

INSPECTION REPORT

HAYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Burslem

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124440

Headteacher: Mr D Dickinson

Reporting inspector: Mark Woodward
11049

Dates of inspection: 12 - 15 May 2003

Inspection number: 254790

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 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Lane Burslem Stoke-on-Trent
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Barbara Dunn
Date of previous inspection:	21/04/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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11049	Mark Woodward	Registered inspector		What sort of school of it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with students?
2793	Ross Maden	Team inspector	Design and technology	
15465	Terence Parish	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
20729	James Berry	Team inspector	Science	
18447	Ronald Cohen	Team inspector	Religious education	
11709	Alan Giles	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11672	Peter Harle	Team inspector	Art	
22723	Bob Hartman	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12121	Jack Mallinson	Team inspector	History	
12844	Michael Saunders	Team inspector	English	
19404	Les Schubeler	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Haywood High School is an average-sized comprehensive school serving 1,068 pupils aged 11-16. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times is well below average. A quarter of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average, and the area served by the school has features of significant economic and social disadvantage. Around 11 per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with eight per cent having a language other than English as their first language; the great majority of these pupils are competent in their use of English. Around a quarter of the pupils are on the register for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) which is above the national average, and nearly four per cent have SEN statements, which is above average. Most of the pupils with SEN have moderate or severe learning difficulties. The standards of work achieved by the pupils when they enter the school are well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school offers pupils a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils have a broad range of academic and personal development opportunities. Standards of work are below national averages but pupils achieve well during Years 7 to 9 and there are signs of an improving picture towards GCSE exams in the work of the current Year 10. The headteacher has set an appropriate agenda for the further improvement of the school and action is steadily being taken to implement it. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The achievement of pupils in English, mathematics, geography, art, physical education and vocational courses; and the rising achievement levels in history.
- The quality of teaching.
- The school is committed to, and effective in, supporting the learning and personal development of all pupils through, for example, literacy strategies, the personal, health and social education programme and the provision for moral, social and cultural development.
- Links with other schools, colleges, universities, business and the community which enhance pupils' educational opportunities.
- The provision of vocational courses and for careers guidance.
- The quality of staff (both teaching and non-teaching) recruited to the school in recent years.

What could be improved

- The achievement of pupils at GCSE.
- The achievement and attitudes to learning of boys in Years 10 and 11.
- Provision for music, modern foreign languages, information and communication technology (ICT), and expressive arts.
- Consistency in the quality of teaching and a strengthening of the role of senior managers in promoting and securing this objective.
- Attendance and child protection procedures.
- The planning of ICT provision.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. Since then it has made satisfactory improvement. Results in the National Curriculum tests have risen dramatically while GCSE results have been maintained. Satisfactory progress has been made in tackling the key issues. Links with feeder schools are stronger, marking and assessment have improved, attendance is two percentage points higher and pupils have more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. Systematic procedures to monitor the quality of the school's work have not yet been fully established and not all teachers plan work to meet pupils' individual learning needs.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	D	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average but pupils progress well during Years 7 to 9, particularly in English, mathematics, ICT, history, geography, art, physical education and religious education. They do not achieve well enough in music and modern foreign languages. National Curriculum test results have improved dramatically since the last inspection. Boys tend to out-perform girls in the tests. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds tend to perform less well than other pupils; the reasons for this are not entirely clear although their writing is less well developed than their reading, speaking and listening. The 2002 English results were good; they were broadly in line with national results. The results in mathematics and science were below average but targets were exceeded in all three subjects. Compared with similar schools (based upon the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals), the results in 2002 were well above average and the pupils made very good progress compared with their results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 10 and 11, but boys do not achieve as well as girls. Unsatisfactory attendance and negative attitudes to learning among a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, depress standards by the end of Year 11. Pupils achieve very well in geography and in the vocational courses taught in partnership with the local college. They achieve well in history, art, physical education and in the full religious education course. Achievement is satisfactory in all other subjects except for music where it is unsatisfactory. GCSE results have remained at a similar level for the last five years while national results have risen. The school did not meet its GCSE targets in 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils have positive attitudes to the school but their attitudes to learning are more variable. This is one of the reasons academic achievement is not as high as it could be particularly in Years 10 and 11 and among boys.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good in lessons; satisfactory otherwise. The school is an orderly community because staff work cohesively to promote this both inside and outside the classroom. A small minority of pupils presents greater challenges; in most circumstances the school acts decisively to tackle them. Pupils report very little bullying and they indicate that staff deal with any such issues effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils and staff show each other respect, which helps to build positive working relationships. The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes pupils' personal development well.
Attendance	Below the national average. Attendance has improved since the last inspection but it still has not reached national average levels. Attendance in Year 11 is poor and this is one of the reasons why some pupils under-perform at GCSE. Unauthorised absence is higher than the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11

Quality of teaching	Good	Good
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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.

The great majority of lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory or better and a higher than average proportion (based on inspections across the country) was very good or excellent. In almost all subjects the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Learning is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 because pupils' attitudes to learning are not as positive as they might be. Pupils learn particularly well in response to very good teaching; for example in English, art and geography. Test and examination results reflect this high quality of learning; for example, in the 2002 National Curriculum tests the English results were in line with the national average while in art, GCSE results have been above average in two of the last three years. The quality of teaching is inconsistent both within and between subjects and senior and middle managers do not give this issue enough priority. In some of the weaker lessons, teachers do not use a wide enough range of methods to stimulate pupils' learning and motivation. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in music as pupils are not expected to produce work of a high enough quality. The teaching of literacy is good and this is particularly supportive to pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy is also good while teaching in science is satisfactory. Good support is given to pupils with SEN and this enables them to learn well. More able pupils make satisfactory progress but could be stretched more in most subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9 some pupils do not have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language, the scheme of work in expressive arts does not provide enough challenge and curriculum time for music and physical education is too short. In all years, ICT provision does not ensure that all pupils receive their statutory entitlement. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is broad, with the vocational aspect significantly enhancing pupils' learning opportunities. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with SEN are supported well and this is largely reflected in their test and examination results. In 2002, for example, the great majority met or exceeded their predicted results for English. SEN assistants give good support in the majority of lessons but the attachment of assistants to subjects does not always result in effective and efficient practice. Arrangements to support gifted and talented pupils are satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The great majority of pupils whose first language is not English are sufficiently skilled in the language to have full access to the curriculum. Whole school literacy strategies give them further assistance in consolidating their skills. The school has worked very hard to support a small number of pupils who arrived from overseas during the current academic year. Standards of work seen suggest that they are making good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils are guided well in developing personal and social skills. Expectations of behaviour are good and the school offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils to encounter diverse social situations and cultural experiences. Opportunities to develop spiritual awareness are more limited: this was also the case at the time of the previous inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Teachers and managers have a high level of commitment to all the pupils whatever their gender and background and they give them good support and guidance. The culture of the school successfully promotes good behaviour and personal development. Procedures for meeting child protection requirements are unsatisfactory.

Many aspects of the school's procedures to promote attendance are good, such as the presence of attendance officers within the school. However, registers are not always recorded accurately particularly in the afternoon and this means that some absences are not picked up. The quality of assessment and progress monitoring is good.

Significant improvements have been made in recent years that have enabled teachers to support pupils more effectively and have helped managers to analyse the effectiveness of departments in preparing pupils for examinations and tests. Very good links with schools, Stoke-on-Trent College, universities, commerce, industry and the community have a significant impact on improving the quality and range of the curriculum.

The school works hard to establish links with parents. The prospectus is informative and professionally produced and regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events. Parents could be more active in supporting the work of the school and the learning of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has set a very positive and appropriate agenda for the school's continued improvement. Particularly good has been the promotion of more effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies. Senior managers organise many initiatives successfully such as the guidance systems and the vocational programme.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive of the school and are committed to their work. They bring a range of valuable expertise to the school and appropriately monitor its work; for example, through the termly reviews of performance. They have not ensured that all statutory requirements are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Senior managers share responsibility for managing subjects and they do monitor and evaluate performance; however, the procedures are not formalised and this means that action by both senior and middle managers to tackle issues and implement whole-school strategies is not always decisive.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning is appropriately linked to improvement planning and the governors monitor the progress of the budget termly. Best value practices are applied but the governors could improve their understanding in this area.

There are sufficient teaching and non-teaching staff but the school has experienced some difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified staff particularly in modern foreign languages and music. The accommodation is satisfactory and resources for learning are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are expected to work hard and achieve well. • Pupils make good progress. • The quality of teaching is good. • The school is approachable when parents have a question or a problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about pupils' progress. • The quantity of homework. • The partnership of the school with parents.

Parents' views of the school are mostly positive, as reflected by the responses to the questionnaire from 17 per cent of the parents and the comments of 5 parents at the pre-inspection meeting. Inspectors agree with parents about most of their positive comments but feel that some pupils do not make enough progress, particularly during Years 10 and 11. Most progress reports are informative but the quality is inconsistent between subjects. Homework seen during the inspection was good and the school works hard to improve its links with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Compared with the results of schools in similar circumstances the results were well above average overall. The trend in results is broadly in line with the national trend and, since the last inspection, results have risen substantially. Boys performed better than girls in English and mathematics in comparison with the results of boys and girls nationally, while results of boys and girls in science were similar. The test results indicate that pupils made well above average progress compared with their results in the National Curriculum tests taken before they joined the school. Pupils of Asian heritage make relatively less progress than other pupils.
2. GCSE results were well below national averages in 2002 but average when compared with schools in similar circumstances. Results have remained at a similar level compared with the those reported by the last inspection and therefore the trend is lower than the national trend where results have risen. The proportion of pupils gaining five A*-G grades fell in 2002 having been broadly at national average level in 2001. Five per cent of pupils gained no GCSE grades, which is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining five A*-C grades was below the national average and less than half the proportion of grades nationally were A* or A grades. GNVQ results were variable but were stronger in health and social care than in engineering.
3. Boys perform less well at GCSE than girls. This is largely because a small proportion become less motivated during Years 10 and 11 and as a result do not produce work that reflects their capabilities. They do not attend as regularly and are not as attentive or committed in class. The school has taken some positive steps to improve curriculum opportunities for boys, for example by introducing vocational courses such as engineering. However, raising standards of boys by the age of 16 is still one of the key challenges facing the school.
4. In 2002, pupils achieved the best GCSE results in English literature, science, statistics and French; girls achieved well in design and technology. In previous years, pupils have achieved very good results in art. Results in 2002 were weakest in history, drama, business studies, media studies, music, German and Urdu. Boys performed less well in art, ICT and physical education. Results do not always match with standards seen during the inspection; for example, standards are rising in history as a result of recent improvements made in teaching and learning.
5. The inconsistent results at GCSE are largely the result of variations in the quality of teaching. Very good teaching, for example in English, geography and art, enables pupils to achieve good GCSE grades in relation to their abilities. Weaker teaching; for example in music, results in pupils failing to achieve appropriate results. The roles of both senior and middle managers in ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently good needs to be strengthened. The headteacher has led the setting of challenging but achievable targets for improvement of GCSE results.
6. Overall, standards seen in lessons and in pupils' work reflect pupils' examination and test results. In around half the lessons, standards were below average, while in around 20 per cent of lessons standards were above average.
7. Pupils achieve well in vocational courses, although this is not yet fully reflected in examination results. The school works very closely with Stoke College to offer pupils a good range of learning opportunities and this has been successful in raising the motivation of many pupils, particularly boys.
8. Achievement in modern foreign languages is adversely affected by the unsatisfactory curriculum provision. Some pupils may have no exposure to modern foreign languages throughout their time at the school. In expressive arts, non-specialist teaching results in pupils not being given work that is sufficiently challenging and this prevents them from making fast enough progress. In music, teachers do not expect pupils to produce work of a high enough quality and the schemes of work are not planned well enough.
9. The school has 85 pupils who have English as an additional language. Six are at an early stage of language acquisition, all of whom are Afghans. They are becoming well integrated into the school

community, having arrived near the start of the current academic year. The success of the school in providing opportunity to these pupils is illustrated by the expected award of a very high GCSE grade to one of them in art. All of these pupils have individual timetables, except one in Year 7 who follows the normal class timetable and receives in-class support. Those in Years 10 and 11 focus particularly on mathematics, English, science and ICT. They all communicate well orally and have made good progress. As is almost always the case, their speaking skills outstrip their written skills at this stage. They have very good understanding of spoken English.

10. Although pupils of Asian heritage achieve less well in tests and examinations than other pupils, this was not a feature that emerged during lessons. Samples of pupils' work suggest that the writing skills of Asian heritage pupils are less secure than their reading, speaking and listening skills and that this may therefore be the principal reason for lower levels of performance. All pupils are helped to develop their literacy skills well by specialist staff, in English lessons and in other subjects.
11. The achievement of more able pupils, including those particularly gifted or talented, is satisfactory but is in need of improvement. Some teachers carefully plan work to meet their needs but others offer the same diet for all pupils and this restricts their progress. In physical education, pupils are set targets for improvement based upon their existing levels of performance. This ensures that the most able cannot coast and they achieve well. In contrast, more able pupils are not stretched enough in design and technology; for example, in a Year 8 graphics lesson, the pace of the lesson was dictated by the pupils and the tasks were pitched at too low a level which meant that pupils, particularly the more able, did not make enough progress.
12. Pupils with SEN generally make good progress in lessons, but this does vary across the range of subjects. A Year 8 special needs group in English made good progress in a lesson on stereotypes. In physical education, history and geography, SEN pupils are able to make very good and even excellent progress through a combination of good teaching, effective support and constant challenge. Not every department is able to match this record. In music, SEN pupils make unsatisfactory progress, largely as a result of poor support and use of information. Constant monitoring of departmental provision is needed.
13. Standards of literacy are broadly average as a result of the good provision both in English and in other subjects. In most subjects pupils can handle key concepts and subject specific vocabulary confidently in speech and writing. Pupils' progress, particularly over Years 7 to 9, is pronounced and shows, for example, in English results, which at age 14, are in line with the national average, and well above expectations.
14. The numeracy skills acquired in mathematics support pupils' progress in other subjects. There is no evidence that levels of numeracy skills significantly impede progress in any subjects of the curriculum - a marked improvement since the previous inspection. Most pupils show a reasonable recall of basic number facts. The least able sometimes experience difficulty recalling multiplication tables. The vast majority of pupils are able to use calculators with reasonable efficiency and at appropriate times. Pupils experience few problems interpreting elementary statistical graphs and tables.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes to the school are satisfactory. In most lessons pupils are well motivated, display interest and enjoy learning. In other lessons, although pupils are well behaved, they can be unenthusiastic, reluctant to answer questions or take part in discussions. This is sometimes because teaching is not well paced or directed but on other occasions it is because of the pupils' attitudes themselves. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, learning was only satisfactory despite excellent teaching because of the pupils' poor response.
16. Pupils on the SEN register demonstrate positive attitudes in the majority of lessons. This was seen in a Year 7 geography lesson in which pupils were enthusiastic and eager to be heard, while they listed positive and negative factors in decisions on where to live. In a Year 10 science lesson on volcanoes, SEN pupils were 'industrious, well-behaved and good-natured', while in a Year 11 lesson in English, relationships with teachers and support staff allowed for good focus and progress.
17. Pupils have a satisfactory respect for the feelings and values of others, although they sometimes jostle in corridors and display boisterous behaviour. Bullying rarely takes place at the school and pupils interviewed during the inspection week confirm that when it does occur, members of staff deal with it immediately and appropriately.

18. Pupils' behaviour is good in classrooms and satisfactory around the school. Teaching and non-teaching staff work hard to enforce the school behaviour policy and pupils are aware of the expectations that staff have for good behaviour and mostly respond accordingly. On several occasions, between lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes, pupils were observed smoking in groups; this was unnoticed or unchallenged by staff.
19. Pupils mostly treat their own property, school property and other people's property with respect. Although no graffiti or vandalism were seen during the inspection week, a degree of litter was seen and some pupils showed a disregard for the appearance or cleanliness of the buildings.
20. Fixed term exclusion rates are relatively high with 133 incidents of exclusions involving 78 pupils and three permanent exclusions in the previous year. All exclusions were appropriately awarded; the school keeps good records and correct procedures are always followed. The great majority of exclusion arise from incidents that take place outside the classroom.
21. The school's procedures for promoting pupils' personal development are good. Pupils interviewed during the inspection week confirm they feel staff care for them, support them well and that the school is a caring, friendly community. Where pupils are given responsibilities, they are eager to accept them. The school has a school council where pupils from all year groups are elected, meet on a regular basis to debate matters of school policy and initiate ideas for school improvement. The school council is chaired by a staff member, who also takes the minutes and compiles the agendas; this means that an opportunity is lost to enable pupils to take a more prominent role. Pupils are invited to apply in writing for positions as prefects and after interview successful pupils are pleased to be appointed and proud to wear the designated prefect's uniform. In addition, some prefects are trained as bullying counsellors and offer good support to Year 7 pupils to ensure that they settle well into school and feel happy and secure. Pupils undertake other duties within the school such as: helping in assemblies, providing refreshments for open evenings and showing parents around the school.
22. The school actively encourages pupils to promote charitable work and considerable sums of money are raised for national and local charities, in particular the Cystic Fibrosis Fund.
23. Pupils in Year 10, who attend work experience, behave extremely well and employers confirm that they are pleased with their attitudes at work and have a high opinion of them.
24. Attendance at 90.69 per cent in the period immediately proceeding the inspection, is below the national average; it is poor in Year 11 where in one year group, attendance drops to 82 per cent. The poor attendance of some pupils in Year 11 prevents them from achieving appropriate GCSE results. Compared with other Stoke schools, attendance is broadly average; it is higher than achieved by other schools serving similar communities in the town. Attendance has risen by around two percentage points since the last inspection; this represents good progress. Most lessons start on time but on some occasions pupils arrive late and do not provide satisfactory explanations.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

25. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The quality of learning is equally good during Years 7 to 9 but is only satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 owing to the decline of pupils' attitudes to learning particularly among boys.
26. In the 169 lessons seen, teaching was: satisfactory or better in 95 per cent; good or better in 72 per cent and very good or excellent in 36 per cent. This represents a better than average performance based on national inspection statistics. Of particular note is the above average proportion of very good or excellent teaching, particularly in English, art, geography, history, ICT and physical education.
27. Teaching is strongest in English and art. It is also good in mathematics, design and technology, ICT, modern foreign languages, history, geography, physical education and religious education. Teaching is unsatisfactory in music.
28. Although the overall quality of teaching is good, there are wide variations within subjects. In science, for example, the teaching of the head of department and the advanced skills teacher are very strong. Other members of the teaching team do not perform as well and this reduces pupils' learning and achievement.

29. Most teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. They plan lessons effectively including making a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills; for example, in a Year 7 geography lesson for pupils with SEN, writing frames were used effectively to help pupils conduct research from texts and guide their understanding of geographical skills.
30. Relationships with pupils are good and this, together with effective teaching methods, helps them to achieve good order in class. For example, pupils in a Year 8 history lesson responded well to the enthusiasm of the teacher. Lively discussions follow the introduction of stimulating materials about the working life of children in textile mills. The teacher's open style of communicating gives the pupils confidence to share their thoughts and ideas with the rest of the class.
31. Day-to-day assessment is a weaker element of the teaching; it is unsatisfactory in ICT and music. In ICT, for example, teachers do not have a clear enough idea about how well individual pupils are performing and the assessment of standards is not consistent.
32. Teaching is unsatisfactory in music. Although teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively, the pupils are not expected to produce work of a high enough quality. Schemes of work are not planned well enough and teachers do not assess pupils' work appropriately. This means that their progress is not monitored effectively.
33. Pupils do not learn well enough in expressive arts because the non-specialist teachers do not have the range of skills necessary to help them make progress at an appropriate rate. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, the pupils were expected to create a script and make puppets for a show. The lesson lacked direction and as a result pupils' learning was too slow and their motivation declined.
34. Other incidences of weaker teaching revealed the use of a limited range of methods to stimulate pupils' learning; for example, in a Year 7 science lesson, pupils were not expected to think and too few were given the opportunity to be actively involved in the lesson; the Key Stage 3 strategy was not being applied. The evidence of unsatisfactory classroom performance from a small minority of teachers highlights the need for a tightening of middle and senior managers' roles in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.
35. Overall, pupils' learning skills are not well established but the good quality of teaching means that the great majority learn well in most subjects. Expectations of the teachers are generally high and this has a positive impact on pupils' response. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson on probability, the learning of pupils was excellent because of the excellence of the teaching by the Advanced Skills Teacher. The teacher used a wide range of activities including games to generate a fast pace to the lesson. Pupils had to think hard about what they were doing and why and in an excellent session at the end of the lesson, the teacher confirmed their learning successfully.
36. Boys and girls learn at a similar rate during Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, most girls maintain this level of learning but a small minority of boys become disenchanted with school and this adversely affects their progress. In a significant proportion of lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching was higher than the quality of learning because of this motivation factor. In a media studies lesson, for example, one boy continually tried to rest his head on the desk feigning sleep. The teacher frequently, and appropriately, cajoled him to take a more positive approach and when asked a question, the boy was able to identify the nature of a Parody, thus revealing a glimpse of his capability. This was an extreme example of a feature of a number of lessons. Some boys, of all ability profiles, have lost the will to achieve well by the end of Year 11. More positive learning was seen in Year 10 from both girls and boys, which the school needs to maintain if it is to reach its 2004 GCSE targets.
37. The two advanced skills teachers make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Their teaching is of a high quality and this gives them credibility when they work with others. In a Year 11 science revision lesson, for example, the teacher very successfully helped pupils to develop their revision skills while reinforcing their knowledge and understanding of patterns of chemical change. While the advanced skills teachers have had an impact on the teaching of some members of staff, their role needs to be more central to the school's improvement agenda.
38. Pupils with special needs are taught almost entirely in classes in which they are integrated in the mainstream curriculum. Additional forms of provision supplement learning. Pupils are withdrawn from

classes for extra literacy support, but this is individual withdrawal for 20-minute periods, and in rotation does not disrupt the curriculum to any great extent. The deployment of learning support assistants needs to be reviewed. At present they are loosely attached to subject areas and in some cases they are not effectively used. In design and technology, for example, a learning support assistant is used to

support a teacher rather than pupils. Although support is spread thinly in some areas, the overall quality and effectiveness is good. In a Year 10 science lesson, the learning support assistant engaged the pupils with questions and ensured that they produced work of a good standard.

39. All pupils with SEN statements receive appropriate help. All pupils on the SEN register have Individual Education Plans (IEPs), in which targets and strategies for satisfying their needs are carefully noted. Most departments use IEPs well and this is particularly the case in history, physical education, science, art and geography. In a history lesson, for example, the IEPs were 'detailed and clearly taken into consideration by the class teacher.' However IEPs are not well used in all subject areas such as music, ICT and design and technology. In English, the use of IEPs is patchy. As with the use of learning support assistants the way in which IEPs are used needs to be constantly monitored and procedures tightened up.
40. During the inspection very good literacy teaching was noted in English, geography and physical education. Teaching was good in mathematics, art, religious education, and modern languages. Teachers constantly refer to key words, give attention to subject specific demands of reading, and use writing frames and other strategies to shape and extend pupils' writing. Only in ICT was attention to literacy judged to be unsatisfactory.
41. Pupils in all year groups have the opportunity to apply some of their numeracy skills. Geography pupils draw and interpret graphs, use decimals and fractions in measurements and scale work and, in Years 10 and 11, are sufficiently secure with algebra to set up spreadsheet formulae. In science, pupils of all levels of attainment interpret a wide variety of tables charts and diagrams, balance equations and make measurements. In physical education pupils measure times and distances using a variety of equipment. A Year 9 group recorded lap times during a 1500 m race, plotted them on graphs, which were later used to interpret the progress of the race and running tactics. Tessellation, pattern work, use of scale, proportion and symmetry are successfully tackled in art. In history, Year 7 pupils cost out the building and equipping of a medieval castle, making changes to keep within budget. The mathematics curriculum takes in the development of appropriate numeracy skills, including mental and non-calculator calculations.

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

42. The school has been partly successful in addressing the curriculum issues identified in the last inspection. The quality and range of learning opportunities between the ages of 11 and 14 are unsatisfactory. Between the ages of 14 and 16 it is good with improvements in vocational education and extended options such as drama, media studies and statistics. The structure of the weekly timetable has been altered to allow more options to be offered. The banding and setting arrangements in subjects often result in smaller groups and more focused support for SEN pupils. Breadth and balance are improved by well thought-out schemes of work in subject areas and also by the use of national strategies for literacy and numeracy. These also ensure that relevant assessment procedures based on National Curriculum criteria are used in subjects. The use of well-planned schemes of work is also a major reason why SEN and EAL pupils make good progress.
43. Over sixty pupils in Years 8 and 9 do not study a modern foreign language and provision is not meeting statutory requirements. The provision for expressive arts is unsatisfactory. It has been developed partly to fill time where pupils would normally take modern foreign languages. It is taught largely by non-specialist teachers who do not ensure that pupils are given challenging and interesting learning experiences.
44. An arrangement in Years 8 and 9 where pupils take physical education and music on a rotation basis results in pupils' receiving significantly less than the recommended time allocation in these subjects; this has a negative impact on the rates of progress. In design and technology, group sizes are too large for practicals in food technology to be conducted safely.

45. Developing the 14-19 curriculum is a priority in the school improvement plan; the well-conceived bid for engineering college specialist status is a key part of this process. In Years 10 and 11 there is a good breadth, balance and relevance to the curriculum as the school strives to match programmes to individuals. In addition to a range of GCSE courses the school makes very good provision for externally accredited vocational courses. Excellent links have been established with Stoke-on Trent College, where presently almost a hundred pupils attend for up to one day a week. The school is attempting to improve ICT provision for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 by increasing other subjects; coverage of the subject and by providing a “key skills” course. Although resources for ICT have been improved since the last inspection, a substantial number of pupils still do not receive their statutory curriculum provision.
46. Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and the school provides access and specialist facilities, where necessary, for all pupils, including those with physical difficulties. Pupils are identified in primary school and there is good liaison between the co-ordinator for pupils with SEN (SENCO) and feeder schools. Prompt and increasingly detailed testing and screening ensure that appropriate support is available to all who need it. The SENCO attends Year 6 reviews of statemented pupils. The withdrawal of individuals is carefully graded. Those pupils with a reading age of less than 7 receive support each day. As pupils improve and eventually exit the programme they are appropriately withdrawn for shorter periods. This form of support will change in September with the introduction of small groups for corrective reading, which may be a better use of resources. There are group education plans for pupils to enable them to reach Level 4 in English. In addition, there is a well-organised programme using computer software which is provided with very good accommodation and resources. ICT programmes are up to date and enable very close tracking of progress showing that some pupils improve a whole level in 6 months.
47. The school provides a good and varied programme of support for pupils with English as an additional language, helping them in the classroom and also by teaching them individually. The pupils receive bilingual support from an Afghan refugee on a temporary contract who comes into the school to help in business studies and ICT lessons. Language support is also provided by a full-time teacher who is partly funded by the local education authority. The support focuses appropriately on pupils’ individual strengths and weaknesses, and pupils were eager to emphasise the value of the support they had received from the school both with their language learning and with settling into their new surroundings. Pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge of both formal and informal language.
48. Of the other pupils with English as an additional language, the majority are of Pakistani heritage. Good links are established with the primary school that sends the large majority of these pupils to the school. Because the pupils have varied experience of schooling and of the English language, scores from tests are used to assess potential and pupils are placed in teaching groups accordingly. Overall, their National Curriculum test and GCSE results are lower than those of the school’s white pupils. The school makes use of data provided by the local education authority, which analyse pupils’ examination performance in subjects by ethnic groups, but the numbers in each group are too small to draw reliable conclusions. Effective support is provided by a full-time in-class support teacher.
49. One of the school’s fundamental aims is to provide “personal, social and health education (PSHE) relevant to contemporary society.” As a result, pupils receive a good range of innovative learning experiences. Good quality teaching materials and an extensive list of visiting speakers enhance these modules of work. Issues that relate to health and sex education and drug awareness are well taught. During the inspection Year 7 pupils enthusiastically discussed the work and relevance of Christian Aid Week and made thoughtful comments about the needs of third world children. Year 8 pupils worked industriously in groups to devise advice on drug awareness. Other aspects of PSHE include a Year 10 “agreement for excellence,” drug awareness with youth workers, accreditation for health-promoting schools, a range of human rights issues and “crazy world,” a workshop considering the plights of vulnerable teenagers. The school has received positive feedback as part of the “Health Promoting Schools” scheme. In conjunction with the PSHE co-ordinator, year heads perform their roles in planning the school’s programme well, these are formally evaluated and actions taken to raise quality. Provision for citizenship is satisfactory; it is stronger in the general school provision than in the planning of individual subjects.
50. Provision for literacy development across the school is good. The literacy co-ordinator works closely with local education authority advisers to provide regular in-service training. There are eight handbooks which comprehensively cover strategies to promote pupils’ learning across the curriculum. The literacy policy and the school improvement plan puts pupils’ language development at the heart of efforts to raise

standards. Pupils in need of particular help are identified early by the special needs department and given intensive programmes by learning support assistants to accelerate progress. The work of departments is audited and evaluated giving a clear indication of strengths and areas for improvement.

51. The provision for numeracy on a whole-school basis is well developed. A training day for all subject teachers has been held and a whole-school numeracy audit carried out. There is a numeracy policy, and a well-conceived improvement plan. A staff numeracy handbook has been produced, setting out clearly the various approaches and conventions with which pupils should be familiar. Regular update sheets have covered all data handling links with other subjects. Most, but not all, subjects have specific reference to key objectives for the consolidation, application or development of numeracy in their schemes of work. According to the improvement plan the remaining subjects will improve their schemes of work accordingly.
52. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Provision is very good in physical education. Staff give willingly of their time and provide a wide programme of sporting clubs. These are supplemented well by the use of community coaches. The provision in subjects such as history, science, geography and drama is further enriched through out of school visits, successful competition entries and study support clubs. The school is committed to developing a programme of enrichment and extension activities to complement developments in learning in the classroom. Maths, science and English have strong links with local universities and take part in regular enrichment activities and events. Gifted and talented sports players are involved in mentoring programmes at the local sports college. Drama is involved in the Chatterley Whitfield programme and talented drama pupils have recently been involved in theatre visits and workshops.
53. The "Playing For Success" scheme is one very successful example of the way the school provides opportunities for pupils with special learning needs to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The school has a strong reputation for the additional work it does in race awareness and inclusion projects in the local community. The study support co-ordinator plays a valuable role in monitoring the school's aims to increase the range and levels of activities and participation. Learning mentors are also used extensively to support a range of activities.
54. The school has made a satisfactory start in identifying gifted and talented pupils. They are using an appropriate policy where departments identify those pupils gifted and talented in their areas. The school works closely with the local education authority in this respect and as a result has identified relevant principles and protocols in their policies. In subjects such as science, drama, physical education and art strong links have been established with local schools so as to allow pupils to join in a series of arranged events and to share thinking. Additional curriculum experiences are planned in subject areas. Science has strong links with universities, enabling gifted pupils to participate in advanced experiments. Drama pupils increase their knowledge in theatre visits. History pupils visited Belgium and talked of their experiences on Belgian television. Maths' pupils make external visits as part of their programme. The co-ordinator has plans in place to mentor identified pupils and to ensure that targets are achieved. Meetings, including those with parents, as well as personal portfolios are other strategies being used in a bid to link the scheme with raising motivation levels and subject standards. There is a further need to monitor the lesson planning and learning outcomes in subject areas in order to improve the progress made in line with other specified groups of pupils.
55. The school has worked purposefully to maintain and further establish very good links with partner institutions and this is very good evidence to support the school's engineering college bid. Liaison with primary schools has been developed via regular meetings with heads of departments and some staff. Designated staff, including a head of year, make important visits to meet Year 6 pupils and familiarise them with school procedures. Contacts between English, maths and science departments have made school transfers more efficient. Year 11 pupils following the Junior Sports Leader Award give local infant and junior pupils valuable sports experiences and staff liaise with their teachers. Links in other subjects are not so well established. The establishment of strong links with partner institutions, businesses and the community is a successful response to some of the issues raised in the last inspection.
56. Successful application for funding has resulted in the 'Aim Higher' steering group which, through the 'Widening Participation' group, promotes close links among the school, the local education authority, further education and higher education institutions. This bridging project is indicative of a growing curriculum in the school that is successfully finding flexible ways of increasing post-16 provision. A further joint project with "Connexions" endeavours to offer one to one advice to those unsuccessfully finding the

appropriate post-16 learning pathways. These are a few examples of how the school initiates community links to fulfil their major objective of encouraging pupils to “aim higher”

57. The school does very well to develop pupils’ awareness of the world of work within local businesses/organisations in order to enhance such personal key skills as team work, communication and personal effectiveness. The bidding for engineering specialist college status has been closely associated with a number of local businesses and also with local feeder primary schools. Well over one hundred links are used to give all pupils in Year 10 important work experiences. A new local education authority funded “Compact” scheme allows for a small number of pupils to receive an additional one-day per week work experience. In doing so they agree to personal and vocational targets that improve their future career opportunities.
58. The overall provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; however, the school has not yet developed a clear policy but pupils’ spiritual and moral development is fostered through the ethos of the school and most subjects of the curriculum. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for its pupils but there are opportunities for reflection in the weekly assemblies. It aims to promote their social and cultural development through good relationships and by promoting positive attitudes towards the community. The introduction of a policy would provide a sound basis for subjects to plan their individual contribution to pupils’ personal development. Some subjects, for example mathematics, geography, English, art, science and religious education, have identified opportunities within their curriculum planning, although some subjects have yet to do this.
59. The provision for pupils’ spiritual development is satisfactory; it has improved since the previous inspection. In geography, pupils in Year 7 show tremendous curiosity about the world and in one lesson seen expressed their feelings in the form of a poem. Good opportunities for pupils’ spiritual development are to be found in English, mathematics, science, geography, art and history. There are missed opportunities in some music and religious education lessons for pupils to explore their feelings. Morning registration time is concerned with the organisational matters of the day and the opportunities for spiritual reflection are limited.
60. The provision for pupils’ moral development is very good. The school expects high standards of behaviour from pupils and provides an orderly and disciplined structure. Incentive schemes encourage good work, attitudes and behaviour. Personal responsibility and consideration for others is encouraged; for example, through charity work, the crime reduction project and the school council. Subjects make a significant contribution to pupils’ moral development. There are important moral considerations in Year 7 and 9 geography lessons on the pros and cons of exploration and conservation in work on the rain forest. In history pupils consider the moral implications of the treatment of children in eighteenth century mills. Good examples are also to be found in mathematics and art. In religious studies, pupils study a wide range of moral and ethical issues, such as prejudice and discrimination.
61. The provision for pupils’ social development is very good. The place of every pupil as a member of a year group and of the school is reinforced through the school’s provision. There is a wide range of enrichment activities including rowing. Within subjects there are many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in groups; for example, in religious education and mathematics where there are good inter-pupil relationships. Geography fieldwork and residential visits give pupils opportunities to develop teamwork skills and self-confidence. There are good opportunities to examine social issues in religious education, English, geography, history, art and mathematics. The physical education curriculum and the provision for extra-curricular sport gives pupils considerable opportunities to work collaboratively and to compete.
62. The opportunities provided for pupils’ cultural development are very good. The ethnic and cultural diversity of British society is well emphasised - for example in the Black and Minority Ethnic Awards Project and involvement in a summer carnival, through multicultural arts and music activities during enrichment week. History and geography make a good contribution, implicit in the nature of the subjects; for example, through a Year 7 study of the way of life in India and Bangladesh. The local culture of pottery manufacture is celebrated through the art curriculum. Traditional techniques are used to cast, paint and finish pieces. This is a very fine way of preserving the local culture and bridging the gap between school and work. In recent years the art department has also worked in partnership with businesses to design and manufacture products. These have been sold to celebrate special events and in doing so to raise money for the school. In music, pupils listen to music from different cultures and times. Mathematics refers to the geometric patterns associated with Islam. There is also a mathematics display based on Internet research depicting famous mathematicians including female and non-European mathematicians.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

63. The school has a successful pastoral system. One head of year has a year every six years when he/she is not attached to a year group. Instead, he/she visits each of the feeder primary Schools and makes contact with all Year 6 pupils prior to them starting at the school. A profile of each pupil is then created from which the pupils are placed in tutor groups and monitored carefully during their first few weeks at school. The unattached head of year moves on to become head of Year 7 following the pupils whom he/she has inducted into the school and moves through the school with them. This ensures that each head of year knows all their pupils well, relates to them and offers them a good level of care and support during their time at school. During the inspection week pupils who were interviewed stated that they thought the pastoral system worked well, they felt safe and secure within school and incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour were rare but dealt with immediately and appropriately by staff when they occur.
64. A variety of resources is used to support pupils' pastoral needs. Many pupils come from homes where life is difficult and challenging and the school offers a high level of care and support to not only this group of pupils but to all pupils. Breakfast and homework clubs have been established where pupils can obtain a hot meal in the morning and receive support from staff in the evening to complete their homework successfully. The school has appointed an inclusion co-ordinator, a welfare assistant to specifically target for inclusion, an education welfare officer with responsibility for ethnic minority children, two youth workers, four learning mentors and a co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils. The appointment of all these additional staff ensures that a high level of care is given to pupils.
65. The social inclusion team comprising a range of teachers, support staff and managers meets on a regular basis to discuss nominated children, the progress they have made and how to best to support them. In addition, the school has bought in extra time from the education psychological services to oversee the whole school's approach for inclusion and provide training and advice for staff in the development of the school's pastoral and behaviour policy.
66. The school has good procedures for the monitoring of behaviour and the elimination of oppressive behaviour. The behaviour policy is brief but concise and is underpinned by the principle that all pupils should feel that they are valued members of the school. It is based on rewards and sanctions and is fully understood by staff, parents and pupils alike.
67. Good use is made of the "Withdrawal Room" which is a facility where pupils who display challenging or disruptive behaviour can be kept for a fixed period of time to reflect upon their behaviour and work under close supervision of a member of staff without disrupting other pupils. Appropriate work is allocated and there is evidence that the use of this room has reduced fixed term exclusions significantly.
68. At the school's request, a review of the effectiveness of the behaviour and support policy has been carried out by the education psychology service. The report identifies several strengths: the youth workers are well used in tackling behaviour and the leadership team have a good grasp of behavioural issues. The school has already adopted some of the recommendations such as: moving towards a more evenly based approach for behaviour interaction and has revisited rules to ensure that pupils and parents are clear about behaviour expectations.
69. The child protection policy adopted by the school has not been updated since 2000 and therefore does not reflect current legislation or protocol. In addition, it has incorrectly named and identified the child protection officer. The appointed child protection officer has received training but is currently on long-term absence and the school has not appointed a deputy. Only a small number of non-teaching staff have received training and the staff handbook does not give information on child protection procedures to be followed; consequently most staff are unaware of the correct procedures for recognising signs of abuse. Records of pupils on the "At Risk" register are detailed but the school does not have procedures for tracking progress of this group of pupils or for referring cases to the statutory agencies. The school is unclear as to how many "Looked After" pupils are registered and records of them are unavailable.
70. The school has an appropriate number of first aiders, all of whom have received appropriate training. Accidents are correctly recorded and the school benefits from the services of a part time nurse and has a dedicated first aid room. The school does not, however, keep records of the administration of medicines.

71. Regular health and safety checks are arranged but no records are kept of fire alarm tests or fire drills. Risk assessments are appropriately carried out by all departments and also for school visits.
72. Although the school has made considerable efforts to improve attendance by the appointment of two education welfare officers based at the school and has commissioned a detailed survey into attendance by the local education authority, procedures for the monitoring and promoting of attendance are unsatisfactory. This is partly due to the fact that the school has a dual registration system. Registers are marked by form tutors in the morning in designated tutor time and in the afternoon by subject teachers. Inspection evidence shows that some registers are not returned to the school office for several days after they have been marked, some registers are marked incorrectly and some are not marked at all. Therefore not all absences are followed up on a first day basis and pupils are sometimes absent for several days without staff being aware of the reasons. Concerns regarding recording methods of attendance by form tutors were raised in the previous report.
73. All the above issues were reported to the senior management team and assurances were given that they would be rectified.
74. The SEN department ensures that statutory requirements for provision as outlined in statements are met. The department has switched efficiently to the new code of practice though the register needs to combine various sources of information and to be completed in its new form. All teachers have access to the register and to SEN information in general (including IEPs) will be improved when the new management system is fully operational. Progress of pupils is carefully tracked and reviews of IEPs and statements are carried out regularly with dates clearly noted.
75. The learning support department meets weekly with the social inclusion team, which includes the education welfare officer, youth workers, pastoral staff and the learning mentors. They discuss pupils for whom exclusion is a possibility and use their combined expertise to plan appropriate support in order for them to continue in mainstream education. The support department and the mentoring system complement each other rather than compete and together provide additional support covering all types of need.
76. Links with all 32 feeder Primary Schools are good and the school has developed bridging units with primary schools not only for numeracy and literacy but have extended these to include science and ICT. Each department in school has appointed a link teacher who liaises fully with primary schools to ensure there is a continuity of curriculum and therefore pupils are able to move to the next stage of their education with confidence. Pupils are assessed using a nationally recognized test shortly after entry to school; targets are set and regular meetings are held between heads of years, subject teachers and form tutors to ensure that pupils are working towards targets identified and their progress is well monitored.
77. The careers education programme offered by the school is of good quality and very well structured. The scheme of work to support lessons is very detailed, as is the careers improvement plan for 2003/2004. Careers lessons are suitably time tabled to enable Year 10 pupils to receive eight lessons during the year and Year 11 pupils' six lessons.
78. The school has arranged for all Year 10 pupils to go on work experience with a large number of outside businesses and professional employers being involved. Staff at the school closely monitor each placement and the school ensures that all employers and premises receive safety checks prior to pupils' commencing work. Records are not kept by the school on individual pupils' progress on work placement and there is therefore a lost opportunity for the school to comment on pupils' success in completing work experience when compiling references for employers or other education establishments.
79. Mock interviews are arranged for all Year 11 pupils by either school staff or local businesses and the Connexions service come into school on four days per week to conduct interviews. Their work is mainly targeted on disaffected pupils or pupils who are experiencing particular difficulties in their work or behaviour but any other pupil receives an interview upon request. The careers library is situated within the City Learning Centre and provides information to pupils on careers or further education courses. All Year 11 pupils receive an individual folder offering information on all post-16 courses and options.

Assessment

80. Whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have recently improved. They are good and give every indication, based on improvement plans, of improving still further. There are regular

cycles of assessment reviews including target setting for individual pupils. This allows pupils whose progress is less than expected to be identified and supported. Examination and test results are used to monitor the performance of subjects and, in the largest subjects, the performance of different sets. The need to investigate and analyse the academic performance and progress of sub-groups, such as pupils of different ethnic groups and abilities, including the gifted and talented and all those with SEN, is now fully recognised and is being implemented.

81. The school keeps systematic records of pupils' progress and attainment centrally on computer. These records include external test/examination results, National Curriculum or GCSE target levels or grades, and details of pupils' special educational needs. Individual student and subject targets are set with the aid of official national test/examination performance data and a commercial assessment scheme. Teachers, associate teachers and members of the Governing Body have received useful information on the use of these data.

82. The local education authority has very recently produced and made available a powerful assessment data analysis computer package. This is beginning to be used to some effect, particularly to investigate the attainment and progress made by different groups of pupils. At the present time only a few heads of subject have had the opportunity to use the package. It is planned to expand staff expertise in its use in the near future.
83. The school's assessment and marking policy is in the process of being re-written. The previous one provided good guidance on the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' work. It stressed the importance of keeping pupils well informed of their attainment and progress as well as what they need to do to improve their work. Within subject departments the quality of day-to-day assessment of individual pupils' work is good overall, pupils are aware of their progress through the National Curriculum and are involved in their own assessment. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are involved in a pilot scheme to involve parents and pupils more in the assessment process. Procedures for assessment are very good in art and physical education; they are unsatisfactory in ICT and music.
84. The use of assessment records by individual subject departments to inform planning, modify programmes of work and enhance pupils' learning is good overall, but unsatisfactory in ICT and music.
85. As part of the induction process pupils are screened in order to assess basic literacy. A nationally recognised reading test is used for all and additional tests are used to allow for more precise identification of pupils with SEN. Tests are repeated regularly in order to gain an accurate picture of pupils' improvement. In the case of the groups using a specialised computer programme, progress is monitored every two months. The department needs to use school and national data to provide information specific to SEN pupils, on success at GCSE and certificate of achievement, such as the 100 per cent pass rate for those entered for the certificate of achievement in geography.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

86. The school strives to involve parents in their children's education and to build effective and meaningful relationships with them. The school provides good information for parents. The prospectus is professionally produced, parent-friendly and contains all information parents need to know regarding school procedures and subjects taught. Regular newsletters of high quality are provided, giving valuable information about current events in the school, profiles of staff and student achievements.
87. The annual report to parents from governors is well produced and contains full details of all activities within the school during the last year together with all statutory information including examination results and financial income and expenditure.
88. Annual reports of pupils' progress are produced at varying times during the school year. In some subjects, such as English, information is detailed and helpful, giving full reports to parents of subject content, grades awarded and progress made. In other subjects, however, the standard of report is uneven and in music, in particular, generic comments are made on what the pupils have studied but no information is provided on progress made or grades achieved. As annual reports are sent out after parents' evenings, there is no formal opportunity for parents to meet with subject teachers to discuss their children's progress, although the school does allow parents to come into school at any time by appointment to discuss problems or concerns that they may have.
89. The school holds parents' evenings for each year group with additional parents evenings for Year 7 pupils prior to their entry to school. An additional GCSE option evening for the parents of Year 9 pupils is also offered and a college open evening for parents of Year 11 pupils. Also, the school has a policy of frequent contact with parents and sends letters home to advise them about pupils' achievement or if they have any causes for concern. The school runs courses for Year 7 pupils to assist parents in developing their children's learning skills. Courses are also offered to parents of teenage pupils to help them deal with teenage problems and there is a three day course for parents to improve their own self esteem. In addition, the school has arranged evenings for parents of Asian heritage pupils twice per year to discuss pastoral arrangements.
90. Parents are advised that they can contact the school at any time by appointment if they wish to see subject teachers or form tutors to discuss their children's progress or development.

91. The school has good procedures for induction of new pupils into the school and they work well. Although the school has a very large number of feeder primary schools, a year head visits all of them and every pupil receives an interview prior to arrival. Year 6 pupils come into school for a "taster day", meet staff, attend some lessons and receive information about the building. Year 7 pupils spoken to during the inspection week felt that because of the school's good induction arrangements they were able to make a confident start in Year 7.
92. The SENCO works well with parents and all parents are invited to annual reviews of pupils' progress and take part in target setting. Parents are kept informed of all developments regarding the support and progress of SEN pupils. Parents are invited to all reviews and are also encouraged to attend 'drop in' sessions on Friday afternoons to chat to SEN staff and avail themselves of the facilities in the city learning centre G.L. The SENCO and staff maintain good contacts with parents and are very flexible in trying to fit in with parents' requirements.
93. The school does not have a parent-teacher association and a very small number of parents come into school to help in practical ways. A "Drop In" session has been arranged for parents in school on a weekly basis. where parents are able to receive help and advice from staff if they feel they have concerns about handling teenage behaviour or their child's health and welfare. This arrangement is much appreciated by parents.
94. All parents sign a home-school contract and some parents sign the school organiser. Although the school makes every effort to involve parents in its life, the contribution of parents to pupils' learning at school and at home is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

95. The leadership and management of the school are both good. The headteacher has appropriately led the school forward since his appointment three years ago. Having been identified as a school performing well in challenging circumstances, further work was needed to raise the achievement of the pupils, particularly in tests and examinations. The headteacher is aiming for half the pupils to achieve five A*-C GCSE grades and this appears to be a realistic expectation for 2004 based on teachers' assessments of the current Year 10 pupils. This focus on raising standards has been appropriately underpinned by placing more emphasis on raising the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum innovation and better assessment and progress monitoring. This is well summed up in the school's motto 'Aiming Higher'.
96. Governors make a good contribution to the school's development. They bring a mixture of good local knowledge and valuable management skills to the governing body's work. In addition to regular meetings of all the governors and appropriate committees, termly meetings take place in which the performance of departments and individuals is discussed; this is a strong aspect of governors' work, which would be strengthened further if they were to receive more detailed reports from senior managers on subjects' progress.
97. Governors have not ensured that all statutory requirements are met, particularly for the provision in modern foreign languages and ICT.
98. The headteacher has led significant curriculum improvements. By developing partnerships with feeder primary schools and post-16 institutions, the school is taking appropriate account of pupils' learning needs throughout their time in education. The 11-16 curriculum is seen as a phase in wider provision rather than just a discrete set of programmes; this is good strategic planning. The strong partnership with Stoke on Trent College, for example, has been established to improve vocational opportunities. Having set up courses with the college, the school does not abdicate its responsibility to monitor the quality of provision. A senior manager visits the college on a weekly basis to ensure that pupils are attending and making progress and that they are being well served.
99. The engineering college bid is well founded. It draws on the school's long-standing commitment to working alongside industry and commerce; for example pottery work in art. It also strongly reflects the direction of curriculum development and the well-established links and partnerships with partner institutions.

100. Senior managers are committed to the school, work hard and perform most of their duties well. The good behaviour of the pupils in classrooms, the good relationships and the positive ethos of the school reflect well on their work. They have successfully implemented a range of improvements such as better assessment and progress monitoring, closer links with parents including the provision of courses and more effective strategies to ensure that all pupils have full access to academic and personal development opportunities. The headteacher has not been entirely successful in developing cohesion within the senior management team about roles and responsibilities.
101. Senior managers do not have a strong enough role in raising standards in the subjects they are linked with. They do not perceive that they have a key responsibility for standards in subjects and are not held to account for them. More formal approaches to the line management of subjects need to be established so that short-term improvement targets and action plans can be developed to achieve the long term objectives of the improvement plans.
102. The leadership of most subjects is good. Heads of department fulfil their responsibilities well and are increasingly taking a more strategic approach to their work. Most do not monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning as well as they perform other duties. This key role needs to be strengthened in order for standards to rise. The high proportion of very good and excellent teaching indicates that successful action is being taken in this area; however, further improvement is necessary to bring all teachers closer to this level of performance. There are strong role models for high quality teaching in the school who could provide an invaluable aid to the improvement of teaching and learning; for example, the two advanced skills teachers.
103. The improvement plan is an amalgamation of a one-year plan and the headteacher's vision statement. Themes are also drawn together in the bid for engineering college status. The plan is actively being pursued; for example, teaching and learning are improving and departments are forging stronger links with the new City Learning Centre. The headteacher has a meeting with all heads of departments each term to discuss their progress towards improvement plan targets. This is good practice but the task should be assigned to the senior manager responsible for each subject if they are to be fully accountable for the subjects' performance and provision. Subject improvement plans begin with a review of progress in tackling the issues from the last inspection; this is good practice.
104. The day-to-day administration of the school is very efficient. A strong team of administrative staff, well led by the office manager, gives teachers and managers very good support. ICT is used well to improve the quality of information available to managers. This strong resource is not used to its full potential. Sometimes teachers and managers develop independent organisational systems not knowing about existing systems or not drawing on the expertise of the administrative team. The office manager is a capable leader who should have a more central role within the senior management team in order to dovetail strategic and operational planning.
105. The local education authority is making a good contribution to helping the school to improve. The director has a hands-on approach and has made specific suggestions to the school about how it might raise standards further. Good support is also offered by the link adviser to the school.
106. The catering contract was won by the local authority team. They are very well led, the catering manager having a keen eye on quality and customer service. Pupils are able to purchase nutritious meals and this appropriately links with the school's participation in the Health Promoting School scheme.
107. A governor is identified with responsibility for oversight of SEN provision. He has experience of special needs provision and has been attached to the department for five years. He is supportive of the department, but previous regular meetings have become absorbed into curriculum committee meetings. The governor is happy that resources are correctly used and has undertaken some training in order to understand the funding system. The information provided by the governors' annual report to parents just about meets statutory requirements but is lacking in detail and the governor is aware of this. There are plans to increase the amount of liaison between the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the governor.
108. The activities and responsibilities of the SEN department are clearly laid out in a useful and informative policy and future planning is laid out in a improvement plan. This takes careful note of the last Ofsted report and more recently the findings of a detailed review of the learning support department carried out in April 2002 by the senior advisor for SEN in Stoke. The review highlights a number of areas such as: use of resources, the widening of assessment criteria, deployment of support staff and the reorganisation of

withdrawal groups. The department is actively addressing the recommendations of the review and making good improvement.

109. There is a good team of SEN staff in place with 12 learning support teachers whose training needs are addressed through in-school training and short courses. The co-ordinator is following a course for a post-graduate certificate in specific learning difficulties. She is receptive to new ideas and after a period of absence will be able to concentrate on following through the planned improvements in provision. All staff have had training in the new code of practice.

110. With the addition of EiC (Excellence in Cities) funding the school receives rather more funds than average for a school of its size. This money is delegated appropriately to priorities identified within the school improvement plan. A large financial surplus existed several years ago. This has been well spent in significantly improving the level of learning resources, including computers. Governors monitor where money goes on a termly basis; monthly reports to the chair of the finance committee would strengthen this position.
111. The latest audit report gave good judgements against most financial controls; a few minor issues were identified to be addressed and they have been. Financial administration is overseen by the school's financial and personnel officer who does a good job in monitoring both day to day expenditure and in advising the headteacher about ways of improving efficiency, for example by improving the manner in which absent teachers are 'covered' by temporary teachers. Strategic budget planning is conducted by the headteacher, governors and senior staff.
112. Specific grants provided for areas such as special educational needs, ethnic minority support, and learning mentors, are well used and sometimes supplemented from the school's basic budget. For example, more mentors are provided than EiC funds pay for. Funds from such initiatives as e-learning credits are being used effectively by teachers to improve provision for the use of ICT in teaching and learning.
113. Best value judgements related to the school comparing itself with others, challenging itself to do better, seeking competitive tenders, and consulting people about spending and changes, are satisfactory. The local education authority and the school work closely together and ensure financial requirements are met and best value principles for purchases applied; governors' understanding of all the elements of best value is in need of improvement. The school recognises that improvements in performance at the end of Year 11 have to be better but has also seen improved resources and provision making a positive difference by the end of Year 9. The school's prediction is that this improvement 'wave' will reach Year 11 in 2004. The school has also embarked on more vocational courses through links with a local college. This work is closely monitored at a senior level to provide quality assurance. Rigorous tendering procedures overseen by the local authority ensure significant purchases are made at the best price and quality. Indeed the item cost at which tendering becomes necessary is set very low (£300) and makes buying relatively small items more difficult than it need be.
114. The school is not making enough use of new technologies involving ICT as strategic management of ICT within the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall and statutory requirements are not met. However, the position is much better than two years ago; there are a lot more good resources, a detailed medium and long term plan for expansion, and a developing curriculum. The location of a City Learning Centre within the school site is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' independent learning; many are using the centre for research and development of projects and for completing homework and sometimes emailing it to friends or the school.
115. The numbers, qualifications and experience of teaching and non-teaching staff are appropriately matched to the needs of the curriculum in most areas. There are problems in modern foreign languages, music and ICT: to some extent these have resulted in the curriculum having to be modified to fit around the available staff. Modern foreign languages have problems with sickness; these have necessitated a succession of supply teachers and there have been three heads of department in recent years. The music department includes one unqualified teacher and ICT, too, is short of teachers qualified in the subject. Difficulties in recruiting appropriately skilled staff in these subjects and in mathematics have adversely affected provision over the past two years.
116. Recent staff appointments have been mostly very good. High quality teachers and administrators have been recruited or promoted and this has improved provision significantly in a number of areas; for example in history and in the administrative team.
117. There are good procedures for supporting newly qualified staff and those new to the school. Much is done within departments using mentors and the expertise of the head of department: new teachers report that they are pleased with the help that they have received. There are good systems for performance management for teachers and it is kept up to date. Arrangements for non-teaching staff vary in quality. Professional development of staff is linked well to performance management and to department and school improvement plans. There are strong links with Keele University Education Department and the school provides impressive support for associate teachers from Keele University and Manchester Metropolitan University.

118. Accommodation is satisfactory, and there are significant strengths in the more recently constructed buildings, where subjects have all their rooms closely sited and display space is excellent. The accommodation is well managed by both senior managers and particularly the site manager. He keeps a careful eye on the buildings and this is one of the main reasons for the limited evidence of graffiti or vandalism. The use and availability of the buildings are analysed well, and clearly linked to development needs. There are strengths in art, English, geography, history, music, religious education and SEN. However, there are significant areas of weakness which are recognised by the school: design technology – where insufficient practical space inhibits standards, physical education – which has insufficient space for this size of school, and science – where the school is significantly short of laboratories. The staff room is far too small for the size of the school and there is no space for teachers to work in comfort. The City Learning Centre is based on the school site and its accommodation is of a very high quality; it is a valuable resource which is well used by the school.
119. Resources are generally good. Funds allocated to departments are adequate for the required purchase of books and equipment. In no department are standards depressed through a lack of materials. There are some particular strengths. The religious education department possesses a good range of artefacts and in art, physical education and history teachers make good use of the local community. The art department also uses the services of an artist in residence. Resources are also good in English and science.
120. The school's stock of computers is slightly below the national average, and in some departments pupils have less access than the schemes of work require. The number of books in the school's section of the new City Learning Centre (CLC) is less than half the national average but the pupils have automatic access to the public library stock. Nevertheless, the number of books borrowed by pupils has dropped by nearly half since the CLC opened. Whole classes make good use of the CLC for research purposes, particularly using the Internet. There is, however, insufficient space for a whole class to use the school section of the library successfully.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

121. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
1. Raise levels of achievement at GCSE by:
 - Raising the motivation of boys, particularly in Years 10 and 11;
 - Continuing to promote improvements in teaching and learning;
 - Regularly monitoring pupils' progress towards targets and taking rapid action to tackle underachievement;

2-14,15-18,24-41,54,80
 2. Improving the achievement and attitudes to learning of boys in Years 10 and 11 by:
 - Continuing to develop the curriculum, particularly the vocational curriculum, so that their individual learning needs and interests are met;
 - Using teaching methods and resources that are more motivating to boys;
 - Ensuring that all teachers consistently expect high standards of work, behaviour and attendance from boys;
 - Co-ordinating the work of teachers and support staff such as learning mentors in identifying early signs of disaffection among boys and implementing action plans to tackle them;

2-14,15-18,24-41,42-62
 3. Improving provision for music, modern foreign languages, ICT and expressive arts by:
 - Raising the quality of teaching, the curriculum, assessment and leadership and management in music;
 - Ensuring that all pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement to modern foreign languages and ICT;
 - Planning and managing ICT provision across the curriculum more effectively;
 - Planning the provision and teaching of the expressive arts curriculum more thoroughly so that all lessons provide challenging and motivating learning experiences;

2-8,27-41,43-45,84,97,114
 4. Raising the standard of teaching and learning to that of the most effective teachers by:
 - Making the monitoring and support of teaching and learning the key role of heads of department;

- Making senior managers accountable for the quality of teaching and learning in their linked departments;
- Using the advanced skills teachers and other high quality teachers to support the work of less effective colleagues;
- Developing structures for sharing good practice within and between departments.

25-41,95-103

5. Improving attendance and child protection procedures by:

- Ensuring that registers are completed in line with statutory procedures particularly in the afternoon;
- Training all staff in the signs of child abuse;
- Updating the child protection policy so that it fully reflects current legislation and guidance;
- Improving the progress monitoring of looked after children and those pupils on the 'at risk' register.
- Ensuring that the child protection officer has a full understanding of how to refer pupils to statutory agencies.

69-70,72-73

In addition, the school should work with the local education authority to tackle the weaknesses in accommodation in design and technology, science and physical education.

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PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	169
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	71

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	11	50	60	39	8	1	0
Percentage	6	30	36	23	5	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1068
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	251

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	33
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	183

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	85

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.0
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	111	110	221

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	75	79	76
	Girls	80	57	62
	Total	155	136	138
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (48)	62 (55)	62 (50)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (15)	38 (29)	20 (15)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	56	73	60
	Girls	63	68	50
	Total	119	141	110
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	54 (61)	64 (54)	50 (41)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (22)	33 (28)	18 (10)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	94	88	182

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	28	77	89
	Girls	35	79	84
	Total	63	156	173
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	35 (34)	86 (90)	95 (96)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	31.7
	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	38	71
	National		N/A

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	947	110	2
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	64	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	14	16	1
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	11	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	10	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	7	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	63.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	732

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24
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Financial year	2002/3
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	£
Total income	3,299,950
Total expenditure	3,443,040
Expenditure per pupil	3,056
Balance brought forward from previous year	143,090
Balance carried forward to next year	29,340

Key Stage 4	21
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18.37
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16.3

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	1068
Number of questionnaires returned	182

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	48	10	4	2
My child is making good progress in school.	51	42	4	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	37	10	5	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	46	16	2	2
The teaching is good.	40	48	6	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	48	15	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	36	5	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	28	45	14	3	10
The school is well led and managed.	34	45	8	3	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	46	8	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	38	6	3	10

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The head of department gives very good leadership
- Schemes of work and lessons are very well planned to develop pupils' literacy
- Lessons have good pace, variety and purpose
- Teachers know their subject well
- Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is very good

Areas for improvement

- The quality of marking and target setting is uneven
- There is insufficient time given to the development and evaluation of teaching in the department
- The use of ICT in English is underdeveloped because of limited access to facilities
- Pupils' attainment and independent learning skills by the end of Year 11 are below expectations

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	Average	Below average
Seen during the inspection	Average	Below average

Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen

Standards on entry are well below average with Pakistani heritage pupils achieving lower results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests than white pupils.

Results in the National Curriculum tests in 2002 were in line with the national average. Compared with the pupils' results in previous tests, the results were well above average, as they were when compared with the results of pupils in similar schools.

The trend of results in English is erratic: but from 2000-2002 pupils did better in English than in mathematics and science.

GCSE results in 2001 and 2002 were below average. Girls did better than boys, but their results were similarly below the results of girls nationally as boys' results were below those of boys' nationally.

In 2002, English literature results were close to the national average for the proportion gaining A*-C grades, though a smaller proportion of pupils were entered than was the case nationally. The strong performance of girls (in line with the national average) accounts for this comparatively good overall picture.

Both boys and girls do better in English (and particularly better in literature) than in the average of their other subjects. However, pupils do not make sufficient progress in Years 10-11 considering their attainment at the end of Year 9.

Standards observed during the inspection confirmed the good picture suggested by the results of pupils at the age of 14. Teachers' very good planning, and the pace and variety of activities in lessons, enables pupils to learn enjoyably and productively. Pupils' attitudes in Years 10 and 11 are more negative, and this limits the effectiveness of the good teaching they receive. Nevertheless, standards seen (in pupils' writing particularly) indicate better standards than those achieved recently in examinations.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Good
Pupils' behaviour	Good

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Very good	Satisfactory

Statements explaining why pupils (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.

Achievement is very good between Years 7 to 9. Both boys and girls make very good progress, as do pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with SEN. This is because schemes of work have been revised to take full account of the national strategies to accelerate pupils' command of skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Lessons are taught with great pace and purpose. Pupils expect to work hard and make progress. This shows in pupils' reading and writing. Pupils of all abilities make obvious strides. Low attaining pupils get much practice in reading aloud and in interpreting texts at appropriate levels of difficulty. Writing frames and other strategies extend and structure their writing so that meaning is always clear despite some uncertainties of spelling and expression. Mid attaining pupils are able to compare texts and comment on them in well-organised ways. They respond to considerable challenges (for example creating their own sonnets) effectively. High attaining pupils show sophisticated skills of interpretation in reading and writing: as in imaginative Gentlewoman's diaries from *Macbeth*.

Pupils make further (though less rapid) progress from 14-16. By the age of 16 low attaining pupils can comment in simple but extended ways on their reading (for example recording the plot and themes of *An Inspector Calls*). Mid attaining pupils are able to use a range of techniques to tell stories and argue, explain and persuade. High attaining pupils write with an assured critical edge, as in essays comparing Tennyson's and Wilfred Owen's attitudes to war: Boys and girls, together with SEN pupils and pupils of Asian heritage make equivalent progress from 11-16. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress. Although there are extension tasks and their needs identified, there is not the sharp focus on giving them appropriate challenge. Less able pupils are given appropriately challenging work.

Overall there is too little use of ICT in English. Development is hampered by limited access to resources. Teachers' marking is regular and supportive. It is inconsistent in quality, however, because pupils are not always shown what they need to do to improve.

Pupils' achievement is testimony to the quality of teaching which overall is very good with more than 20% of lessons seen outstanding. Teachers have high expectations. Their subject knowledge is very good, and so is their confident grasp of effective teaching approaches. These methods have had most impact with pupils aged 11-14 but are beginning now to feed through to the upper school. For example, a Year 8 lesson for low attaining pupils had them reading aloud and making connections between original extracts from *Romeo and Juliet* and translations into modern English. The teacher's energetic and good-humoured presence, together with the skilled support of the learning support assistant, pushed learning forward in clear and enjoyable ways.

Similar features of excellent teaching were evident in a Year 11 lesson on *Animal Farm* with potentially high attaining pupils. There was a difference however in pupils' response. The quality of pupils' learning from 11-14 is good, which does not precisely match the very good teaching. This is because of their substantial dependence on teachers for motivation and progress. From 14-16 this is even more the case, together with some resistance or indifference, which makes the quality of learning at this stage only satisfactory. However, as pupils move through the school with positive attitudes to learning established by their earlier experience, improved commitment and achievement can be anticipated.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Very good	Good
Quality of Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of the curriculum	Good	Good

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Very good
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Good

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Very good
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Very good
Adequacy of resources	Good
Adequacy of accommodation	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

122. The leadership of the department is very good. The curriculum in English has been developed so that pupils can follow courses in language, literature and media studies. The Key Stage 3 strategy fully informs the department's work. Resources are well managed, and accommodation is bright, motivating, with displays to encourage and model high achievement. The department has a secure focus on developing systems to track pupils' progress and to set targets in the light of that information. Since his appointment in September the head of department has developed a team ethos to planning and development and has taken very effective action to raise quality further. While he has monitored the quality of teaching in the department this aspect of his work needs to be increased, particularly as many of the teachers are new to the school. Since the last inspection, attainment by the age of 14 has significantly improved and the department is in a strong position to take forward the high achievement of younger pupils into Years 10 and 11.

MATHEMATICS

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

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching, particularly teachers' subject knowledge and understanding. The department's commitment to raise standards and to adapt and share new ideas. Rising standards in both mathematics and numeracy. <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve the planned provision of ICT to support learning in mathematics. Maintain and monitor a common approach to day-to-day marking. Analyse the reasons for and re-dress the relative fall in progress in Years 10 to 11.
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STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	Below average	Below average
Seen during the inspection	Below average	Below average

On entry, standards are well below average. Standards on entry of Pakistani heritage pupils are very low, (figures for other ethnic minorities are difficult to interpret because of the relatively small numbers involved). Standards on entry appear to be rising slightly.

In Years 7 to 9 standards are below average. Boys' standards are higher than girls, which is in line with the national picture, but the difference is greater.

National Curriculum test results were below average in 2002. They were similar to results in science and below those in English. The trend in results is broadly in line with the national trend, though boys' results are rising at a faster rate than those of girls.

By the end of Year 9 pupils have a grasp of basic number work, including the recall of multiplication tables. They are encouraged to explain their mathematics, in line with the National Numeracy Strategy and do so successfully overall; for example, a lower ability Year 9 group successfully used the idea of scale and made accurate measurements involving different paper sizes. Their good progress was the result of good question and answer skills shown by the teacher.

Standards in Years 10 to 11 are below average, with girls performing at a higher level than boys, which is the same as the situation nationally.

There is no significant difference between pupils' GCSE performance in maths and their performance in other subjects, although in 2002 a relatively higher proportion gained A* or A grades!

Statistics is available as an option from Year 10 under the umbrella of the mathematics department. The first group completed their GCSE course in 2002. Results were below average, but inspection evidence suggests they will improve.

Many pupils in Years 10 to 11 find algebra difficult but the majority can solve simple equations and most are able to simplify elementary algebraic expressions.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Good
Pupils' behaviour	Good

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Good	Satisfactory

Analysis of the 2002 test and examination results show that:

- Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress from Year 7 to Year 11
- Pupils of Pakistani heritage make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 and good progress from Year 10 to Year 11
- Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 and good progress from Year 10 to 11

Overall pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 but satisfactory progress from Year 10 to 11 – with girls making relatively greater progress than boys. The recent introduction of a modular GCSE assessment, with examinations spanning Years 10 and 11 is an attempt to counter the fall in boys' progress.

Learning is good in Years 7 to 9. Although teaching is also good throughout Years 7 to 11, learning is only satisfactory in Years 10 to 11. This is a result of some fall off in attitude by pupils, particularly boys, and possibly the poorer level of attendance in Years 10 to 11 (about 85 percent in mathematics during the inspection).

Pupils observed in statistics lessons make good progress and have a positive attitude to the subject. A Year 10 group were able, with the aid of directed questions from the teacher, to 'discover' two basic rules of probability. A Year 11 group were challenged to think through their views concerning correlation and cause and effect. They responded well to the challenge.

The quality of teaching is good overall, with about one fifth of lessons that are very good or excellent. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The best lessons have pace, involve pupils in a variety of activities and provide challenge – usually in the form of probing questions – but at the same time allow 'time for thought'. These features were well shown in a Year 7 lesson on probability in which the teacher framed questions of the form 'Why is that?', 'How do you know that?' and 'What would happen if ...' to stimulate pupils' thinking skills. Pupils were invited to justify their answers in front of the class, which gave opportunities for them to practise their oral and listening skills.

ICT is used to support learning, for example: a group of Year 10 SEN pupils used a colour mixing program to gain concrete experience of ratio, a Year 8 class used an interactive whiteboard to investigate number sequences. A commercial suite of programs is used to boost younger lower attaining pupils' standards. Although opportunities where ICT could help mathematics learning are indicated in schemes of work, this aspect of pupils' provision is not as prominent as it could be.

Several instances were observed of pupils having effective opportunities to practice their literacy skills such as reading aloud, writing up and re-drafting mathematical investigations or using writing frames

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Good	Good
Quality of Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of the curriculum	Good	Good
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Good	
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Good	

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Good
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Good
Adequacy of resources	Satisfactory
Adequacy of accommodation	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

123. The department has a clear sense of direction and a shared commitment to improve. Knowledgeable leadership and effective management plus a team of enthusiastic teachers and the talented support of an Advanced Skills Teacher underpin the good progress made since the previous inspection. Pupils are now able, as a result of improved literacy, to write-up and complete accounts of mathematical investigations. Levels of numeracy have also risen, so that poor numeracy skills no longer hinder progress in some other subjects. Adoption (and adaptation) of the Key Stage 3 Strategy has resulted in improved teaching and learning. The department is developing good systems for assessment, including student self-evaluation.

Day-to-day marking is of a good quality, usually with comments as to what pupils need to do to improve, but there are sometimes slight differences in approaches to marking.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Some very good teaching leading to good learning.
- An enthusiastic and committed head of department and staff.
- A broad range of curricular opportunities.

Areas for improvement

- The improvement of the pupils' attitudes so that they take more responsibility for their learning.
- Raising the quality of teaching to a consistently high level by sharing best practice.
- Raising standards at GCSE.

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	Below average	Below average
Seen during the inspection	Below average	Below average

Results in the 2002 national tests, taken at the end of Year 9, were below the national average for all schools. However, when compared to similar schools the results were above average. Overall results of girls and boys were similar but girls outperformed boys at the higher levels. Over recent years results have risen sharply at a faster rate than the national average. Observations of lessons and analysis of the pupils' work suggest that results will rise again this year.

Results in science are similar to those in mathematics, but weaker than English results.

At GCSE in 2002, considering all courses together for the grades A* to C, the school's results were below the national average for all schools. They were above the average found in similar schools. For the grades in the range A* to G the school's standards were in line with the national average. There has been no significant trend in standards in recent years. Girls did better than boys in 2002 and obtained a much higher proportion of the upper grades.

The majority of pupils were entered for double award modular science. Smaller numbers did single or double award coordinated science: the results of these examinations were disappointing and well below the national average. It has now been decided that almost all pupils will do double award modular science with a few of the most able taking the triple award, biology, chemistry, physics examination. Observations of lessons and the examination of pupils work show that the standards remain in the same region as last year.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Unsatisfactory
Pupils' behaviour	Good

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Pupils' achievement is what might be expected from the levels that they obtained in the national tests in their Years 6 and 9.

Achievement is directly related to the quality of teaching. A third of the lessons seen were either very good or good and a small proportion unsatisfactory. Lessons are usually well planned with their aims made clear and their content well matched to the pupils, forming a sound basis for learning.

The best teaching sets out to actively involve all the pupils in thinking all of the time. These lessons show a wide variety of strategies, lively delivery and very effective classroom management; as a result they are enjoyable and lead to some very good learning. So it was in a Year 11 revision session, where the teacher provided a good number of active revision activities. These had graded questions designed to highlight weaknesses and to point the way to improvement. Small groups circulated, all were involved in discussion and resolution of the questions and frequently visited by the teacher who challenged and informed them.

Features of less successful lessons include lack of direction, poor discipline, most pupils not actively involved and poor timing of activities resulting in a slow pace and a diminished enjoyment with disappointing learning.

Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively; this leads to positive relationships and good behaviour. However, their attitudes are often unenthusiastic and sometimes they work without urgency and little motivation to ask questions. This results in less progress than would be expected from the quality of teaching provided.

Although there is a good provision of enrichment and extension opportunities for the most able, such as a programme of interesting visits and an extra teacher in some classes, its impact is diminished by some poor pupil attitudes resulting in fewer top grades than might be expected. Similarly effective support is provided for pupils with SEN; this results in good progress.

Attention is paid to literacy and numeracy skills. Keywords are emphasised, pupils are encouraged to glean information from books and to write in their own words. They draw and use graphs and handle formulae with increasing confidence. The more able pupils can tackle such tasks as finding the percentage composition of each element in a compound. ICT is not extensively used, due to lack of resources. However the available equipment is well used: the pupils experience data logging, utilise the internet for research and present word-processed work.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of the curriculum	Good	Good

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Good
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Good

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Good
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Good
Adequacy of resources	Good
Adequacy of accommodation	Unsatisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

124. The department is headed by a committed and enthusiastic teacher who is raising standards by rewriting the schemes of work, broadening the curriculum, adopting new methods of teaching and overhauling the use of assessment. The curriculum is good and enhanced by visits such as that to Chester zoo and a

science club. The resources, apart from ICT, are good; they are well deployed and maintained by an effective team of technicians. There is a lack of ICT teaching aids such as computer projectors, smart boards and a science intranet. The accommodation is unsatisfactory because, although there are many good laboratories, at present the science resources room has to be used for teaching, as do rooms in the technology block. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with most of the shortcomings found then overcome; however, the monitoring of teaching to spread the best practice and the accommodation remain as issues to be resolved. Nevertheless this is a forward-looking department under determined purposeful leadership committed to raising standards.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good
- Links with mainstream and world art with a tradition of community and industrial links together with artists in residence style work
- Developments in ceramics

Areas for improvement

- The refinement of the options system to support access to examination courses for the full ability range
- The further development of first hand observation work
- The use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning
- A formalised programme of gallery visits

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	Average	Average
Seen during the inspection	Average	Average

The proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above at the end of Year 9 is above the national average. Excellent work was seen in all years using stimuli from different parts of the world; the application of colour, style and imagery all showed deep understanding of the culture concerned. GCSE results in 2000 and 2001 were above the national average. They were below average in 2002 but evidence suggests that the ability profile of the pupils was much lower. The proportion of pupils gaining A* or A grades at GCSE is higher than in other subjects. In 2001 over a third of the pupils gained A* or A grades which was double the national average. Almost all classes are mixed ability, and no consistent variation in attainment was seen among boys, girls or pupils of different ethnic heritage. The work of a pupil who recently arrived in the school from abroad was of a particularly high standard. It showed influence of the art of his country of origin and the work of major Western artists, while being highly creative and technically very good. The department has helped him make very good use of his abilities. Excellent work was seen from lower ability pupils and pupils with SEN, especially in ceramics. The school is enabling pupils to achieve high standards by using the manufacturing methods of the local pottery industry; this also helps preserve important aspects of the local culture. The pursuit of excellence is alive and well in the art department; for example, pupils' work has been manufactured professionally in partnership with local firms.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Very good
Pupils' behaviour	Excellent

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Good	Good

The open-ended nature of projects enables all pupils to work at their own level and more pupils are able to pursue excellence.

Teaching and learning are a significant strength of the department. Teachers are skilled artists whose enthusiasm and passion have a clear impact on pupils' attitude to their own learning and will to succeed. This was very evident in ceramics lessons where the teacher gave very effective demonstrations of techniques that the pupils were able to follow readily.

Encouragement, challenge and high expectation are a norm in the department; for example, in a Year 7 lesson on building a representation of an Egyptian Mummy, the excitement of the pupils was palpable as they strove to craft and refine their finished pieces.

The challenging and interesting work set by the teachers enables them to build strong relationships with the pupils which in turn leads to a very purposeful but relaxed working atmosphere in the classrooms.

Whiteboards are used well to enhance pupils' understanding of lesson topics and the techniques they need to use to complete tasks. Sessions using the whiteboard also served to support pupils' literacy development by reinforcing their knowledge of art vocabulary.

Industrial and community links and artists in residence are all having a significant impact on pupils' learning.

The strong culture of the community around the school is celebrated in aspects of art work.

Not enough use is made of ICT to develop pupils' learning.

The best learning is through doing and subsequent self refinement, with teacher feedback assisting this process

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Very good	Very good
Quality of Learning	Very good	Very good
Quality of the curriculum	Good	Good

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Very good
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Very good

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Very good
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Very good
Adequacy of resources	Good
Adequacy of accommodation	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	Very good

125. Leadership and management are very good, and all staff are enthusiastic and committed; they work well as a team. Teacher expertise is very high, and pupils trust their teachers, believing that they will succeed. The curriculum for the use of ICT to support pupils' learning is barely satisfactory, but major developments are in hand using the expertise of one of the staff. The assessment system is very good; pupil self-assessment plays a significant part in helping them to take responsibility for their further development.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- A well planned scheme of work and accompanying materials
- Strands of citizenship developed through inclusive policies and spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision in the school

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching
- Further identification and evaluation of contributions that can be more regularly made in subject areas

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	N/A	N/A
Seen during the inspection	Average	Average

The school provision for citizenship is centred on “ACE” – a citizenship experience. Knowledge and understanding is well developed in the ‘ASDAN’ accredited learning modules in Year 7 looking at independent learning, early relationships and transition from primary to secondary school. The citizenship seen within lessons makes positive contributions to the way pupils enquire and communicate and how they work responsibly. Citizenship skills are also well developed and catered for via the provision made for the personal development of pupils.

Pupils’ attitudes to the subject	Good
Pupils’ behaviour	Good

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Good	Good

Achievement in citizenship, taught through the personal, social and health education programme, is good in all years.

Year 7 pupils make very good progress understanding the plight of people in the third world. In one lesson, for example, they were able to distinguish that water supplies are much more practical and important than extending ICT facilities. In another lesson pupils studied styles of learning and began to relate it to their preferences improving enquiry and communication. A teacher in a Year 10 lesson expertly connected the relationship between jobs and salaries. As a result, pupils made very good progress in rationalising budgets with job satisfaction.

Other planned course work includes a ‘Citizenship Day’, work on asylum seekers and refugees. The ‘Human Rights Day’ looks at the rights and needs of children, the elderly, the homeless and political refugees. In many of these themes connections are made with relevant community agencies.

In subject areas achievement linked with standards in citizenship is less developed. It is in these areas that the school insufficiently measures standards in line with National Curriculum guidelines.

Assemblies are linked well with citizenship themes and this helps to develop pupils’ broader understanding. During the inspection the Year 9 assembly enabled pupils to consider the negative impact of prejudice.

The school has very good links with ‘Citizens Advice’ who regard the work integrating pupils from Afghanistan as a good model of practice.

In-service training has helped departments to identify the strands of citizenship pertinent to their areas and to assess its development through teaching and learning.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Good	Good
Quality of Learning	Good	Good
Quality of the curriculum	Good	Good

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Good
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Satisfactory

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Good
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Good
Adequacy of resources	Good
Adequacy of accommodation	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	N/A

126. There is an expectation that subject leaders identify elements of citizenship to be covered in their subjects. Heads of departments are familiar with nationally produced curriculum materials and incorporate them into the subjects' scheme of work. Delivery of these elements is not consistently monitored to assess the quality of the teaching and to see whether citizenship standards identified in the National Curriculum are achieved.

127. New arrangements such as the accredited Year 7 course and portfolios of work kept in other years allow for good judgements to be made on the progress pupils make. Further monitoring of the programme by the subject co-ordinator and heads of year further enhance this provision. For example it was felt that political awareness was insufficiently catered for. As a result a module, well resourced with House of Commons materials and visits by the local MP, was developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils' very positive response to the opportunities to work independently and in groups.
- The breadth of curriculum opportunities in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils are well supported by experienced teachers and skilled technicians.
- The positive relationships between teachers and their pupils

Areas for improvement

- Identify more clearly tasks to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils
- Using assessment information to ensure that pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their levels of performance.
- Ensure a consistency of approach by all teachers within the department to lesson planning.
- The deployment of the learning support assistant to meet the needs of pupils with SEN.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- The accommodation to enable all pupils in Years 7 to 9 to develop their practical skills in food studies

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	Average	Below average
Seen during the inspection	Average	Average

Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen

Standards as judged by teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are close to the national averages; standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 reflect these judgements.

GCSE results in 2002 for child development, food, resistant materials and graphics were below the national averages but in all four subjects showed an increase of the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C when compared with the school's 2001 results.

The proportion of pupils gaining A* or A GCSE grades is around half the national average; in resistant materials and textiles very few pupils achieve this level.

Present standards in Year 11 are higher than those reflected in the previous year's examination results because in 2001 there were a very high proportion of unclassified results for design and technology.

Pupils who attend regularly are reaching satisfactory standards which match the national averages.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Good
Pupils' behaviour	Good

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Statements explaining why pupils (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.

Achievement is satisfactory across all age ranges with boys and girls making similar rates of progress. Basic skills and processes are taught effectively and this contributes to pupils' making at least satisfactory and often good progress.

Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well and for these pupils they are well supported by experienced teachers and skilled technicians. A minority of pupils in each year group make limited progress because they have poor attitudes and on occasions can demonstrate challenging behaviour which, in the main, teachers handle well.

Pupils with SEN make good progress because the tasks set match their needs. However, higher attaining pupils are not always set tasks which allow them to make good progress. Progress is restricted in Year 7 to 9 because pupils have limited opportunities to develop their practical skills, especially in food studies where the rooms are too small for the numbers in the teaching groups.

Learning is good because teaching is good.

In most lessons the relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. In the best lessons the pace of learning is very good. For example, in a Year 8 resistant materials class the teacher set specific times for tasks to be completed.

Occasionally the pace of learning is slow when pupils dictate the pace and there is no real sense of urgency to complete tasks.

When the opportunity is provided pupils work well together in groups. This was especially evident in a practical Year 10 food lesson.

Most pupils have developed very good skills in being able to work without constant supervision.

In many lessons a clear and concise introduction to the lesson from the teacher resulted in pupils' responding to the task set and they remained on task and concentrated until the task was completed.

There are limited and missed opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support learning because of the difficulty for pupils accessing computers.

Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory, although many pupils were unable to explain what they needed to do to improve their work.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Good	Good
Quality of Learning	Good	Good
Quality of the curriculum	Satisfactory	Good

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Satisfactory
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Satisfactory

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Satisfactory
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Satisfactory
Adequacy of resources	Satisfactory
Adequacy of accommodation	Unsatisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory

The department has satisfactory leadership. It has suffered since the last inspection with changes in personnel, which resulted in a lack of consistent leadership. The new head of department has a clear plan for improving standards. He has conducted an effective audit of the work of the department. He has correctly identified the areas needed for improvement and is working with the department to tackle these issues. There are some issues such as ICT and accommodation, which were issues at the time of the last inspection and have not been tackled effectively, which can only be resolved at a whole school level. The bid for specialist school status, if successful, will help to tackle these issues. The current deployment of the effective learning support assistant is confined to the food technology area and there are other pupils in the design and technology department who would benefit from her support. The current review of schemes of work and the development of the department handbook should result in a consistent approach by all members of the department to lesson planning and for identifying further tasks to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

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

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and good teaching • Promotion of skills including literacy • The use of ICT • Enquiry work at all levels • Provision for SEN pupils <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop assessment procedure in Years 7 to 9 • Widen fieldwork opportunities • Analyse statistical data more closely to pinpoint areas for performance improvement

STANDARDS

	Year 9	Year 11
Test/Examinations	Average	Above average
Seen during inspection	Average	Average

At the end of Year 9 standards of work are confirmed by the department's continual assessment throughout years 7 to 9, which suggests that 60% of pupils are at Level 5 or above.

At GCSE A*-C grades are, overall, above average. In 2002, the proportion of girls gaining A*-C grades was just below the national average, while boys' slightly exceed the average. Although slightly lower than the previous year the results continue a long period of success at the higher levels of GCSE grades. Despite these very good results overall A*-G grades are below the national average, though again boys outscore girls and achieve above the national average. At the very highest grades girls outscore boys and the bulk of boys' grades are at C. This fact and the large percentage of girls gaining passes at E or lower reduces the overall points score and results in pupils taking geography doing less well than in a few other subjects, despite the very good performance of boys.

Lower attaining pupils entered for the Certificate of Achievement gained a 100% success rate at the highest grade in 2002, again continuing a long period of success.

The results raise questions for the future and the department needs to carefully analyse data in order to identify areas for further improvement.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Very Good
Pupils' behaviour	Very Good

ACHIEVEMENT

	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
How well pupils achieve	Good	Very Good

Given the well below average attainment on entry and their initial lack of skills, pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and those who opt for geography achieve very well in Years 10 and 11. This is the result of a very high standard of teaching from a knowledgeable and expert team. Objectives are always clear, planning is meticulous and delivery is pacy, interesting and laced with good humour. Pupils concentrate well and stay on task as a result of challenging work and the high expectation of teachers.

Pupils of all ability levels are encouraged to think for themselves and produce high quality work, seen in a Year 7 lesson in which pupils with SEN, with excellent support from the teacher and a support assistant and very well produced materials, were able to identify positive and negative factors in settlement and put population figures in rank order. In 9 out of 10 lessons seen, teaching was good or better with many lessons very good or excellent.

Much of the success of the department is as a result of the enthusiastic and positive attitudes generated in lessons, seen to advantage in a Year 7 lesson on the Tropical Rainforest in which pupils were eager to display their knowledge. These characteristics were also seen in a Year 9 lesson for those with SEN in which pupils worked with imagination and application to produce computer-aided presentations on the oil industry. Behaviour is good and relationships very productive. The teaching is highly successful in motivating pupils at all levels and giving them the confidence to perform at a constantly high level.

The department is very successful in improving a wide range of skills, particularly literacy skills. There is a strong emphasis on the use of a technical vocabulary and written skills are improved steadily from entry to Year 11. Extended and imaginative writing is encouraged, in a variety of styles that result in brochures, letters, essays and high quality notes. The department's policy of introducing and improving investigative skills from the earliest stage results in some very well written, illustrated and presented project work such as that seen in Year 7 or a 'Journey down the Ganges'. In Years 10 and 11 literacy and enquiry skills meet in well presented course work on the local area, in which pupils are able to hypothesise, gather and analyse data and arrive at correct conclusions. Much of the work is improved by the good use of ICT and pupils are able to use spreadsheets and databases and research their writing skills through the use of writing frames and drafting procedures.

The department is very inclusive. All pupils are included in the work and given the opportunity to display their talents. Extension work is set for higher attainers, but work for gifted and talented pupils might be more clearly identified.

Regular testing and careful assessment, along with good questioning in lessons, helps to reinforce information

and accounts for the high retention levels shown by pupils.

EDUCATION PROVISION

	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 - 11
Quality of Teaching	Very good	Good
Quality of Learning	Very good	Good
Quality of curriculum	Good	Good
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural provision	Good	
Quality of assessment and progress monitoring	Good	

Leadership & management	Very Good
Effectiveness of action to improve the subjects quality	Good
Adequacy of resources	Good
Adequacy of accommodation	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

The last inspection report noted many good points about the geography department. These included attainment, progress, teaching, the hard work of the staff and the enjoyment exhibited by the pupils. The department has maintained the high standards previously reported and developed other areas well, such as the quality of enquiry work and the good use of ICT by pupils.

A very expert and dynamic team is led with great energy. Teachers work together well and share a lot of skills. They have the capacity and desire to ensure continued improvement and success. Good use of these talents should be made to widen the scope of fieldwork, which at present is dependent on the local area. The department is prepared to make changes they think will benefit pupils and as part of this they are improving assessment in Years 7 to 9. This should continue, enabling pupils to improve further their knowledge of how well they are progressing. This is a strong department, working well for all pupils and training geographers, not just teaching geography.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The commitment of teachers to raising standards
- High standards of teaching
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities

Areas for improvement

- In the regular marking of books teachers need to give pupils a clearer guidance on how to improve
- The department needs to revise schemes of work, and record its procedures comprehensively

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	Well below average	Well below average
Seen during the inspection	Below average	Below average

Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen.

Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate that pupils have not performed as well as they could have done.

GCSE results have declined in recent years. They were below or well below national averages in the last two years, improving in 2001 and dropping again in 2002.

In the 2002 GCSE examination, pupils who took history gained worse results than they did in their other subjects; no pupils gained A* or A grades

Standards observed in lessons indicate a rapid rise in the last nine months, particularly in Years 7 to 9, in response to the improvements made in teaching and leadership and management.

As a generalisation, pupils are much stronger on factual narrative than on other key elements. That said, pupils often comment on cause and effect, but seldom on different interpretations, or on reliability. They seldom deal with the questions, "how do we know?", and "can we trust the source?".

Presentation, particularly in project work, reaches a high standard, and shows that pupils take a pride in their work.

Literacy skills are at national expectation for the abler pupils, slightly below for the rest.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Very good
Pupils' behaviour	Good

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieved in previous years	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
How well pupils are achieving now	Good	Good

Statements explaining why pupils (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.

Overall, pupils are now learning and achieving well because they are motivated by the quality of the teaching that they receive. Much teaching is very good, with very little merely satisfactory, and no unsatisfactory lessons seen. Teachers use a range of approaches, and make lessons exciting. As a result pupils show very good attitudes, and learning is at least good and often very good.

Pupils know what they should be doing, and are given much encouragement in the form of praise and merit awards. In Years 10 and 11 they are offered extra help after school in revision classes. Teachers are always available for support. Visits to France also arouse enthusiasm.

A weakness is that teachers put too much reliance on pupils' assessing work for themselves. Errors of fact or weaknesses in organising a written answer are not always pointed out and corrected. The marking of some books is superficial, so pupils are given too little guidance about what they should do to improve.

Pupils are given many opportunities for researching topics which enhances their independent learning skills.

Boys tend to achieve less well than girls in all years. Girls give more attention to the research projects, and often present their work better. Boys play an equal part in discussion but are less successful in writing.

It is an inclusive department in which the least able are taught in smaller groups. Pupils with SEN make good progress. Reading ages and general literacy improve rapidly in the first year, and further development continues steadily. Many of those with SEN are articulate and make perceptive comments.

There is a well thought out programme for gifted and talented pupils; the most able are challenged, and respond eagerly. They enter for and win history competitions run by universities and there is a regular club after school for Year 10.

There is no difference in attainment or rates of progress among those from ethnic minorities

Extra-curricular activities are unusually strong. Pupils use the local community as they do in their visits to Ceramica, and have in the past collaborated with art and local business to celebrate the life of a local war-hero. The department organises visits each year to the first world war battlefields in France.

Pupils are encouraged to work together, and do so productively. They argue moral issues, such as the treatment of children in eighteenth century mills, or the way the Nazi regime discriminated against Jews. Such study gives rise to discussions about contemporary issues, such as the treatment of refugees.

Multi-cultural awareness is fostered in the study of slavery, and some references to Islam at the time of the crusades.

A great strength is that pupils are given targets and know what they should be aiming at. Mark books indicate where pupils are failing to reach expectation. Extra help is available and letters are sent home. Parents are kept well informed, and given guidance about how they can help their children's researches.

Standards are enhanced by the very good quality of resources and the good use of ICT to promote learning.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Good	Good
Quality of Learning	Good	Good
Quality of the curriculum	Good	Good

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Very good
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Satisfactory

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Very good, particularly in leadership.
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Good
Adequacy of resources	Very good
Adequacy of accommodation	Good.
Improvement since the last inspection	Good.

The department has changed personnel in the last year. A new head of department, in company with a newly appointed full-time member of staff, has dramatically improved the quality of teaching and the popularity of the subject. The effect is already being felt in higher standards, particularly in years 7 to 9. There is an excitement and enjoyment about the study of history, expressed in lessons and in the lively display of pupils' work in all rooms. Pupils clearly have confidence that if they study history they will find it fun, with the expectation of results approaching the national average. Some who could not take history for GCSE in the options choose to study after school and take the exam in one year rather than two. The priority in reviving a run-down department has been to make the teaching lively and to inspire pupils with a love of history. In this the head of department has been very successful.

Management of the department is also good, but many tasks still remain to be completed. Data on test and exam results still need to be fully used to assess progress, both for individual pupils and for the whole department. Schemes of work need to be revised. Marking needs to be checked so that, for instance, self-assessment does in reality lead to pupils' understanding their strengths and weaknesses, and how to improve. That said, the department runs efficiently, with teachers making very good use of their time, support staff and resources.

All issues identified in last report have been carefully analysed, and addressed. Teaching is now nearly all good or very good, with no unsatisfactory lessons. Attitudes are now very good. Teaching methods are now imaginative. Pupils have a much better grasp of sources and how they might be interpreted. An undoubted improvement has been the introduction of after school classes, and contacts with the community. There remains the need to improve assessment procedures, and compile a comprehensive handbook.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the work in hand, management and motivation of pupils, pace of lessons, and use of resources are all very good.
- Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 9 due to good teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and their attitudes to learning good; they work well together and with their teachers

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' performance in GCSE examinations.
- Assessment of work is neither rigorous nor consistent. Consequently pupils who do not achieve well

enough are not immediately identified.

- Monitoring and analysis of pupils' performance is unsatisfactory.
- Evaluation and development of teaching in the subject is unsatisfactory; best practice is not adequately shared.

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	n/a	Well below average
Seen during the inspection	Average	Average

Pupils start in Year 7 with a mixed pattern of attainment in ICT due to different experiences at primary school and in the home; their levels of attainment are not identified, as assessment is not good enough. However, very good projects and most often good or better teaching in lessons do raise the standards of pupils' work between Years 7 and 9. Progress in communicating via e-mail, using spreadsheets to solve problems and help display information, and using databases to store and retrieve information is particularly good. Other national requirements, such as using ICT to gather and analyse data from, for example, science experiments, and using ICT to control devices are only touched on. These areas need to be developed better in science and in design and technology.

GCSE results in 2002 were well below average and analysis during the inspection revealed very few pupils achieved as well as might be expected. Pupils who might be considered the most able, when in Year 9, did relatively worse than their less able peers. The department was aware several years ago that the examination syllabus taken in 2002 was causing difficulties to both pupils and teachers. A good decision to change syllabus was made and the current Year 11 are producing work that is, overall, average in relation to national standards.

Girls did a little better than boys in the 2002 GCSE examinations but not as well as they should.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Good
Pupils' behaviour	Very good

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Good	Satisfactory

In lessons there is little difference in boys' and girls' practical work; boys are sometimes faster. There is no significant difference in the progress of pupils of different ethnicity.

Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress overall; good help is provided by teachers when time permits, but work is not planned for them appropriately. Some pupils who struggle need modified tasks so that they can take smaller steps and get to grips with problems more easily. Similarly, the most able pupils need different challenges sometimes, rather than refining their work so that it is better presented or contains more information.

Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall, due to inadequate assessment procedures, but teaching in lessons is often much better and has led, for example, to detailed and well presented projects about the data protection act and about computer networks.

Good revision techniques are also being used with pupils about to start their GCSE courses to help them do better in examinations in 2003.

Most pupils pay attention in lessons, complete work in class and help their peers. Some do not complete homework or coursework.

Almost all pupils act in an exemplary way, and respect equipment and people; this enhances their learning.

ICT lessons in Year 10 and 11 are also provided for some pupils who take vocational courses at college. In a Year 10 lesson observed, the teacher set a great pace and enthused pupils. Their work on creating an extensive party plan using many software packages was of an above average standard and worthy of accreditation of some kind.

Older pupils can also pursue GNVQ ICT at a local college. This work is monitored by the school but is not part of the ICT department. This is unsatisfactory as there should be a clear link between their attainment and experiences at the end of Year 9 and their work at the college.

An ICT lesson at the college was visited. Pupils were in the process of completing work and most had made good progress in producing extensive portfolios. All questioned said they enjoyed their activities.

Other pupils at the college are following a car maintenance course. When visited these were using the Internet to help them produce a workshop 'hazard' booklet. They were doing well and enjoying the work.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of the curriculum (across the school)	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Satisfactory
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Unsatisfactory

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Unsatisfactory
Adequacy of resources	Satisfactory
Adequacy of accommodation	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory

128. Although many of the features of ICT provision are good they are disparate – no one has a handle on them all. As pupils' capabilities in the use of ICT feed from these separate elements, this situation is not satisfactory. Someone should be strategically leading the whole school development of ICT, whilst management of significant aspects could be devolved to others.
129. Sorting out assessment procedures and practice is a management issue. Leadership also needs to ensure teaching and learning are more effectively monitored so that best practice is identified and shared and areas such as marking of work and providing for more able pupils improved.

ICT Provision Across the Curriculum

130. At the time of the last report, opportunities for pupils to use ICT outside of ICT lessons were thin. The position now is much better though National Curriculum requirements are not met for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. The use of ICT in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory overall though more remains to be done. In geography pupils create extensive work books that are published on a computer and contain pictures, graphics and research items culled from the Internet. Individual pupils in art and design use software creatively to help present their work. The physical education department use digital video very well to analyse physical performance. Reasons for the improvement include: teachers who are better motivated to use ICT; better provision of computers – though more are needed; an improving school network; the very good use of e-learning credits (government funds to seed developments) to help departments pay for their ideas, and an increasing use of facilities at the City Learning Centre, adjacent to the school.
131. The network manager is responsible for developing ICT hardware provision and for improving the use of ICT within subject areas. He has begun both processes well and good plans for further development have been made. Each subject has a teacher responsible for ICT and meetings are held for good practice to be shared and new developments to be discussed. The modern foreign languages department currently uses little ICT but meetings have led to software being purchased; the e-learning credits helped pay for it. Full implementation of the network improvement plan will require a lot of money and governors will have to decide how and when available finances can be allocated. There are fewer computers for each pupil than in similar schools, though access to the City Learning Centre computers does cancel this shortfall to a large extent; more computers are still needed within some curriculum areas and more space for computers in general is needed in the school. The network managers' role is strategic rather than keeping the network functioning; skilled technicians do that well and this is cost effective.

132. The relatively new City Learning Centre is attached to the school. This is full of modern computers. They are accessible by other schools, the public and businesses. This school has access to machines during the day and after school and pupils are sent with permission slips to do research or complete work. The numbers of pupils using this facility has increased dramatically in the last few months. The centre manager does an excellent job monitoring the work that is going on and the use each subject is making of the facility. Pupils also heavily use the computers to help with homework after school. They are monitored by the school learning mentors, paid for from Excellence in Cities monies.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Strong leadership is regenerating the department.
- Good teaching is raising standards and promoting good learning.

Areas for improvement

- The school curriculum excludes some pupils from modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9.
- GCSE results are lower than they should be.
- There is no formal programme of identifying and extending the sharing of the good practice that takes place in the department.

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	Well below average	Well below average
Seen during the inspection	Below average	Below average

Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen

Teachers' assessments of pupils' performance at the age of 14 shows that standards were well below the national average in 2002. Girls performed better than boys.

Higher-attaining pupils have a good knowledge of grammar in Years 7 to 9. Written work is of a good standard. In situations closely controlled by their teachers, pupils speak rapidly and without hesitation.

Over the last three years, GCSE results in French, German and Urdu have been well below the national average. French results in 2002 were above average but only eight pupils took the subject.

The difference between the performances of boys and girls reflects the national difference; girls perform better than boys.

Very few pupils in French, German or Urdu gain A* or A GCSE grades.

Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of both written and spoken language in Years 10 and 11. They also have a good knowledge of grammar in structured writing and speaking activities that are used for examination preparation. Pupils' speaking skills are under-developed when they are required to speak spontaneously.

The modern languages department has in recent years been beset by staffing difficulties, which are still not completely resolved. However, the recently appointed head of department has succeeded in giving a new direction to the subject in the school. There has been a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, and standards seen during the inspection provide evidence that improvements are taking place.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Good
Pupils' behaviour	Good

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

Statements explaining why pupils (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.

The achievement of pupils across Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory because in Years 8 and 9 almost a third of the pupils do not study a foreign language. However, the overall progress of pupils who do study a foreign language is satisfactory. As a result of recent changes and of good teaching, the achievement of pupils in Years 7 and 8 is more noticeable than in Year 9. Oral skills remain under-developed, however, because pupils do not use the foreign language in everyday exchanges with one another or with their teachers.

The overall achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. The number of pupils who study a modern language is low. The impact of improved teaching on achievement continues to make its mark. Teaching and learning throughout the school are now good, and in some classes, very good. Lessons have a clear focus and consequently pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers' expectations of pupils are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection, and pupils respond well to their teachers' challenges. A lively pace sustains the interest of pupils.

Teachers contribute effectively to their pupils' literacy development by encouraging them to think about language patterns.

Very good management of the pupils ensures that they behave well and work earnestly.

Well-planned assessment procedures enable pupils to be aware of their individual strengths and weaknesses. Teachers provide a wide variety of activities that are well matched to the needs of all pupils' needs, enabling them to develop their language learning effectively.

Teachers do not provide opportunities for pupils to use the foreign language in routine classroom exchanges. Consequently, the ability of pupils to speak spontaneously is unsatisfactory. Insufficient use is made of ICT to help pupils with their language learning.

A small number of pupils study Urdu as their first foreign language in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned to enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills, especially in writing, which pupils find the most difficult skill to master. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, and relationships are good.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Good	Good
Quality of Learning	Good	Good
Quality of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Good
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Good

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Of the subject - Good Of overall provision - Unsatisfactory
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Satisfactory
Adequacy of resources	Satisfactory
Adequacy of accommodation	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

133. The overall management of the provision of modern languages in the school is unsatisfactory. The school curriculum in Years 8 and 9 excludes from modern languages almost 30 per cent of pupils. Some of those

pupils are also excluded in Year 7 and, therefore, have no experience of modern language learning throughout their five years in the school.

134. The school has recruited well. Leadership within the department is good. The head of department has a strong commitment to raising standards. He has revised the schemes of work, introduced new resources and led by example in improving the quality of teaching and the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Ideas are shared with colleagues, who value his support, and this also is helping to raise standards. The monitoring of teaching, which would go further in disseminating good practice, is under-developed. The capacity for continuing the recent improvements is good, particularly if the current staffing difficulties can be resolved.

MUSIC

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

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships in the classroom • Management of pupils • The quality of the accommodation <p>Areas for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsatisfactory teaching overall • Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are unaware of their standards in music because there are no assessment procedures in place. • Curriculum planning is underdeveloped and lesson content lacks variable complexity to meet the demands of all abilities. • Timetable arrangement for music are fragmented and have an adverse effect on learning.

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Test/Examinations	No evidence	Very low
Seen during the inspection	Well below average	Well below average

<p><i>Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen</i></p> <p>In Years 7 to 9 pupils have limited skills in performing, composing and listening; for example, in a Year 7 class, most pupils were unable to sing in tune</p> <p>A small minority of pupils achieve higher standards in playing and performing. These pupils are supported in their learning by instrumental tuition.</p> <p>GCSE standards over the last few years have been well below national averages; in 2002, only seven per cent of pupils gained A*-C grades</p> <p>Very few pupils gain A* or A grades in the GCSE examinations.</p> <p>Present standards in the Year 11 examination group are higher than in previous years.</p> <p>Pupils have good attitudes and those spoken to say they enjoy music lessons.</p>
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Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Good
Pupils' behaviour	Good

ACHIEVEMENT/PROGRESS

	Year 7 –Year 9	Year 10-Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

<p><i>Statement about any differences in progress between pupils (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL)</i></p> <p>Achievement is unsatisfactory across all age-ranges; some boys in Years 7 to 9 make less progress than girls. Programmes of study are being rewritten but are not yet complete or being used in the classroom. Consequently there is unsatisfactory continuity and progression from year to year. Pupils in Year 9 are only just beginning to understand the basics of reading notation and simple musical signs; for example, the repeat.</p> <p>Teaching is unsatisfactory overall because pupils are not expected to produce work of a high enough standard</p>
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and because of the lack of variation and insufficient pace in lessons. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, the pupils sang enthusiastically but with little accuracy or subtlety; the teacher did not try to improve the quality of singing.

Learning is unsatisfactory because teaching is unsatisfactory and because of the lack of detailed planning to match the needs of all pupils including those with SEN and the more able.

Pupils make better progress when the teaching is at least satisfactory as in two Year 7 lessons and in one Year 9 lesson where the teaching was very good.

Learning targets are not set for pupils of all levels of ability. This lack of inclusive strategies has a negative effect on standards and results in the lack of participation and industrious response from some pupils.

Attention is given to new words but these are not always subject related. There is a missed opportunity to use an overhead projector to eliminate the noise created when pupils rattle laminated sheets.

Composition skills are underdeveloped in Years 7 to 9. In lessons seen there were limited opportunities for pupils to use their creative skills in composition.

Pupils in all years do not have equal access to up to date computers and software. Most of the equipment is out of date. There are limited opportunities for pupils to evaluate their performances and this is another reason for low levels of composition skills.

The department has made very little progress in developing teaching methods to match the learning needs of pupils. All teachers however have good management skills and relationships are good. Lessons do not always allow pupils enough opportunities to consider the objectives being learnt; the majority respond positively to the tasks set for them, even when there is a lack of challenge as seen in one Year 9 lesson.

In Years 10 and 11, compositions and performances showed a satisfactory range of styles and use of instruments including voice. Not all GCSE pupils however, receive instrumental tuition and these pupils find practical work difficult.

Assessment criteria alongside programmes of study are still being developed. This was identified as an area for development in the previous report. Further planning is needed that ensures gifted and talented pupils are fully challenged. Similarly, more variety in teaching tasks to match the range of ability levels in all years would improve standards further. On-going assessment takes place but pupils do not keep a record of this and targets are not set for pupils' improvement.

There are sufficient keyboards in the department however; inconsistent access to ICT facilities restricts the use of this good practice.

There are a limited number of extra curricular activities mainly organised by pupils or peripatetic staff. There are no planned opportunities for singers to rehearse and perform as a group.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Year 7-Year 9	Year 10-Year 11
Quality of Teaching	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Quality of Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Quality of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Satisfactory
Quality of assessment and progress monitoring	Unsatisfactory

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory
Effectiveness of action to improve the subject's quality	Unsatisfactory
Adequacy of resources	Satisfactory
Adequacy of accommodation	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

135. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection standards have declined and little progress has been made towards addressing the issues raised in the previous report. The department has yet to fully develop and implement a range of policies relating to curriculum and teaching and learning that would raise standards. The accommodation has improved since the

previous inspection. Timetable arrangements make it difficult for pupils to practise their skills weekly and there are insufficient planned activities outside lessons.

136. There has been a lack of commitment to continual improvement since the previous report. Further support and monitoring by senior managers and governors will help the next stages in direction. They need to be more involved in identifying appropriate priorities and targets and rigorously monitoring their implementation. Further identification and support of the innovative teaching and learning practices within the department can only benefit the school as a whole.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching • Teaching of literacy which particularly helps to improve the learning of lower ability pupils including those with SEN • Leadership and the collective will of the department to improve further • Very good use of community sports resources which helps to raise standards <p>Areas for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of teaching and learning to further evaluate the impact of delivery on raising standards • Further use of assessment records to ensure that support, intervention and challenge in lessons are appropriate for all pupils
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STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Test/Examinations	Below Average	Well below average
Seen during the inspection	Average	Below average in examination groups Average (Core)

<p>Standards in the 11-14 and 14-16 core programmes are at the national average.</p> <p>The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C GCSE grades in 2002 was well below the national average. The proportion that achieved a pass grade in 2002 was above the national average. More pupils gained A* or A grades than in most other subjects but these were mainly girls who generally achieve higher standards than boys in GCSE work. In 2002, boys' results were relatively lower than their results in other subjects.</p> <p>In 2001 the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C GCSE grades was in line with the national averages reflecting the ability levels of these pupils and provision for their learning.</p> <p>Present standards in Year 11 examination groups are higher than 2002. Moderated practicals and scrutinised work show standards closer to the national average.</p> <p>The overall standard of work in Year 10 GCSE groups is in line with national expectations. Predictions and practices show a potential to exceed these standards.</p> <p>Standards in girls' striking and fielding skills are sound and year teams are acquiring a strong reputation for success in local competitions.</p> <p>Boys have sound techniques in bowling and batting in cricket. Their fielding skills are of a good quality.</p> <p>Standards are rising; the majority of pupils enter school with low standards and make good progress.</p> <p>The improvement in the overall standards of girls' performances have been a recent success in the department.</p> <p>Considerable extension and refinement of skills and techniques are achieved through high participation levels in extra-curricular clubs and inter-school and regional competitions.</p>
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Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Good
Pupils' behaviour	Good

ACHIEVEMENT/PROGRESS

	Year 7 –Year 9	Year 10-Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Good	Good

Achievement of both girls and boys is good across all age-ranges from a poor entry level. Programmes of study show very good improvement since the last inspection. They mirror National Curriculum expectations so learning is improved by better continuity and progression from year to year. The rates of progress slow in Years 8 and 9 because curriculum time is restricted. These pupils receive considerably less than the national recommendation for the subject. Many Year 11 pupils make very good progress in their understanding of leadership in sport by taking the 'Junior Sports Leader Award.' Because of this, and if they do not take GCSE physical education, they have less opportunities to improve and refine their personal performances at the rate of previous years. Learning in athletics, rounders, swimming is good, often very good, because planning is identifying relevant learning objectives. Teacher expectations are good. In athletics and swimming, for example, targets are used to improve performance. In cricket and rounder games tasks are well developed into competitive contexts. Teachers are aware of all levels of ability in their classes. There are examples of gifted and talented, pupils with English as an additional language and those with SEN all making good progress. These inclusive strategies ensure high participation rates and industrious responses by pupils. Assessment procedures are very good but more use could be made of assessment records to help provide challenging learning opportunities for pupils of all abilities. The implementation of literacy skills in learning is very good. Key vocabulary is contextually used and helps in the next stages of learning. In a Year 10 theory lesson pupils with learning difficulties made excellent progress because questioning directed them to the key differences between private and public leisure provision. They made notes, took part in debates and answered exam-type questions to further their understanding. The resources that teachers have developed to support GCSE learning in lessons and additional study and revision strategies are of a good standard. Data analysis and supportive targeting are beginning to have an impact and improve standards of GCSE work. Responses to teaching are good overall. Self-evaluations by pupils confirm their positive attitudes to improving further. Some boys' behaviour does not match these high standards and they do not apply themselves to the thinking processes expected. Similarly some boys underachieve in theoretical aspects of GCSE. Teacher expectations that require pupils to plan and evaluate their performances are beginning to deepen pupils' thinking of topics. They require further skills, assessment criteria and appreciation of these processes to fully capitalise on the potential for learning; ICT is beginning to be used well to help this process. School-based accommodation is unsatisfactory and restricts the department in its attempts to widen learning experiences. They make very good use of community resources to improve curriculum and extra-curricular provision.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Year 7-Year 9	Year 10-Year 11
Quality of Teaching	Good	Good
Quality of Learning	Good	Good
Quality of the curriculum	Good	Good

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Very good
Quality of assessment and progress monitoring	Good

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Good
Effectiveness of action to improve the subject's quality	Good
Adequacy of resources	Good
Adequacy of accommodation	Unsatisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

137. Leadership within the department is very good. The head of department has been very successful in developing and implementing a range of policies relating to curriculum and teaching and learning. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in this respect and good capacity for future success. Improvement planning has evolved in recent years so that the most recent plans accurately identify the next stage issues for development. Further monitoring and evaluation of teaching are now needed, with senior management support, to review how standards can be necessarily improved further. There is also a need for more stringent challenge and appropriate support from senior line managers to ensure targets that relate to standards are met.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection • Pupils make good progress from a very low level of attainment on entry to school • Good management of the department <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pupils' literacy skills and examination techniques • Make greater use of ICT to enhance learning • Raise the profile of the subject in the minds of pupils in Years 9 and 11
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STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 9	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	Below average	Below average
Seen during the inspection	Below average	Below average

Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen

Pupils enter the school with attainment levels generally well below average, and many have significant weaknesses in their knowledge of religious education.

By the end of Year 9, as a result of good teaching, pupils have developed their knowledge, understanding and skills well. For example, they know the central beliefs and practices of Christianity and other major world religions and have gained an understanding of how religious belief influences world events.

Pupils' literacy skills are below average and this is reflected in the below average standards shown in the subject in all years.

At age 16, the picture is complex. Results in the full course GCSE in 2002, which is taken as a chosen subject by a relatively small cadre of pupils, were below national averages; in 2001, the results were above average. Work seen in a class of pupils currently studying the subject is in line with national averages. Pupils' weak retention skills and examination techniques lead to attainment in examinations falling below those attained in class and in homework.

Results in the GCSE short course, which is obligatory for all other pupils, are generally below average. However, standards seen in lessons vary markedly between Years 10 and 11. In Year 10, standards are below average but are rapidly improving. In Year 11, with the significant exception of the small numbers of higher ability pupils, standards reflect pupils' poor learning attitudes and commitment to the subject and are well below average.

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Satisfactory overall (but unsatisfactory in Year 11)
Pupils' behaviour	Good overall (but only satisfactory in Year 11)

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 9	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Good	Satisfactory

<p><i>Statements explaining why pupils (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.</i></p> <p>In Years 7 to 9, achievement is good. Girls achieve better than boys, although boys are often more willing to participate in oral work.</p> <p>Pupils with SEN make good progress, because their teachers know them well and use the support staff effectively.</p> <p>Good schemes of work underpin the curriculum.</p> <p>Teaching is good overall in Years 7 to 9. In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of activities and teaching resources that stimulate pupils and lead to good learning. There is good inclusion of the full range of pupils including those from ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>Pupils' overall achievement is hampered by their poor literacy skills.</p> <p>ICT is not employed sufficiently to enhance learning and motivation (particularly of boys).</p> <p>Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is only satisfactory. There is a marked difference between the achievement of pupils on the full GCSE course, (who are almost entirely girls) and the much larger cohort of pupils, who are studying the obligatory short course. For some of these pupils, particularly in Year 11, achievement is unsatisfactory. This is mainly the result of their unsatisfactory attitudes, which prevent their engaging successfully in lessons or taking revision and/or homework seriously. Other factors are their poor literacy levels, weak retention and examination techniques.</p> <p>Year 10 pupils achieve satisfactorily though lack of wider reading also leads to lack of confidence when dealing with the complexities of analysis.</p> <p>Teaching is good overall in Years 10 and 11. There were some lessons which were less effective, because of a lack of pace and the appropriate strategies to engage all pupils. However, the vast majority of lessons were good, and some were very good. The department benefits from having all lessons taught by religious education specialists. The best lessons are characterised by teachers using stimulating methods which transmit their very good level of knowledge of the subject to the pupils but which also encourage high degrees of independent learning.</p> <p>In Year 11, the good teaching did not always lead to good learning since the unsatisfactory attitudes of the pupils militated against the best efforts of the teachers.</p>

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Quality of Teaching	Good	Good
Quality of Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of the curriculum	Good	Good

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	Good
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	Good

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management	Good
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	Good
Adequacy of resources	Good
Adequacy of accommodation	Good

Improvement since the last inspection	Good
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138. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department is a good role model for commitment to improving standards. Under her effective leadership, the department has produced informed and informative documentation, which underpins all aspects of the work of the department. The department has addressed the issues of the last report well and has been particularly successful in developing a curriculum that meets both the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus and the needs of all pupils.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The positive attitudes of pupils towards their vocational courses, many of whom had become disenchanted with traditional school based courses. Many pupils on vocational courses have better attendance records than for their school-based courses. The high quality of support provided for pupils on college courses. The commitment of the college to provide appropriate courses, which meet the needs of the pupils.
Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that when choosing their option courses all pupils are aware that vocational courses are not just for disenchanted pupils.

STANDARDS (AT THE END OF KEY STAGES)

	Year 11
Tests and Examinations	Above average
Seen during the inspection	Above average

<p><i>Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen</i></p> <p>In 2002 ten out of the 13 pupils passed the GNVQ Engineering course at Intermediate level with five pupils achieving merits.</p> <p>In the 2002 Foundation level Engineering course three out of eight pupils passed while 14 out of 16 pupils passed the GNVQ health and social care Foundation course.</p> <p>The one pupil who took ICT at Foundation level in 2002 gained a pass grade.</p>

Pupils' attitudes to the subject	Very good
Pupils' behaviour	Very good

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

	Year 11
How well pupils achieve	Very good

<p><i>Statements explaining why pupils (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.</i></p> <p>Over one hundred pupils in Years 10 and 11 are involved in vocational courses either within the school or at local colleges. The success of vocational courses is that considerable effort is made to ensure that the selection of courses matches pupils' needs. The range of courses is being expanded from those primarily aimed at lower attaining pupils to include courses which meet the needs of a wider range of abilities. The commitment of the school to vocational courses effectively reflects the aims of the school to develop 'lifelong learning'. There are many examples of pupils who would have been unlikely to pursue further education courses once they left school but do so because of their achievements on the college courses. This in part is a significant explanation of why a higher proportion of pupils from the school go on into further education than is the pattern in other local</p>

schools.

A major strength in the success of pupils' very good achievement on college courses is the commitment by the school and college staff to support these pupils. There is a very strong partnership between lecturers, teachers and mentors to provide very effective pastoral support. This is particularly evident for those pupils following vocational courses who were often disenchanted with 'schooling' and some of whom were capable of offering some challenging behaviour to their teachers. These same pupils are now confident and have developed good levels of self-esteem and are proud of their achievements on these courses. The College courses lead to National vocational qualifications (NVQs) and pupils who achieve NVQ level 1 while still at school are able to progress to the higher level at 16. This gives school pupils an advantage over others following a career in the vocational areas.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

	Years 10 and 11
Quality of the curriculum	Very good

DRAMA

139. The subject has been offered only over the last 3 years since the appointment of the present head of department (and only specialist teacher) so is still at a developmental stage. Provision is currently satisfactory overall.
140. GCSE result in 2002 were well below the national average; no pupils gained A* or A grades. Standards observed during the inspection confirmed this picture of below average attainment compared to the national picture. The achievement of pupils, and their attitude to their work in drama, relates directly to the quality of teaching they receive. The specialist teacher has a secure grasp of the disciplines of educational drama. Her teaching is very good. Pupils in her classes make clear progress, boys and girls equally, together with pupils with SEN. In a Year 11 class, for example, the majority of pupils were able to justify their views on how Viola's character is developed in Twelfth Night. In this lesson, the contrast in attitudes of girls and boys was marked despite very good teaching. A small number of boys, three in particular, failed to produce homework and did not fully engage with the lesson; in contrast, the great majority of girls concentrated well and made good progress.
141. Because there are no pupils yet in Years 10 and 11 who have had a full programme of drama work in the lower school, standards are compromised by that lack of experience. Certainly there is not a full spread of ability in GCSE groups and this is reflected in results.
142. Timetabling is something of a problem with rotational arrangements from Years 7-9 interrupting the continuity of pupils' experience. Staffing is also problematic. Non-specialist teachers are not in a position properly to develop pupils' understanding of dramatic and theatrical skills and conventions. Teaching and learning, other than in lessons conducted by the head of department, is in the range from satisfactory to unsatisfactory. Accommodation too militates against high achievement where classes are taught in ordinary classrooms rather than in the drama studio.
143. Leadership in drama is good. There is a well-planned curriculum in place, with very good methods of assessment linked to National Curriculum levels. Self-assessment is encouraged; pupils evaluate and record their progress in booklets. Writing frames and other strategies shape and extend pupils' writing. Attention to literacy is a strength of work in drama. There are very good links with primary schools and with visiting artists so that projects, such as the recent examination of the decline of the mining industry in the area, provide the basis for drama work directed towards and shared with real audiences. The drama club, and a growing tradition of school productions, gives further opportunities to develop dramatic interests and skills.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

144. The provision for expressive arts is unsatisfactory. The course has only recently been introduced. Behind its development lie two factors, one of which is laudable, the other pragmatic. The school is committed to improving its provision for creative and performing arts as the development of the drama course illustrates; the expressive arts is seen as a means of taking this a step further. At the same time, the school has

been faced with a problem recruiting specialist languages staff and the expressive arts course has filled the timetable gaps that this has caused.

145. Expressive arts is mostly taught by non-specialist teachers who are not in a position properly to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result, some of the teaching is unsatisfactory; for example, in a Year 9 lesson based on a theme from the Arabian Nights, the work was not challenging enough and therefore the pace of the lesson was slow. Behaviour declined as pupils lost interest in the activities.
146. Timetabling is something of a problem because classes move from one activity to another, which interrupts the continuity of their learning. Accommodation, too, militates against high achievement where classes are taught in ordinary classrooms.

MEDIA STUDIES

147. The first group of pupils to take GCSE media studies was examined in 2002. The results of the 25 pupils were below the national average as was the proportion of pupils gaining A* or A grades. The pupils did relatively worse in media studies than they did in their other subjects, the reasons for which are not clear from the limited inspection evidence.
148. In the one Year 11 lesson observed, standards were below average. The teacher worked hard to consolidate pupils' learning; for example, by using a good starter activity that drew on their knowledge and understanding of specialist vocabulary. In the main part of the lesson the teacher ensured that pupils stayed alert by asking questions to specific individuals rather than the whole group. The great majority paid attention throughout but a small minority of boys, of both white and Asian heritage, were disengaged and made little progress. Although the main activity of the lesson was continued for too long, the teacher taught an effective revision lesson giving specific guidance on how to tackle examination questions.