of variation correctly, but cannot accurately distinguish between inherited and environmental variation. Lower attainers can describe some properties of materials and living things, but cannot use simple vocabulary such as “harmful”, classify substances or use their knowledge of metals to predict the properties of an unknown metal.

125. Results in national tests are not as high as standards seen in lessons, especially in Years 10 and 11, which are well below average rather than very low. In Year 11, higher-attaining pupils can describe and explain total internal reflection using scientific vocabulary and explain its uses in optical instruments. Lower-attaining pupils cannot relate the frequency and amplitude of waves to the pitch and loudness of sounds immediately after a demonstration. The low results are caused by the poor attendance of some pupils and their difficulties with retaining knowledge over time. The progress made by those pupils consistently present in science lessons is good. Achievement is satisfactory overall.

### ***Teaching and learning***

126. Pupils learn well as a result of good science teaching. Topics and lessons are very well planned to provide suitable learning activities and support pupils' confidence. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed and several lessons were very good. Very good management of pupils results in very good behaviour and courteous, compliant responses from pupils. Resources are very well organised and lessons are well structured so that pupils learn at a good pace. In many lessons, there is considerable direction by the teacher and the teacher talks for a high proportion of the lesson. This ensures coverage of the curriculum, but it inhibits pupils' development as independent learners. In the best lessons, pupils are given opportunities to learn in their own ways and to take responsibility for their own learning. In a very good Year 11 lesson, pupils completed an experiment to demonstrate total internal reflection. They were then encouraged to research from a range of sources in order to identify how this is used. By explaining these applications using technical language, pupils developed a very good understanding of the concept, their ability in evaluating the usefulness of sources of information and their literacy skills. Their learning was very good.
127. Teachers know the individual needs of their pupils very well and plan carefully to meet them. Teachers and teaching assistants provide individual support so that pupils with special educational needs and those, who are gifted in science, also learn well. Teachers mark work thoroughly and provide helpful comments for pupils on how to improve their work. This has enabled pupils to do better, especially in tests and examinations. The introduction and use of scientific vocabulary and the opportunities provided for pupils to read aloud and write at length help to develop pupils' literacy as well as their science. Much less attention is paid to numeracy and pupils make limited progress in measuring, use of scales and graph work. Although pupils use the Internet for some research, information and communication technology is underused as a tool to support learning in science. Teaching is good in all years. The relatively limited time available for the science curriculum in Years 10 and 11 contributes to less good achievement in these years.

### ***Leadership and management.***

128. The leadership provided by the new head of faculty is very good. In her first year in post, she has set a clear direction and established very good teamwork and co-operation from the staff, most of whom are new to teaching or to the school. Resources have been improved and are very well organised and maintained. The

limited access to information and communication technology has meant that these aspects of the curriculum are not well developed. Management is also very good and a number of effective systems have been established. Those for monitoring teaching and learning and for tracking the progress of pupils in science are particularly impressive and have helped to identify action to be taken with individuals and groups in order to improve pupils' achievement. The work of the department is systematically evaluated and priorities for improvement are established. These have already borne fruit in improved national test results at the end of Year 9 and in pupils' improved attitudes to science. Improvements in GCSE results are now being addressed. This systematic approach has led to good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the last year. The newly established team is very well placed to continue these improvements.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths:

- Teaching is very good. It is challenging yet supportive and provides all pupils with opportunities to acquire very good technical skills.
- Standards are improving rapidly.
- Pupils achieve very well and show very good attitudes to their work. They are supported by a very good quality and range of learning opportunities.
- There is very good subject management and leadership and the commitment to succeed.
- There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection.

### Areas for improvement:

- The accommodation for the use of computers in the department.
- Pupils do not sufficiently provide written evaluations of their work in their sketchbooks.

## Standards attained in 2002

	<b><i>Year 9</i></b>	<b><i>Year 11</i></b>
<b>Results in national tests</b>	There are no national tests in art and design in Year 9. Teacher assessments indicate that pupils reached standards close to the national average.	The number of those attaining grades A*-C was close to the national average for all schools, but was very high in comparison to similar schools. Very little difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
<b>Results over time</b>	Standards continue to rise each year.	Similar results to 2001, but an improvement in the number of the higher GCSE A* to C grades in particular.
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Pupils attained more highly in art and design than in most of their other subjects.	Pupils attain one and a quarter grades higher in art and design than in their other GCSE subjects.
<b>Achievement</b>	Very good achievements by all, including those with special educational needs.	All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved very well and made very good progress.

***Standards seen during the inspection.***

129. The standards observed in lessons confirm the improving standards. Standards achieved by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11 are average and an increasing number of pupils attain the higher A\* to C grades. Pupils have a good technique and know how the wide range of artists studied influences their work. In Year 9, the pupils with a good technique and awareness of the style of a chosen artist develop their own self-portraits. In Year 11, pupils show a similar good awareness in their work.
130. Pupils explore ideas presented to them by their teachers confidently and are skilled at shaping and modifying visual information. In Years 10 and 11, pupils draw well and become increasingly confident at composition. They are well aware of the impact of scale. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 show a good technique, but do not sufficiently provide written evaluations of their work in their sketchbooks, justifying what they are doing and saying how particular artists have influenced their style.

***Teaching and learning.***

131. Teaching is very good in all years with much that is excellent and so pupils' learning is very good. They make very good progress and achieve very well. The very good applied subject expertise of the teachers and the very thorough planning of lessons matched to the discerned needs of the pupils supports their very good achievements and learning very well. Teachers guide and develop the style and technique of each pupil very thoroughly according to the pupils' thoroughly assessed needs, enabling pupils to increase their skills and their knowledge of how to develop their work. Because they understand what they are doing, pupils, including those with special educational needs, show very good attitudes to their work. In an excellent Year 7 lesson, for example, the pupils developed very good drawings of a sweet pepper with an excellent awareness of impact, scale and composition. Pupils in all years are attentive and settle down quickly to their tasks, working at a good pace with very good levels of interest, enthusiasm and motivation. Teachers have high expectations, lessons proceed at a very good pace and the pupils receive very good levels of support as the lessons progress. Teachers emphasise the development of literacy within the subject. They are good at helping pupils develop their understanding of the key words associated with their work and set homework that builds on and extends the work pupils do in class.
132. In lessons, teachers ask the pupils to think about and to justify what they are doing. They support the pupils' very good progress and rising standards very well with their use of questions and relevant resources and also by showing pupils how they can improve their skills and technique. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of artists and their work in progress is thoroughly evaluated and marked. Pupils are given very good verbal and written suggestions about how they can improve their work, but they do not always follow up written comments in their sketchbooks by teachers.

***Leadership and management.***

133. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. There is a clear vision for the development of the subject and a very good ethos of collaborative work. The head of department has put a very good scheme of work into place and has ensured a satisfactory level of resources for its development.
134. The school and department monitor and evaluate the department's performance very well. It has made very good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching, the range of learning opportunities, in developing the very good attitudes of the pupils, in marking and assessment and in leadership and management. The department is very well placed for future developments.



## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths:

- The standard of teaching and learning leads to good achievement of pupils in lessons.
- The enthusiasm of teachers spurs on pupils to learn.
- The very good use of assessment of pupils and target setting promotes learning.
- The clear and focused leadership of the department is driving up standards.

### Areas for improvement:

- The attainment of pupils in all years, which is well below average.
- The teaching of electronics and systems and control to develop work to a higher technical level.
- The use of new technology for designing and making.
- The inclusion of literacy and numeracy teaching in lessons.

### Standards attained in 2002

	Year 9	Year 11
<b>Results in national tests</b>	There are no national tests in design and technology at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessment showed that pupils are achieving below the national average. Girls perform slightly better than boys.	GCSE results are well below the national average for food and resistant materials, but at the national average for graphic products. Girls are performing slightly better than boys.
<b>Results over time</b>	Results have been gradually improving over a number of years.	Results have been gradually improving over a number of years and not just 2001.
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Similar results to other subjects.	Similar results to other subjects.
<b>Achievement</b>	From Year 7 to Year 9, pupils make good progress and their achievement is close to the national average.	The achievement and progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with the support of Learning Support Assistants.

### Standards seen during the inspection:

135. On entry to the school, the pupils' prior knowledge, understanding and skills in design and technology are well below average. By the end of Year 9, the standards observed in lessons are just below average and so all pupils make good progress and achieve well. They can work effectively with a design brief to develop their own ideas and produce satisfactory practical outcomes. Teachers make good use of ICT in different aspects of the work. For example, pupils in Year 8 access the Internet to find graphical ideas for a project. A few pupils are working at the higher levels of the National Curriculum and demonstrate a confident application of the design process using computer packages to design and cut out packages.

136. Pupils are encouraged to undertake research to support the development of their ideas. In food lessons, pupils progress well from the simple making of biscuits through to the detailed investigation of food from other cultures, for example Japan and India. At an early stage in Year 7, pupils are taught to successfully use sensory testing methods to evaluate food products.
137. Although pupils gain a broad experience of design and technology by the end of Year 9, they have little opportunity to use electronics or control systems to extend their work to a higher technical level.
138. Work in GCSE resistant materials lessons is just below the national average. Design folios are weak and lack the depth of study and detail required to design and make successful practical outcomes. Research is too often poor and pupils gain little from this to support their development of ideas. Many pupils are working on practical projects without working drawings. There is a lack of creativity. Literacy is a problem for some pupils and this limits the quality of their work.
139. In the GCSE graphic products lessons, pupils are making good progress and results are similar to the national averages. Pupils have completed a number of projects and these demonstrate a confident use of the design process. An environmental garden project in graphic products, for example, showed pupils capable of good research leading through to the effective 3D modelling of their design using a variety of media.
140. There is a flourishing child development course and pupils following this course are making good progress. Folios of work are comprehensive and well organised. Lessons are challenging and pupils take an active part in discussions. In one Year 10 child development lesson, pupils discussed children with disabilities, covering aspects of moral and social issues. Pupils were confident in expressing their views and demonstrated a high level of maturity and awareness of the issues involved.

### ***Teaching and learning.***

141. Most of the teaching and, therefore, learning, is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and their lesson planning is good. They have a very good rapport with pupils, which has a positive impact on the learning and progress of pupils. Teachers challenge pupils well and use questioning effectively to confirm learning and to extend understanding. Their general subject knowledge is good and two staff members have recently completed training to use new computer technology. However, the use of this technology has yet to be planned into the design curriculum so that it improves the learning and project work of pupils. Assessment procedures are thorough and there is extensive use of target setting in all year groups to promote learning. Teachers ensure pupils are aware of the levels they are at and are working towards.
142. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified in lesson plans, but few strategies are used to address their specific learning needs. Individual action plans provide little guidance for subject teachers. Teachers devote more time to pupils with learning difficulties and this does have a positive impact on their progress. Learning support assistance is being provided for some pupils following examination courses to overcome their learning difficulties. This strategy is having a positive impact on progress and learning. Across the department there is a good approach to the marking of work and teachers offer effective and constructive feedback that promotes learning in many instances. Lesson planning includes some strategies to promote the literacy of pupils, but support for numeracy is less well developed. The quality of display is good in most areas and used by teachers as a resource in lessons and to stimulate the interest of pupils.

### **Leadership and management.**

143. Leadership in the department is good with a clear vision for future development; schemes of work are comprehensive and policies are in place. However, more coherence needs to be brought to the work of the resistant materials area because there is a duplication of learning, for example, in developing presentational skills. The department does not have the experience or equipment to teach electronics and the system and control aspects of the National Curriculum properly.

144. The department has made good improvements since the last inspection. Standards are still below national averages, but they have been improving over several years and staff are determined for this trend to continue. The department has a committed teaching team and is well placed to raise the quality of education and learning.

### **GEOGRAPHY**

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

#### **Strengths:**

- Leadership is excellent and all teachers share a vision for the future development of the subject.
- Assessment is very good and pupils' progress is carefully monitored and evaluated.
- Standards are improving each year. The rise in standards at GCSE since the last inspection has been spectacular.
- Relationships are very good. Pupils respond very positively to the subject and it is a very popular option choice.
- Teaching is good with many very good features. It is challenging yet supportive and allows the full pupil ability range to acquire sound geographical skills.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- Pupils to be given more responsibility for their own learning.
- The quality and quantity of geographical resources in the library in order to facilitate opportunities for more pupil research.

### **Standards attained in 2002**

	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b>Results in national tests</b>	There are no national tests in geography at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessment shows standards to be well below average. There is little difference in attainment between boys and girls.	Results are below average compared to both all schools nationally and to similar schools. There was little difference in attainment between boys and girls.
<b>Results over time</b>	Standards have improved consistently over the past three years.	A marked improvement over the past two years.
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Pupils attained more higher grade Level 6+ passes than in most other subjects.	Pupils achieved more higher grade A*-C passes than in most other subjects.
<b>Achievement</b>	Good progress by all, including those with special educational needs.	All pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good progress and achieve well.

***Standards seen during the inspection.***

145. The standards observed in lessons and in the analysis of pupils' work show that standards are below average by Year 9 and close to the national average by Year 11. This represents good achievement for all pupils. This rise in standards is because of the good quality of teaching across the school and the very effective use of pupil target setting linked to their individual learning needs. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a growing understanding of place and location, their geographical skills are well developed and they are competent in identifying the similarities and differences between the regions they have studied. Opportunities to develop their individual enquiry skills further are inhibited by their low levels of literacy and the inadequate library and computer resources.
146. In Year 10, students explain clearly the causes and effects of river flooding through the study and evaluation of a range of maps, photographs and written sources. They use their knowledge and skills to suggest viable solutions to the catastrophic flooding in Bangladesh and understand the impact of such devastation on a less economically developed country. By the end of Year 11, pupils record and present their work with increasing sophistication. They utilise a wide variety of resources and geographical skills skilfully to evaluate the impact of human activity on the environment. Such multi-skilled enquiries enable all pupils to make real progress in their geographical studies. Achievement is good across the whole ability range and positive pupil attitudes are a major factor in bringing about this change in the school's learning climate. Pupils achieve well in terms of their earlier attainment because they are motivated by attainable learning targets and respond positively to the school's behavioural management systems.

***Teaching and learning.***

147. Pupils make good progress in the acquisition of geographical skills, the development of ideas and their understanding of the world around them. They produce high-quality work and are able to sustain their interest over long periods of time. They are very clear as to how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Teaching is good and often very good and has a positive impact on learning. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, the teacher's selection of real rock and mineral samples, which the pupils were allowed to handle and analyse, enthused the class and enabled the whole ability range to undertake their own individual research. Pupils were provided with additional opportunities to work in pairs and benefited from the resultant discussions with their peers. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, provide a wide variety of stimulating resources and set clear learning objectives. They have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and this provides pupils with the confidence required to undertake more difficult assignments and to work to the best of their ability. Learning gains are made because teachers set targets for individual pupils, which are effective because they are regularly monitored and reviewed. Pupils are aware of their national curriculum levels or GCSE grades and work in partnership with teachers to promote advances in learning. Lesson planning is meticulous and teachers choose appropriate resources to ensure that the whole ability range has full access to the curriculum. The use of challenging questioning techniques in class and the selection of stimulating homework tasks meets the learning needs of higher-attaining pupils. The great emphasis placed on the promotion of literacy enables lower-attaining pupils to improve their learning, especially their understanding of essential geographical terminology. If standards are to rise still further, higher-attaining pupils should be allowed to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

***Leadership and management.***

148. Leadership of the department is excellent and ensures a clear educational direction. The team of teachers has a shared vision of how the subject should be taught and how

standards can be further improved. The department monitors its performance very closely and has devised excellent data-based assessment systems, which allow individual pupil target setting to operate across the curriculum. Staffing and learning resources are very well managed. Department worksheets are of a high quality, challenging to the very able yet accessible to pupils of all levels of prior achievement. However, individual learning advances are being held back by the poor quality of geographical learning resources in the school library. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection and is well placed for future development.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths:

- Leadership and management are very good and have ensured the establishment of well-founded strategies for development, which have led to a rapid improvement in pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is good and provides pupils of all ability levels with opportunities to make good progress.
- There are very effective systems in place for assessing pupils' performance; marking is a strong feature and gives pupils extensive advice on how they may reach for higher standards.
- Pupils behave very well, enjoy history and have warm relationships with their teachers, of whom they speak highly.

### Areas for improvement:

- Although improving rapidly, pupils' historical skills are not well refined and attainment at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations is well below average.
- Teachers do not place enough emphasis on researching the many different ways in which their pupils learn in order to inform their teaching methodology more closely.
- ICT, as a tool for learning, is underdeveloped and library stock needs updating.

### Standards attained in 2002.

	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b>Results in national tests</b>	There are no national tests in history at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessments show standards were well below average. There is little difference in attainment between boys and girls.	Results are well below average compared with all schools nationally and below average compared with similar schools.
<b>Results over time</b>	Results over time show a marked improvement in pupils attaining Level 4 and above.	There has been a marked improvement over the previous years.
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Pupils attain similar standards in history to their other school subjects.	Pupils' results were higher than the school average.
<b>Achievement</b>	Good progress by all, including those with special educational needs.	Pupils made very good progress from Year 9 to Year 11 and achieve well.

***Standards seen during the inspection.***

149. Standards observed in lessons are below average overall and demonstrate that pupils are making good progress in the acquisition of historical skills from a low level when they enter the school. Because of the emphasis that teachers place on their pupils understanding just how historians work, many pupils have a sound grasp of the nature of evidence by the end of Year 9 and are beginning to support their views with confidence and with reference to the sources. Standards of literacy are generally a major concern. A significant minority of pupils have weak chronological skills and find the understanding and use of historical terminology difficult.
150. Pupils following the GCSE course still find higher-order skills of source evaluation difficult and most, as yet, cannot make informed decisions about the reliability and usefulness of evidence. Because teachers provide their pupils with challenging and thought-provoking source materials, an increasing minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress in questioning the evidence available to them and in making links between different aspects of the work they cover. In Year 11, for example, they are well aware of bias and can answer quite complex questions about when sources can be considered both primary and secondary evidence at the same time.

***Teaching and learning.***

151. Pupils become increasingly fascinated by history and acquire historical skills at a rapid rate because of teaching, which is both challenging and supportive. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in three-quarters of lessons it is good, very good or excellent. In an excellent Year 10 lesson, for example, the relentless challenge and the support for pupils, who found the work difficult, led to the pupils working most maturely in groups on the dangers facing cowboys during the 'Long Drive'. They were justly proud of the mind maps they produced and many surprised themselves at the quality of their achievements. Overall, teaching and learning is good in all years. Furthermore, teachers know their pupils very well and assessment techniques are of a very high quality. Marking, for example, is detailed and regular and not only congratulates pupils for the achievements they have made, but also gives them extensive and realistic advice on how they may improve. Moreover, because teachers have presence and treat their pupils with the utmost dignity, youngsters behave very well and pursue their studies with real interest.
152. Pupils of all ability levels are able to learn at their own pace because teachers are adept at providing individual help and because learning support assistants are skilled at ensuring that pupils, who find the work difficult, have the utmost access to what the lessons have to offer. Teachers know that pupils can learn much from their classmates and provide many opportunities for paired and group work. In addition, pupils benefit from classrooms, which are vibrant learning environments in which their work is displayed with care and with pride. The models, which pupils make as part of the annual castle competition, are quite superb and are a testament to the department's emphasis on the recognition of achievement in all its forms.

***Leadership and management.***

153. Leadership and management are very good. From a very difficult situation, the head of department, fully supported by teaching colleagues, has led the subject in a wide-ranging analysis of departmental performance. In a short period of time, a range of initiatives and a variety of monitoring strategies have been established and have already brought about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the levels of achievement and attainment in all years. The department is, therefore, well placed for future development.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### **Strengths:**

- The standard of teaching, which leads to good learning and progress.
- The assessment of pupils and target setting to promote good progress.
- The leadership and management of the department facilitates the good progress being made by pupils.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- The attainment of pupils.
- The teaching of ICT in subject areas to meet statutory requirements.
- The planning and monitoring of ICT across the school.

### **Standards attained in 2002**

	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b><i>Results in national tests</i></b>	There are no national tests in ICT at the end of Years 9. Teacher assessment showed the number of pupils achieving Level 5 or above to be below the national average. Boys and girls achieved similar results.	Results were below the national average for all and similar schools, but this is based on small entry numbers. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
<b><i>Results over time</i></b>	Results have been gradually improving in line with other subjects in the school.	Results over the past few years have been variable.
<b><i>Results compared to other subjects in the school</i></b>		Pupils attained similar results in ICT to their other GCSE subjects.
<b><i>Achievement</i></b>	Pupils make good progress and their work is closer to the national average.	Pupils make good progress.

### ***Standards seen during the inspection.***

154. The standards observed in separate specialist lessons for Years 7 to 9 are close to those expected nationally. However, the use of ICT in other subject areas is unsatisfactory and so standards are well below average overall. An induction programme in Year 7 used to assess pupils shows their prior attainment in ICT to be very low. Assessments in Year 9 and the work seen indicate that pupils are below the national average, but they have made good progress.
155. Pupils are now gaining confidence in the use of word processing, graphics, data handling, spreadsheets, desktop publishing and multi-media packages. They are making increasing use of the Internet to support their work. For example, Year 8 pupils used the Internet to search for examples of graphics to design a leaflet in geography.

156. In Year 9, pupils are set a project that combines the different skills they have learnt. This is used to confirm their learning and also provides the opportunity to extend their skills. Some pupils in Year 9 have made particularly good progress and a substantial number are being entered for a short-course external examination. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils work towards external examinations for information and communication technology and they are making good progress.
157. Overall, pupils make good progress and are keen to use information and communication technology. This is demonstrated through their attendance after school to complete tasks and activities.

### ***Teaching and learning***

158. Teaching and learning are good across the department. Lesson planning is good and teachers make good use of information and communication technology in their teaching. For example, they use PowerPoint presentations and interactive boards. The learning objectives for lessons are clearly explained to pupils and teachers explain what the pupils will need to achieve. Teachers' very good rapport with pupils has a positive impact on the learning and progress of pupils. Teachers use questioning effectively to confirm learning and to extend the understanding of pupils. Their subject knowledge is good.
159. Effective and thorough assessment procedures enhance learning. Extensive use of target setting in all year groups helps to promote learning and progress. Pupils are fully aware of both their level of performance and what they need to do to progress to the next level.

### ***Leadership and management.***

160. A new head of department was appointed last year and there is now a clear direction for the department. There is good leadership for the planning and management of teaching. A well-structured teaching programme is in place as part of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy for ICT. This is having a positive impact on learning and progress for the current cohort of pupils. There is now clear direction and progression to cover the National Curriculum programme of study.

### ***ICT in other subjects across the curriculum***

161. Most subjects across the school are failing to meet the requirements to cover their specific aspects of ICT. Most subjects use information and communication technology to some extent, but the use is not monitored. The National Curriculum ICT statutory requirements are not being met across the school because most subject areas do not effectively use ICT as required by their programmes of study. There are no formal links with other departments to map, monitor or support the teaching of ICT across the school.



## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths:

- Standards are improving rapidly; all pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good overall. In Year 9, it is very good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; very good relationships support learning well.
- Excellent leadership and management ensure continuing development.
- Very good assessment procedures and constructive marking help pupils to understand targets and progress.

### Areas for improvement:

- Lack of specialist staffing reduces the time available for each class.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to extend the range of their oral and written work.
- There is insufficient use of resources, such as computers and readers, to vary and further improve learning.

### Standards attained in 2002

	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b>Results in national tests</b>	There are no national tests in Spanish at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessment show attainment to be well below the national average.	No pupils were entered for GCSE examinations in 2002. The first pupils will be entered in 2003.
<b>Results over time</b>	At the previous inspection in 2001, there was no provision for modern foreign languages. Consequently, pupils in Years 9 to 11 have learned Spanish for only four terms.	***
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Pupils attain similarly to their other subjects in Years 7 to 9.	***
<b>Achievement</b>	Good progress in the first year of study by all pupils and so they achieved well.	***

\*\*\*No pupils were entered for external examinations in 2002.

### Standards seen during the inspection.

162. In lessons and work sampled, almost half of pupils in Year 9 reached standards consistent with national expectations, though the overall standard remains below average. After four terms of study and with a low time allocation, this represents good achievement by all pupils, including the large number with special educational needs. They achieve these standards because they respond enthusiastically to well-planned teaching. Pupils work hard in class and have fun as they learn. A Year 8 class, for example, learned language to describe tapas. They then sampled plates of tapas supplied by the teacher before voicing and recording their opinions about the various items. Pupils pronounce well, reflecting frequent opportunities to make oral contributions. They steadily acquire knowledge of vocabulary and language structure, which gives them a sound basis for understanding the main points in what they read

and hear in Spanish. All pupils respond briefly in spoken and written Spanish, but few show an ability to expand into more complex language, or to take the initiative. This is largely because there is so little time allowed for Spanish lessons. Attitudes and behaviour are so good and relationships so strong that teachers have the confidence to take risks to improve learning experiences.

163. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are below average (again reflecting the limited depth of study), which represents good achievement. The number of pupils choosing Spanish as an option is small, but increasing as the subject becomes more popular. About half the pupils in each year are approaching average standards. In Year 11, pupils participate well in oral work, but continue to answer briefly. Written coursework is promising, with good content and accuracy, though language remains simple at this stage, with little tense variation and few complex structures. Pupils write descriptively about their local area, school uniform and their subjects. They can write a letter to reserve accommodation. They have sufficient command of vocabulary to pick out main messages in more extended passages of written and spoken Spanish. Throughout Years 7 to 11, there is no significant difference in standards achieved by boys and girls.

### ***Teaching and learning.***

164. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. There is very good teaching in Year 9 lessons. Pupils learn well because they are challenged to think in activities, which keep them fully occupied and engage their interest and attention. Teachers adhere to a successful pattern in each lesson, including the sharing of objectives and a recap session, so that pupils understand the purpose of learning and understand their progress. Planning is very good, ensuring that all pupils participate and make progress, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnicity. Learning is enhanced by teachers' generally good subject knowledge, though one Year 10 lesson was unsatisfactory because the teacher's limited Spanish held back the pace of learning. A strong focus on National Curriculum and GCSE requirements enables teachers to make the most of low contact time and underpins very good marking, giving constructive guidance on how to improve. Pupils enjoy much of the work because teachers vary methods, for example with paired tasks. A Year 11 group participated in a series of oral activities on parts of the body and illness, made much more relevant by the use of a range of real medical items. Teachers use available resources well to enliven learning.
165. However, lack of time means the department cannot use desirable resources such as video, ICT and readers. Homework complements classroom learning, though the range of tasks is limited because pupils cannot take textbooks home. Learning is held back in Year 10 due to a lack of specialist teaching.

### ***Leadership and management.***

166. The rapidly improving status of Spanish is due to excellent leadership and management. Regular monitoring through observation and work sampling leads to amendments of schemes of work to improve provision. Planning documents and minutes of meetings show a commitment to work collectively to raise attainment. Assessment procedures are very good and are used effectively to improve motivation and track progress. Teachers give up time to conduct extra sessions in French, German and Spanish clubs, increasing interest in language learning, which is further stimulated by contact with a foreign language assistant from Argentina. Good accommodation and displays support learning. Textbook stocks are improving, but neither in the department nor the library are there resources to stimulate independent reading. Though there is still much work to be done, the department has made very good improvement since the previous inspection to establish Spanish as a successful subject.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths:

- The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils develop their musical skills and understanding well.
- Pupils show good attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons as a result of the good relationships between the staff and pupils.
- The department's contribution to pupils' personal development is good because of opportunities provided in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.

### Areas for improvement:

- Linking assessment procedures to National Curriculum levels of attainment.
- Music ICT resources and the opportunities to use ICT in order to enhance pupils' composing and performing skills.

### Standards attained in 2002

	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b>Results in national tests</b>	There are no national tests in music at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessment shows attainment to be well below average. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.	No GCSE candidates have been entered since the previous inspection.
<b>Results over time</b>	Standards have improved inline with those of other subjects in the school.	
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school.</b>	Standards are similar to other subjects in the school.	
<b>Achievement</b>	Satisfactory progress by all pupils, including those with special educational needs.	

### Standards seen during the inspection.

167. In the lessons observed, the standard attained by Year 9 pupils was below average. As most pupils enter the school with music skills that are well below average, this reflects good progress and is the result of the teacher's high expectations and good planning. This achievement is not yet reflected in the teacher assessment results. Pupils' keyboard skills are developing well.
168. Though their use of musical vocabulary and their understanding of the features of different styles of music are limited, pupils are developing an understanding of music satisfactorily. However, pupils' composing skills are well below average because insufficient time has been spent on developing these skills in previous years and there is less time allocated to music this year.
169. There is not enough evidence to make a judgement about standards by the age of 16 years. However, the results of tests taken in the school show that pupils' listening skills are below average and so they achieve well. The exception is a higher-attaining pupil whose skills are above average. Pupils can answer short questions more easily than those requiring further explanation. Pupils in Year 10 are developing their knowledge

and understanding of instruments well for the area of study about the orchestra. However, their composing skills are underdeveloped.

170. The standard of singing by the school choir is very good as a result of the expertise and commitment of the learning support assistant, who rehearses the choir.

***Teaching and learning.***

171. Pupils make good progress in developing their musical skills and understanding because the quality of the teaching they receive is good. Pupils behave well and concentrate on their work because of the teacher's good management and relationships with them. All pupils, including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, make good progress with their keyboard skills because the teacher plans sufficiently challenging work for them. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, all pupils made very good progress in playing the keyboard with both hands and in learning about chords because of the very effective step-by-step methods used by the teacher, who also used his own musical skills to demonstrate first. The use of headphones with the keyboards also enabled pupils to focus better on their own playing. Pupils are further supported by the teacher going round the class helping them to improve their keyboard playing or providing further explanations of their composing task. Because the teacher uses challenging and well-focused questioning very effectively, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of musical elements or the features of a particular piece of music.

***Leadership and management.***

172. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Because the school has been unable to appoint a head of music, the music department is led and managed by an acting head of department, who is the only music teacher and, who also has another post of responsibility in the school. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. However, assessment criteria are too general to enable pupils to understand clearly what they have to do to achieve a particular grade or level and the link to National Curriculum levels needs to be more systematic. Although the range of classroom instruments is good, the department does not have adequate keyboards or music computer software to meet statutory requirements for the use of ICT to support pupils' musical learning in Years 7 to 9 or to enhance pupils' composing and performing skills in Years 10 and 11. Since the previous inspection, opportunities for pupils to learn to play instruments have improved. However, the range of instruments on offer is limited to the more traditional orchestral instruments and caters well for the different interests of pupils in the school. Links with feeder primary schools have been more firmly established. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths:

- The high quality of leadership and management in the department, which ensures the quality of teaching and learning, which is consistently good.
- The range of activities offered within the physical education curriculum contributing to the enthusiastic attitude shown towards physical education throughout the school.

### Areas for improvement:

- The further encouragement of evaluation as a tool for learning, particularly with regard to improving the performance of others.
- The consistency of the written work of the GCSE group.

### Standards attained in 2002.

	<b>End of Year 9</b>	<b>End of Year 11</b>
<b>Results in national tests/teacher assessments</b>	There are no national tests in physical education at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessment shows attainment was broadly in line with the national average.	Standards are broadly in line with the national average for all schools and above average for similar schools. More girls than boys gained the higher grades.
<b>Results over time</b>	An improvement in standards has been seen over the past three years.	An improvement on the previous year's results.
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Standards in physical education are broadly similar to those in other subjects in the school.	
<b>Achievement</b>	Good progress by all, including those with special educational needs, and so all achieve well.	Good progress by all, including those with special educational needs.

### Standards seen during the inspection.

173. The standards observed in lessons are average. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of work covered in previous lessons and this enables them to apply new skills successfully, building on their existing skills base and developing this further in response to increasing competitive challenges. In Year 9, for example, pupils successfully learned the new skill of the overhead clear shot in badminton. They were then able to incorporate this into a structured game and apply the correct scoring system themselves.

174. Pupils know what is expected of them in lessons and, consequently, they respond well to the demands of tasks set. They are prepared to use their initiative and can organise equipment efficiently and safely. In an excellent Year 11 lesson, for example, pupils planned, organised and led an activities circuit as part of their training for the Junior Sports Leadership Award. In addition to this, the leaders also showed pupils how to adapt certain exercises, enabling those with special educational needs to gain maximum physical benefit.

### Teaching and learning.

175. Pupils make good progress because of the good quality of teaching. This is evident in good class management and effective, varied teaching methods. Teachers' explanations are informative, lively and understandable, encouraging pupils to aspire to higher rates of success.

176. Teaching of key words, along with good use of resources such as flip charts, white boards and work sheets, enables teachers to establish pupils' understanding during lessons. Teachers state learning objectives clearly at the beginning of lessons and reinforce them regularly by questions and answers. Teachers give praise regularly. The work folders of pupils in the examination group are neatly presented and they demonstrate a clear understanding of course concepts. They also show that pupils are making links between the practical and theoretical aspects of the course.
177. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers and pupils ask questions confidently, knowing they will receive help when they need it. There is a consistent approach towards differentiation in lessons. Pupils, who are gifted and talented, are encouraged to lead in certain aspects of lessons, such as the warm-up, and there are adequate opportunities for them to develop their expertise. The department does not encourage pupils to be involved in mutual evaluation with their peers.

### ***Leadership and Management.***

178. The leadership of the department is good. Over the last year, the department has successfully recruited new staff and this is to be commended in the light of the difficulties faced by the head of department on her arrival in 2001. Major improvements to the assessment and monitoring of pupils have taken place over the last year and a provision for the assessment of the abilities of Year 7 pupils when they enter the school has now been established. Throughout the department, the quality of display material is of a high quality. This reflects pupils' achievements and trips abroad and is informative about the physical education curriculum, the GCSE syllabus and examination results. The department has made very good improvements and is well placed to progress further.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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

### **Strengths:**

- Good teaching results in all pupils making good progress whatever their prior level of attainment.
- Leadership and management are good. The commitment, determination and enthusiasm demonstrated by the recently appointed subject leader contributes significantly to the rise in pupil achievement.
- The six weekly system of assessing pupil progress quickly identifies any gaps in pupil knowledge.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Marking does not ensure that pupils are given very clear and specific guidance on how to improve their standard of written work.
- Independence in learning, especially opportunities for pupils to review their own learning.
- Broaden the learning experience for all pupils by involving members of the local community in lessons and creating more opportunities for using ICT in lessons.

### ***Standards attained in 2002***

	<b><i>Year 9</i></b>	<b><i>Year 11</i></b>
<b>Results in national tests</b>	There are no national tests in religious education at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessments show that attainment is close to the standard expected by SACRE agreed syllabus.	Standards are well below average overall compared to all schools and below average compared to similar schools.
<b>Results over time</b>	Standards have risen in line with those of other subjects in the school.	There were no GCSE results for 2001, 2000 or 1999.
<b>Results compared to other subjects in the school</b>	Pupils attain standards similar to those attained in their other school subjects.	Pupils attained results on average half a grade below in religious education compared to other subjects.
<b>Achievement</b>	From prior attainment on entry that is below average in religious education, all pupils make good progress and achieve well.	All pupils achieved well compared to their predicted target grades. All made good progress over the two-year course.

### ***Standards seen during the inspection.***

179. Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with the expectations of the Wolverhampton agreed syllabus in Years 7, 8 and 9. In Year 8, all pupils can explain how the beliefs and practices followed by religious groups influence their daily lives. They can evaluate the relationships between belief and practice in society today for the particular religious groups they are studying. The work produced by the current Year 10 GCSE group indicates standards are higher than those normally expected for this stage in the course and are above average. Where information relating to previous year groups is available, this indicates a significant improvement in standards. Pupils display good retention of subject knowledge in their written and oral work. They are able to make links to work completed in previous years and in other subjects. All pupils in all classes are making good progress.

### ***Teaching and learning.***

180. Learning in lessons is good because teaching is consistently good with much that is very good. Teachers' high expectations, coupled with a passion for the subject, promote very positive attitudes to learning. The rise in achievement seen during the inspection week is the result of good and often very good classroom teaching. In one very good Year 10 lesson, for instance, pupils had to analyse the pros and cons of the various death penalties imposed by different states in America. In groups, they then considered an actual crime that had taken place and had to make a decision on the appropriate punishment. As a direct result of the way in which the teacher had planned the lesson and introduced a wide variety of resources, an excellent debate on capital punishment took place in which all pupils were able to take a full and active part. Lessons are very carefully planned to provide all pupils with the opportunity to gain knowledge, acquire new skills, demonstrate understanding and improve their levels of literacy.

181. Homework is regularly set and builds upon the learning that has taken place in class. Classwork and homework are marked regularly. However, with the exception of work

set for assessment purposes, marking does not always provide pupils with enough detailed guidance to enable them to identify what they need to do to improve.

### ***Leadership and management.***

182. Leadership and management are good. Leadership sets a clear direction for the subject and there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement. The subject leader, who has been in post since September, regularly monitors the learning of pupils in all classes. New schemes of work have been introduced, which identify other areas of learning that the teaching in religious education can support, for example citizenship. Regular assessment opportunities have been introduced into Years 7, 8 and 9 to enable teachers to track progress. The next step is to provide pupils with the opportunity to be more directly involved in the assessment and review process. The content and style of the new GCSE course provides a better match to the way in which the pupils learn and is another contributing factor to the rise in standards seen in their work. Resources have improved this year and are now good both in quality and range. The department does not sufficiently involve members of the local religious community in delivering lessons nor to provide opportunities for pupils to gain access to ICT in lessons. Current timetable arrangements do not allow all pupils in Year 10 through to Year 13 to follow a course in religious education and so does not meet its statutory obligations.

### **CITIZENSHIP**

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

#### **Strengths:**

- The course in Years 10 and 11 is well planned and reinforces pupils' understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens.
- School assemblies and the work of the school council are very effective in giving pupils opportunities to consider social and moral issues and to assist in the running of the school.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- There is no formalised citizenship programme in Years 7, 8 and 9.

### ***Standards seen during the inspection.***

183. Because the formalised citizenship programme exists solely in Years 10 and 11, inspectors visited assemblies and meetings of the school council. Pupils display a sound understanding of the differences between civil and criminal law, of the positive qualities needed for effective relationships with others and in what ways an OFSTED inspection can cause anxiety to teachers! Pupils play an active part during assemblies and they deliver their presentations with skill and verve. Moreover, during meetings of the school council, pupils display a very mature approach to the subject matter and they treat their peers with the utmost respect and dignity. They use quite sophisticated language to express their opinions and realise the importance of eliciting the views of their classmates if effective and well-founded decisions are to be made in meetings.

### ***Teaching and learning.***

184. Only three lessons were seen and the teaching varied from satisfactory to excellent. Key features of the teaching are very detailed planning, very good opportunities for pupils to work in groups and clear objectives shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. In a very good Year 10 lesson, for example, enthusiastic and focused teaching and subject matter, which appealed to all, led pupils to make very good



progress. As a result, they began to understand how different kinds of crime affect different sections of society and how the actions of individuals can have a negative influence on large groups. Teachers demonstrate very effective classroom management skills and a desire to involve as many pupils actively in the lessons as possible. Questioning techniques are challenging and encourage youngsters not only to express their own opinions, but also to treat the opinions of others with respect and to listen to them carefully.

185. Pupils' emotions are engaged by the very well thought-out assembly programme, which also gives youngsters many opportunities to consider social and moral issues and their response to them. The assembly on loneliness, for example, was a most moving experience and treated a complex and distressing issue in a most thought-provoking fashion.

***Leadership and management.***

186. Leadership and management are good and are characterised by high levels of commitment to the provision of a programme, which will assist pupils to become full and valuable members of society. Although a formalised programme has yet to be established in Years 7, 8 and 9, detailed plans are already in place. The Citizenship Day in February, for example, will be attended by pupils in the first four years and comprises of modules of work on personal health, safety in the home, the role of the police, alcohol and drug abuse and the creation of a school newspaper and web page. The citizenship policy is an integral part of the school's underlying objective – to help pupils become responsible citizens.

## PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, five subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	0						
English Language and Literature	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Art and design	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physical education	3	100	-	0	-	4	6
Product Design	0	-	-	-	-	-	-

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

#### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

##### MATHEMATICS

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

##### Strengths:

- The very good relationships between students and teachers encourage a positive learning atmosphere.

##### Areas for improvement:

- The standards of students upon entry to Advanced level courses.
- The use of computers to support and enhance learning.

##### ***Standards attained in 2001***

187. There were no students entered for examinations in 2001 or 2002.

##### ***Standards seen during the inspection.***

188. Year 12 students start the course after gaining a grade C or above at intermediate level GCSE. Mathematics is a developing feature of the sixth-form curriculum. Normally, a grade B or higher at GCSE higher level would be required, but, at present, a grade B or C at intermediate level is accepted. This means that students enter the course at a level below that, which would normally be required. However, the work these students are now studying is at a level just below that, which would be expected at this stage of the course. This indicates that they are making satisfactory progress from their GCSE levels and at present they are achieving as expected. There are no apparent differences between boys and girls at this stage.

189. Year 13 students are expected to join the Year 12 students because their standards are not yet high enough to be awarded a grade in Advanced level examinations. Students can successfully differentiate equations to find the gradient function of an equation and interpret their answers in relation to the shape of the graph. This indicates good progress from previous levels. Some students re-take their GCSE examination during Year 12 so as to gain a grade C or higher. These results have not yet been received.

### ***Teaching and learning***

190. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare lessons well. There are two teachers teaching the current Year 12 and they divide up the four successive lessons that occur on one morning between them to provide variety. In a lesson seen on calculus, the teacher used graphical calculators and the overhead projector tablet to good effect so that students could explore a range of graphs before deriving the results from first principles. Students responded by working hard. They find it difficult to sustain their levels of concentration for four successive lessons on one morning, but still work hard. They are aware that A-Level mathematics is a hard subject, but show great determination to succeed. This determination is underpinned by their respect for their teachers and the knowledge that their teachers will do all that they can to secure improvement.

### ***Leadership and management.***

191. The management of mathematics in the sixth form is good. The head of department is very knowledgeable of the syllabus and has a good plan for the work ahead. There is good liaison between the two members of staff, who teach the group. This has meant that the modular course can be built upon the needs of the students at a pace that builds upon prior knowledge.

## **ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING**

GCE A level product design was the focus subject inspected.

### **PRODUCT DESIGN**

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

#### **Strengths**

- The standard of teaching, which ensures good learning and progress.
- The enthusiasm of teachers, which motivates students to learn.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The use of new technology to extend learning, increase the depth of study and more design opportunities.

### ***Standards attained in 2001***

192. There were no students entered for examinations in 2001 or 2002.

### ***Standards seen during the inspection.***

193. The standard of work seen in lessons is close to the national average. The course is challenging for students and they are progressing well. Emphasis is placed on quality outcomes and this is to be seen in displays of their work in the department. Students are starting to develop skills in the use of computer aided design techniques. A project set to develop architectural designs demonstrated a good level of graphical skills using traditional techniques. Model-making skills are well developed. Skills in freehand sketching and product evaluation are being developed well.

### ***Teaching and learning.***

194. The standard of teaching is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and lesson planning is good and has a positive impact on the learning and progress of students. Teachers have a very good rapport with students. They challenge students well and use discussion and questioning effectively to confirm learning and to extend understanding.

The use of new technology has yet to be exploited to have an impact on the learning and work of students.

195. Assessment procedures are thorough and there is extensive use of target setting to promote progress. Teachers ensure students are aware of the levels they are at and are working towards.

***Leadership and management.***

196. Leadership in the department is good with a clear vision for future development. The accommodation for design and technology is satisfactory in meeting the needs of the product design course. New technology is available for CAD and CAM activities. However, teachers have yet to plan the effective use of this to increase the range of opportunities for design development, folio presentation and making.

## **BUSINESS**

No subject was inspected in this area.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

No subject was inspected in this area

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

The inspection focus was GCE A level physical education.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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

### **Strengths:**

- The contribution of the Community Schools' Leadership Award course to students' personal development.
- The quality of pupil-teacher relationships, which motivates students to learn.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- The strengthening of the teaching provision for the theoretical aspects of AS and A2 lessons within the existing schools' partnership arrangement.
- The transition from GCSE to the more independent learning demands of advanced level study.

### ***Standards attained in 2001.***

197. In Year 12, students attained broadly in line with the national average in the GCE AS examination. The number gaining the higher grades was below average, however. This is an improvement on the previous year's results and represents good progress.
198. In Year 13, attainment was above the national average at GCE A level overall, but the number gaining the higher grades was well below the national expectation. This too is an improvement on the previous year's results and students achieved satisfactorily. There was little difference between the attainment of males and females.

### ***Standards seen during the inspection.***

199. The standards observed in lessons are average. In relation to their attainment when they began the course, most students make satisfactory progress and achieve as expected. The school is one of five forming part of a local partnership that provides post-16 education in collaboration with the local further education college. Students are well integrated with students from the other schools and take their lessons seriously. In lessons, they show they understand the learning objectives and apply intellectual and physical efforts towards answering the set tasks. In Year 13, students readily apply their skills in games and are able to replicate different coaching styles for analysis. For example, whilst experiencing the “command” style of coaching, students were able to **articulate its** advantages and disadvantages and to state their own preferences using satisfactory technical terms and reasons for justification.
200. Students have a sound knowledge base. However, in the theoretical aspects of the course, their answers often appear confined to phrases from the text and they do not readily use or grasp more complex concepts through reasoning based on given information. Whilst students in Year 13, for example, had shown their understanding of the concept of coaching in their practical lesson, they were unable to explain, when asked, the distinction between teaching and coaching. Reference to the previous text reminded them of the key words, but they were not able to make the necessary deductions to answer the question.
201. Work folders are satisfactorily presented. However, students’ individual written work shows only slight evidence of the fuller, more detailed context required for study of the subject at this level. The assessment sheets for students’ practical course work reflect more consistent levels of achievement.

### ***Teaching and learning.***

202. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. Studying within the local partnership of other schools presents problems that affect the quality of teaching and learning. Most of the theory at A2 level is taught at another school whilst most of the Year 12 students are taught at Moreton School. All practical course work is taught at Moreton School. This presents difficulties in aspects of teaching and learning such as the use of different marking systems and teaching methods, following up students’ absences and the correction or repetition of work when not up to the required standard. The negative impact of these arrangements is reflected in the evidence of inconsistency between students’ theoretical and practical work.

### ***Leadership and management.***

203. Leadership and management of physical education in the sixth form are satisfactory. Students not studying for the examination courses have the opportunity to pursue training for the Community Schools’ Leadership Award, which they do in their physical education options time. This course has been recently reintroduced into the school and all physical education staff are now fully trained as leaders. Interest in the award is increasing and already students are assisting staff with team practices and extra-curricular activities as part of their training.
204. Staff support for students is evident both in lessons and the range of activities offered outside the curriculum. Two Year 12 leadership students, for example, have introduced a dance club for the younger students during a lunchtime. This has attracted interest from almost 20 students in Year 7, who are clearly excited about the new activity. The leadership students are responsible for all planning and organisation and teach the sessions themselves. Through this contact, the students build good relationships with the younger students and develop as role-models for the rest of the school. There are various “drop in” sessions held at lunchtimes where staff offer help to all students with

both their examination work and Duke of Edinburgh Award activities. The recent ski trip, open to pupils and students of all ages, was partly subsidised by the PE department, indicating their intention of making this a truly inclusive cultural and social experience.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

The focus subject in this area was AS art and design.

### **ART AND DESIGN**

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

#### **Strengths:**

- Teaching is very good. It identifies very well how students can improve.
- Students achieve well and show very good attitudes to their work. They are supported by a very good quality and range of learning opportunities.
- The use of ongoing assessment and marking is good and indicates to students what to do to raise their standards.
- There is very good subject management and leadership and the commitment to succeed.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- Standards.
- Students to take account of the verbal and written comments made by teachers on their work, indicating how they can improve their standards.
- The accommodation for the use of computers in the department.

#### ***Standards attained in 2001.***

205. Students in Year 12 are studying this course at AS level for the first time and there are no results for 2001.

#### ***Standards seen during the inspection.***

206. The standards observed in lessons confirm that in the short time students have been studying the course they are already attaining at average standards and making very good progress. They show a very good applied technique in their practical work and have good subject knowledge. They do not yet fully justify and evaluate their work in their sketchbooks or explore how it is influenced by the range of artists they are studying.

207. In Year 12, students showed good applied subject knowledge and applied technique in developing their unit of work on self-image. Their styles were influenced well by the artists studied in their two-dimensional drawing and paintings and in the development of three-dimensional clay heads. Samples of students' work show them using the high level of practical skill they have learnt very well in both their two-dimensional and three-dimensional work.

#### ***Teaching and learning***

208. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good with much that is excellent. Planning is very effective, expectations are high and lessons proceed at a very good pace with a high level of input given to each student in turn. The very good applied subject expertise of the teachers supports the students' good achievements and very good learning very well. Work is thoroughly assessed. Students know what to do to improve. Understanding what they are doing, all the students, including those with

special educational needs, show very good attitudes to their work. They work with high levels of interest and show a good self-knowledge of what they are learning.

209. In lessons, teachers challenge the students, providing a very good input matched to their individual needs. Work in progress is thoroughly evaluated and marked. Teachers are building effectively on the previous above-average standards attained by the students. However, the students are not immediately following up the suggestions provided by their teachers, in particular in their sketchbooks, on what to do next to improve their standards.

### ***Leadership and management***

210. Leadership and management of the subject in the sixth form are very good. There is a high level of commitment from the two teachers, who teach the sixth form. They work together very well as a team. Work in progress is thoroughly monitored and evaluated. Appropriate targets to improve the subject have been very well met. Students cannot easily access the computer in the department that is at present in a store cupboard.

## **HUMANITIES**

The focus subject in this curriculum area was A Level English Literature. AS theatre studies was sampled, as was AVCE leisure and tourism. In theatre studies, students were enthusiastic about their course and showed their growing knowledge and appreciation of the technical aspects of the theatre. In travel and tourism, students were seen to be enthusiastic learners.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

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

### **Strengths:**

- A new, young team of well-qualified and enthusiastic English teachers have good subject knowledge and so teaching is good and students learn well and make good progress.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Students to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- More planned activities for students to improve their speaking skills.

### ***Standards attained in 2001.***

211. No students were entered for AS or A-level examinations in 2001.

### ***Standards seen during the inspection.***

212. Standards seen during the inspection in lessons and in students' files show that work is below average, but students are making good progress in relation to their modest attainment at GCSE. Most of the students in both years are working within the D to E grade, above the levels predicted of them. Students' written work shows that they are becoming mature in criticising texts and in making links between different texts, including poems, prose and plays. Students studying *The Glass Menagerie* of Tennessee Williams, for example, made links between the themes in the book and the effects of the economic crash in 1920s America. The symbolism of glass and the fragility of Tennessee's sister portrayed in the novel were clearly appreciated by all the students.

### ***Teaching and learning.***

213. Teaching and learning is good. Teachers share assessment objectives at the start of every lesson and make constant reference to them as the lesson proceeds. Teachers

use their questioning skills sensitively to encourage students to define their views clearly and to use critical language with precision. One student, for instance, was made to be precise when she used the word 'rubbish' to define her response to a word in the text. Another student, through the teacher's persistent questioning, defined her view of the word 'atrocities' in a First World War poem very clearly.

214. There is regular marking of students' work in which students are given clear guidance on what to improve. Teachers have a good knowledge of the chosen texts and through questioning and the use of illustrations from the texts support students to explore characterisation, setting and themes. At the moment, the department does not encourage students to read widely enough.

***Leadership and management.***

215. The leadership of this new team of specialist English teachers is good. The department is committed to encouraging more students to study English and to further improve standards in English Literature. The head of department has just received a permanent appointment and a second in the department has just arrived. There is a lot of development to be done. However, the enthusiasm of the teachers, their sensitivity in developing the students' analytical skills and their fluency with words will ensure that students gain a good introduction to the study of English Literature at this level. The library has an insufficient selection of critical texts, which are vital for the study of English Literature.