

INSPECTION REPORT

WAVERLEY SCHOOL

Small Heath, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103481

Headteacher: Mrs C Quinn

Lead inspector: Mr P Hill

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th September 2003

Inspection number: 258848

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 11 – 16
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 644

School address: Hob Moor Road
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Birmingham
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr J Boyack

Date of previous inspection: 17th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Waverley School is a smaller than average mixed comprehensive school catering for 644 pupils in the 11-16 age range. The school is situated in Small Heath, Birmingham. The surrounding area consists of mainly terraced housing. There is a high level of disadvantage, both economically and socially, within the area. The school attracts pupils from homes with a wide range of cultural backgrounds and circumstances. The majority of pupils' families originate from Bangladesh or Pakistan but there is also a wide range of other family origins represented in the school. Over eighty percent of pupils speak English as an additional language; 43 pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Although the full range of ability is represented, the majority of pupils enter school with levels of attainment that are significantly lower than the national average. There are notably more boys than girls, especially in Years 7 and 8; the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average; the number of pupils with special educational needs is well above average. The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative and is also very closely linked with Ninestiles Technology College through a Federation. This Federation partnership and associated strategies have been responsible for the dramatic improvement in the school over recent years. The school is increasing in popularity and is oversubscribed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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12499	Marie Durkin	Team inspector	English
17453	Clive Edney	Team inspector	Mathematics
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1759	Geoff Edwards	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
15940	Norman Godfrey	Team inspector	Art
21803	Laura Ramsey	Team inspector	Design and technology
33002	John Woodhouse	Team inspector	Geography
7465	Richard Brent	Team inspector	History, Special educational needs
31649	Richard Marsden	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
1340	David Wigley	Team inspector	Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good and effective school that has been exceptionally successful in radically improving almost all of the areas of weakness** identified in previous reports. As a result of very good leadership and management, a dramatic improvement in standards in GCSE 2003, significant improvements in teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour, it provides **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management are very good with some exceptionally good features. Key features of leadership are that the school has very successfully taken on the immense challenge to change the ethos of the whole school and has developed a very effective team with high morale and high expectations, committed to improvement and to raising standards.
- A major strength is the impact of the Federation partnership with Ninestiles Technology College, the combined strategic management provided by the headteachers of Waverley School and Ninestiles Technology College and influence on teaching and staff development of the Advanced Skills Teachers from Ninestiles Technology College.
- The quality of teaching is good and has a good impact on learning and on standards.
- The improvement in attainment and achievement are now strengths of the school, as are the impact of the introduction of discipline for learning (DFL) and the development of positive learning across the school.
- Systems for supporting pupils with special educational needs need further improvement.
- Independent learning, the next stage in the phased improvement plan, is, as the school recognises, an important area for further development.
- Attendance is below the national average.
- There are weaknesses in the curriculum: Year 7 pupils are not taught music and the school does not provide a daily act of corporate worship.

There has been a dramatic improvement and considerable change in the school since the last inspection in May 1998 and especially since the more recent review by HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools) in January 2001. This is particularly so in leadership and management, teaching and recent attainment in GCSE/GNVQ examinations.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	E*	E	E	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Pupils in both key stages **achieve well**, although standards overall are still below the national average by the ages of 14 and 16. In the 2003 GCSE/GNVQ examinations, 50 percent of pupils achieved 5 passes at grade A* - C. This is a very significant and considerable improvement in levels of attainment on previous years and is clearly the result of the improvements in leadership and management, teaching and learning and rapidly improving pupils' self-esteem and behaviour. Overall, there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls or of different groups of pupils. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development **is good**. Provision for pupils' cultural development **is satisfactory**. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school. Overall attendance figures are **unsatisfactory**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now **good overall** with a significant amount of very good and some excellent teaching. This has resulted in **good learning** and most pupils make good progress and achieve well. The school provides a good curriculum. The 'pathways' strategy to provide relevant courses for Year 10 and 11 pupils is innovative and designed to meet pupils' needs and aptitudes. Individual support and guidance, academic and pastoral, are very good. As a result of comprehensive record systems, caring and committed staff know pupils very well. The school's links with parents and the local community are satisfactory. 80 percent of parents attend the school's very successful Academic Review and Target Setting days. These are very important in the rapidly developing relationships with parents. Links with other schools and colleges are good, with some exceptional benefits from the Federation with Ninestiles Technology College.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** and have been outstandingly effective in the rapid improvement in all areas of school life. The headteacher has excellent clarity of vision and a very clear sense of purpose which has clearly motivated and inspired staff and pupils. The Federation with Ninestiles Technology College and the partnership between the two schools, the Local Education Authority and the Department for Education and Skills (the 4start project) has been centrally responsible for the dramatic change in the school's fortunes and the rapidly rising standards. Governors are supportive of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths but need to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The development of relationships with parents and the community is a high priority for the school and there is increasing evidence of parents' support for, and satisfaction with, the school. Only a small number of parents' questionnaires were returned and a small number of parents attended the parents' meeting. Both these sources are clearly supportive of the school and overall no significant issues were indicated. Those parents at the meeting were very pleased with the recent school improvement. Pupils feel that they are treated fairly and that most like school and enjoy attending.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- improve the effectiveness of systems to support pupils with special educational needs;
- provide more opportunities for pupils to work and learn independently;
- continue the drive to improve attendance;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- improve the Key Stage 3 curriculum to provide music lessons for pupils in Year 7;
- meet requirements for a daily act of collective worship as is planned for in the current school improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is **good**. The average level of attainment on entry to the school is very low. By the age of 14 attainment is still well below average and, for the majority of pupils, is still below average overall by the age of 16. Inspection findings confirm this, especially in mathematics, English and science. However this improvement, as pupils move through the school, represents good progress by all groups of pupils. This year there has been a very considerable improvement in performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- 50 percent of 16 year olds achieved 5 or more passes at grades A*-C in GCSE/GNVQ examinations.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in most subjects.
- There is definite upward trend over time and spectacular improvement in examination grades in Year 11.
- The improvements in standards are directly as a result of very good leadership and management which has ensured good teaching and motivated pupils.
- The school is very aware of the need to continue to improve standards and has targeted the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

1. There has been a very significant and considerable improvement in performance at GCSE/GNVQ examinations in 2003 where 50 percent of pupils gained 5 or more passes at A*-C grades. The figures in the tables are for 2002, the last full reported year and represent pupils' attainment at that time. The current performance clearly shows the substantial progress being made by the school.
2. At the end of Key Stage 4, when compared with all schools nationally, pupils' attainment in the core subjects of English and mathematics is well below average and in science is below average. However, when compared with similar schools in 2002, the overall performance in all subjects was average.
3. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' overall attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, as measured in National Curriculum tests for 2002, is very low compared with all schools and well below average of pupils in similar schools. Evidence from the inspection shows that in most areas of the school pupils are achieving well and overall achievement is at least satisfactory. This picture is improving rapidly.
4. The trend in results at both key stages is one of improvement over recent years, and at a much greater rate than the national trend. Inspection evidence clearly indicates that standards are being driven up, that appropriate targets are being set and that pupils are making good and often very good progress as they move through the school. The key skills of numeracy and literacy are now well developed; however the level of pupils' attainment in the use of ICT across the curriculum in Key Stage 3 is below average although, by the age of 14, standards are approaching average but are still below average.
5. The raising of standards is a major priority for the school: the current improvements in attainment are directly attributable to the drive, high expectations and very good systems that the school's leadership and management have put in place. These have impacted considerably on teaching and learning and pupils' desire to achieve. Besides the

improvements in teaching, two strategies, Discipline for Learning and Achievement for Learning, have had an important effect on the overall quality of lessons. The drive to improve attendance, which includes involving parents wherever possible, has also had a significant effect on pupils' progress and improving standards.

6. Overall, pupils with special educational needs achieve well by Years 9 and 11 mainly as a result of good teaching and appropriate curricular arrangements, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Analyses carried out by the school of GCSE examination results show good progress is made by most pupils, including those with special educational needs. However, the department does not evaluate this improvement on a pupil by pupil basis. The quality of differentiation is variable overall, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and this restricts further achievement on a broader front, particularly for those with more complex needs.
7. There is no significant overall difference between the achievement of boys and girls or of different groups of pupils.
8. The development of the literacy strategy throughout the school is progressing well. It is seen as essential to pupils' success in many areas and subjects. The literacy strategy of the three-part lesson has been successfully used by many departments in their teaching and has been an important part of the improvements in teaching and learning.
9. The positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy is evident and the provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills is good. Pupils receive a good grounding in mathematics lessons and are able to apply these techniques to work in other subjects with examples of good practice in many areas of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.2 (30.3)	33.3 (33.0)
Mathematics	26.2 (26.0)	34.7 (34.4)
Science	25.9 (25.5)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 131 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	17.0 (16.0)	49.9 (48.4)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91.0 (87.0)	90.9 (88.5)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100.0 (95.0)	99.0 (98.0)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	24.3 (25.5)	39.2 (39.0)

There were 121 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.** The school successfully teaches pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and encourages them to treat others with respect and consideration. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Overall attendance figures are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strategies for improving attendance and punctuality are good.
- High expectations, coupled with very successful behaviour strategies, consistently implemented, result in good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Pupils and staff have very good relationships, built upon mutual respect and trust.
- Positive ethos encourages development of self-esteem, respect and consideration for others. There is no bullying or racism.
- Strong emphasis is placed on teaching moral principles.
- Provision for personal and social education is good.
- Attendance remains below national expectations, with too many unauthorised absences.

Commentary

10. Although many pupils have very good records of attendance, overall figures are still well below those found in similar schools and a small number of pupils stay away from school without a legitimate reason. A range of new measures to encourage good attendance and a more rigorous monitoring system are being introduced, with some visible effect in the first few weeks of term. Strong emphasis is placed on demonstrating the clear link between good attendance and good achievement to pupils and their parents. This is in a concerted effort to improve attendance rates. Punctuality is improving; pupils are on time for their lessons.
11. The introduction of the Discipline for Learning strategy is acknowledged by staff and pupils as a major factor in the improved standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to work that are seen throughout the school. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how they are expected to behave and welcome the strict application of rules, which allow them to learn, and teachers to teach, in a calm, purposeful environment. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is almost always good and often very good; pupils concentrate on their work and consequently make good progress. The rewards offered through the associated Achievement for Learning strategy also help motivate pupils to work hard and behave well.
12. Teachers provide good role models for pupils, treating them with the same respect and courtesy that they hope to see in return. Pupils respond well to this approach and, as a result, relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils support one another in lessons and co-operate well when working in pairs or groups. They are polite and respectful to support staff, and friendly and helpful to visitors.
13. The positive ethos of the school celebrates achievement of all kinds and spurs pupils on to aim as high as they can. Successes, no matter how small, are recognised and praised, so that self-esteem is boosted and pupils become increasingly motivated to do well. Pupils learn to be considerate of the needs of others, and agree that there is hardly any bullying and no racial tension in the school community.
14. Through lessons in citizenship, through assemblies and through the Discipline for Learning strategy, pupils are encouraged to think carefully about global issues and to come to their own, informed opinions about right and wrong. On a simple level, they accept and understand the basic disciplinary rules in school, which form the basis of their moral code. Some show, through their perceptive comments on issues such as animal rights and the influence of the media for example, that they are beginning to grasp the wider implications of morality.
15. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is good. Whilst religious education, history and music make significant contributions to pupils' spiritual development, opportunities are missed in other subjects to develop a sense of awe and wonder and to offer opportunities for discussion of beliefs and values.
16. The provision for the moral development of pupils is good with significant strengths. Heads of year, in particular, provide good role models for the pupils. Pupils respect and value them. The

personal and social education curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' moral development by recognising the importance of discussion and evaluation of a variety of moral and personal issues. It reinforces the school's good code of conduct and involves pupils in re-evaluating their own personal values.

17. The provision made for the social development of pupils is good and the good behaviour of a significant majority enhances its effective impact. Many subjects effectively use group work to develop pupils' social skills. Personal and social education also effectively promotes pupils' collaboration through discussion in groups. Physical education makes a significant contribution to the development of social skills through its emphasis on teamwork and working together for a common goal.
18. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Religious education makes a significant contribution through learning from religion and the investigation of a variety of religions from different cultures. Music schemes of work include music from Indian and Caribbean cultures. Foods from a variety of different cultures are considered in food technology. Trips and visits include Barcelona for art and languages and a variety of different places of worship in UK cities. Other opportunities include Eid and Ramadan celebrations.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (percent)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	87.6	School data	2.5
National data	91	National data	1.2

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
63	5	1
2	10	
1	2	
5	5	
1		1
17		
3		
355	48	3
119	1	
8		
9	4	
43	3	1
3		
12		
23		

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**. Pupils' learning is good as a direct result of the good and often very good teaching they receive. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are very good and strengths. The quality of assessment is good and the use of assessment information to plan the next stages in pupils' learning is developing rapidly.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school: there is a significant amount of very good and some excellent teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The commitment of all teachers to provide an effective climate for learning.
- The commitment of school managers to develop systems to improve achievement.
- The beneficial impact upon teaching and learning provided by the advanced skills teachers from Ninestiles Technology College.
- The good use of assessment data as an influence upon future planning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 97 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (3%)	12 (12%)	48 (49%)	30 (31%)	4 (4%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

19. The managers of the school have invested a great amount of time and energy in an attempt to improve the quality of teaching and thereby influence the quality of learning opportunities provided for the pupils. Lesson observations have been introduced, together with demonstrations of best practice supplied by visiting advanced skills teachers from Ninestiles Technology College. The advanced skills teachers have had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning in a range of subjects. In-service training has been provided and a common framework has been developed for lesson planning. Some teaching groups in Years 7 and 8 have been reduced in size. Managers have introduced two systems that have had a significant impact upon the quality of teaching and learning: Discipline for Learning and Achievement for Learning. These initiatives provide pupils with a very good climate for learning and give the teachers improved opportunities to concentrate on teaching. There is an obvious commitment by teachers to provide quality experiences in lessons that raise self esteem and give pupils the confidence to learn. The strategies now in place have been successful and, as a consequence, standards overall are improving. The previous inspection report stated that teaching was generally unsatisfactory in a significant number of subjects. Teaching is now good overall. Learning is also good as a direct consequence of the improved quality of teaching.
20. During the period of the inspection 97 lessons were observed. This exercise covered all subjects on the curriculum and all teachers. 64 percent of lessons were judged to be good or better, 32 percent were satisfactory and only 4 percent unsatisfactory. These statistics represent a very good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
21. Further development is planned to improve teaching and learning. Teachers are being encouraged to set clear learning objectives in lessons and to promote independent learning. A start has been made by the introduction of the accelerated learning project in Year 7. The provision of improved assessment data is also being used to influence lesson planning by

taking account of earlier learning. A majority of pupils are becoming increasingly aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and know what they must do to improve. Most pupils make good progress and achieve well. Teachers foster good relationships with their pupils, thereby providing an effective learning partnership in lessons. It is obvious from discussions with pupils that in general they appreciate their teachers and enjoy lessons. Teaching methods are often imaginative, promoting interest in lessons. Teachers understand their pupils and therefore the level of support given in lessons is good overall and often very good.

22. Individual teachers' knowledge of their subject is very good and this is having a significant positive effect on the quality of learning. English lessons are well structured and challenging and teachers have high expectations. In science, lessons are very well planned and relationships in lessons are very good. In mathematics, lesson planning is effective, lesson objectives are shared and good use is made in the promotion of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Modern foreign language lessons provide pupils with a wide range of activities but pace and challenge could be improved. Information and communication technology lessons are well planned and the subject knowledge of the teachers is a particular strength. The overall quality of teaching in physical education is very good with some being excellent, a particular strength being lesson planning. Art lessons are well planned and very good use is made of time and resources. In music there is a particular focus on the quality of learning influenced by the advanced skills teachers from Ninestiles Technology College.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught in all age groups. The quality of teaching has a significant impact on their progress, which is good.
24. The quality of teaching is raising standards and achievement. Pupils are acquiring new knowledge and skills, developing ideas and increasing their understanding. The ability to concentrate is improving, as is their general application to work. The majority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 rely upon teacher support and will over time need to develop the skills to work independently.
25. The last report drew attention to the fact that teaching in Years 7 to 9 was less than satisfactory. Teaching was seen to be less than satisfactory in a significant number of lessons in music, modern foreign languages, design and technology, mathematics, science and history. All these concerns have been addressed successfully.

The curriculum

26. The curriculum provides a **good range** of learning opportunities for pupils across the school. However, requirements are not met in the teaching of music in Key Stage 3 and for a daily act of collective worship but are planned for in the school improvement plan.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Numeracy and literacy strategies are well embedded in most areas of the curriculum.
- The 'pathways' strategy to provide relevant courses for Year 10 and 11 pupils is innovative and designed to meet pupils' needs and aptitudes.
- Equality of opportunity for pupils is good.
- There is no provision for music in Year 7.
- The school does not provide for a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

27. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils are **good**. In Years 7 to 9 they are satisfactory. This is better than at the time of the last inspection.
28. During Years 7 to 9, pupils study all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, personal, social and health education, citizenship and drama. In Year 7 there is no

provision for music, and in Years 8 and 9 continuity is hampered because of the carousel arrangement with art. The provision for music, therefore, does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in Year 7, and is unsatisfactory in Years 8 and 9. In these years, the lack of continuity in music slows progress.

29. The National Numeracy Strategy is well embedded into the work of the mathematics department in all years. Numeracy across the curriculum as with pupils' numeracy skills are less well developed, but improving in nearly all subjects although at various rates. English, science, ICT and physical education departments are particularly strong in terms of policies for teaching numeracy and this is reflected in their schemes of work and lesson planning. The ICT department has begun to work closely with the mathematics department to produce units of work.
30. Similarly, the National Literacy Strategy has been successfully developed across most subjects of the curriculum and is recognised by the school as playing an important part in raising standards. The three-part lesson structure has been influential in improving teaching and learning as well as improving pupils' literacy.
31. In Years 10 and 11, pupils take a broad range of courses that contribute to the subjects of the core National Curriculum, but this is enhanced by the addition of GNVQ in ICT, applied GCSEs in business, health and social care, leisure and tourism and GCSEs in art and design, drama, design and technology, French, Spanish, Urdu and Bengali, geography, history, physical education and sociology. Curriculum organisation in Years 10 and 11 provides all pupils with a choice of one of three 'pathways'. All follow courses in English language, mathematics, religious studies, physical education and ICT as compulsory subjects. Additional subjects direct pupils towards an academic, practical or vocational pathway course of study. Higher attaining pupils have the opportunity to take up to the equivalent of 13 GCSEs, including GNVQ science. A second pathway is less academic in terms of number of GCSEs and directed more towards practical aspects of the curriculum. The third pathway provides up to six GCSEs alongside vocational work/college experience. This innovative arrangement was introduced following extensive consultation meetings with pupils and their parents.
32. All pupils study French/Spanish in Key Stage 3 and yet in 2003 only 7 pupils sat the GCSE examination in Spanish and no pupils in French. Similarly significant numbers of pupils choose to take Bengali or Urdu in Year 8, but do not continue their studies beyond Key Stage 3.
33. Religious education is taught according to the Agreed Syllabus and there is a carefully structured citizenship programme. The latter includes personal, social and health education and careers work. There is a useful work-experience programme.
34. Vocational pathway pupils have good opportunities for work-related learning through a range of college link courses. These pupils receive a great deal of benefit from these courses, which has improved their motivation and attitude to school. However, it is important that they do not become isolated from the main school and that they retain their links with normal tutor/class groups and through physical education.
35. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. The school has more recently directed its efforts towards teaching, learning and attainment; however, alongside the rapid improvement in standards and results there has been a rich and varied programme of enhancement of learning. The school commitment to this is reflected in the appointment of an assistant headteacher with direct responsibility for this area. There are teams for all major sports and pupils have gained honours at various levels. A very close relationship has been formed with Warwickshire Cricket Club. Music is supported through the tuition offered by the Local Education Authority and the formation of a choir is planned. There are visits to the theatre, places of worship and more recently to the cinema to see films in a variety of community languages.

36. The library is open both before and after the school day to provide good access to ICT opportunities and a venue for the completion of homework. At lunchtimes, Waverley House is the venue for reading and board games, which for some pupils provides a quiet secure environment to improve their social skills. Staff at the house also co-ordinate the very successful Playing for Success scheme, organised with Birmingham City football club. The Central Birmingham Cluster Excellence in Cities Gifted and Talented scheme, which the school has readily supported, has provided many opportunities for both enhancement of resources and enrichment activities. The most notable include a summer visit to Barcelona for art and language pupils, the Shakespeare Schools festival, Wasim Khan Masterclass cricket and geography fieldwork visits with other local schools. Each year there is a programme of extra classes, including opportunities during school holidays, for Years 9 and Year 11. Each year the school hosts to a summer school for the new Year 7 pupils. The National Indoor Arena Jobscene is a highlight of the industry and career days.
37. Equality of opportunity for pupils is good, with examples of good practice in most departments. For example, opportunities for playing musical instruments and joining in educational trips are open to all pupils, including the 'end of year' day.
38. Provision for personal and social education is good and incorporated under the umbrella of Citizenship. There is a comprehensive programme dealing with, for example: the world of work (including careers education), health education (including sex education and drugs awareness) social issues (including citizenship), personal development, and study skills. Areas are revisited and dealt with at the appropriate level. The experienced school senior management team take responsibility for leading the citizenship programme in Year 11.
39. A two-week work experience programme supplements careers education. Futurewise, which replaced Compact, provides a good link between pupils and the business world and involves regular group work for Year 11 pupils and volunteer employees from a range of backgrounds.
40. Acts of collective worship do not feature in the school programme.
41. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff to meet the overall demands of the curriculum. In the recent past the school has had some difficulties in attracting suitable staff but this situation has improved considerably with the recent successful profile of the school and the links with Ninestiles Technology College. The recent staffing shortage experienced in the science department has been completely resolved; mathematics, which suffered similarly, is now stable with new staff being appointed; and, design and technology has a new head of faculty. Stability of staffing has, especially in the recent past, been an issue which the school is well aware of. It is working hard at developing stability through the improved performance of the school and the facilities and resources provided, for example providing teachers with a high level of access to ICT for preparation and teaching. There are sufficient support staff to meet the school's needs; however, in design and technology, technician support is limited and cannot provide the support required in the workshops.
42. Much has been done to improve the overall nature and appearance of the accommodation and surroundings. Across most of the school the accommodation allows subjects to be taught effectively, besides presenting an encouraging environment enhanced through extensive displays which celebrate pupils' achievement. The provision for science and art has been improved through modernisation of rooms and refurbishment of laboratories. However, the condition of the accommodation and level of resourcing for resistant materials, graphics products, systems and control, and computer-aided design and manufacture is unsatisfactory and does not provide for the technological requirements of the subject. Similarly, the school recognises that dining facilities are limited as are facilities for indoor physical education. A very important recent development, the provision of lockers for pupils, has been made as a response to a request made by pupils and highlighted through the School Council.

43. Learning resources are good for most subjects and are very good for a number, including mathematics and science. Only in design and technology do they not meet the needs of the curriculum. The considerable investment in ICT resources for both pupils and staff has impacted very positively on teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes satisfactory arrangements to see that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Individual support and guidance, both academic and personal, are very good, as a result of comprehensive record systems and caring, committed staff, who know pupils very well. Pupils' views are valued and taken into account well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective pastoral system that identifies academic and personal needs and takes appropriate action.
- Caring staff create relationships of trust and confidence with pupils.
- Pupils' views are sought and acted upon well.
- Good arrangements to help pupils to prepare for the next stage of education and eventual employment.

Commentary

44. A well-structured pastoral system ensures that the personal and academic progress of all pupils is closely monitored, so that effective advice and guidance can be provided for them. Record keeping is extensive and readily available to staff through the school's intranet. Any concerns, for example, about attendance or behaviour and their effect on pupils' achievement, can be quickly identified and relevant information provided for the form tutor, head of year, learning mentor or outside specialist who will give the necessary support to the pupil who needs it.
45. Academic Review and Target Setting days are very successful opportunities for pupils and their parents to discuss progress with the teachers. The pupils' work, attitudes, behaviour and attendance are all discussed in detail and targets for improvement are jointly agreed. This helps pupils to become responsible for managing their own learning and gives them an incentive to try harder, in preparation for the next review.
46. Pupils' personal well-being is an important factor in their ability to achieve high standards at school. Because form tutors stay with their group throughout their time in school, they come to know pupils very well and build up relationships of trust and confidence that make it easy for pupils to approach them if help is needed. More intensive support is provided by the team of learning mentors, who work very effectively with individual pupils and their families to remove any barriers to learning that may exist as a result of personal problems, and thereby help pupils to achieve as they should.
47. Overall identification, assessment, monitoring and accompanying review and target setting arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. The pupils benefit from some good school systems but the department's arrangements are not yet sufficiently robust or linked effectively to the Waverley assessment system. As a result, they are not detailed enough for those pupils with more complex needs whilst other pupils have too many targets. The effect of this is to make it more difficult both to measure progress and to plan the next stage of learning.
48. The school tries to involve pupils in new developments by listening to their views: for example, they were consulted on the introduction of the Discipline for Learning system and were surveyed about bullying. The school very successfully developed the innovative pathways for Years 10 and 11 pupils after very thorough consultation with pupils and with their parents. The

School Council provides an effective formal means of communication between staff and pupils and has already been successful in instituting changes, for example, in the installation of lockers, which makes movement around the school easier for everyone. There are extensive plans to develop the role and effectiveness of the School Council, to the benefit of the whole school community.

49. A well-planned scheme for careers education is overseen by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who ensures that all pupils receive appropriate information, advice and guidance to help them decide on the next step after school. Good support is given by the Connexions service, local colleges and local employers, who take part in an extensive programme of tutorials and mock interviews for Year 11 pupils, as well as providing them with valuable work experience placements.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the local community are satisfactory, and are developing. Links with other schools and colleges **are good**, with **some exceptional benefits from the Federation with Ninestiles Technology College.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good information is provided for parents on pupils' progress and about school routines, developments and successes.
- Annual school reports are exceptionally good.
- Procedures for dealing with parental concerns and queries are effective.
- Links with other schools and colleges in relation to careers education and vocational courses are good.
- Links with Ninestiles Technology College are very effective.

Commentary

50. The quality and range of information that the school provides for parents is good. In addition to the usual newsletters and prospectus, personal contacts with parents keep them informed about any issues that concern their children. Telephone calls, letters home and home visits by school staff are used to celebrate successes as well as to deal with concerns. A high percentage of parents and carers attend the Academic Review and Target Setting days, enabling them to keep track of pupils' academic progress and personal development. **Annual school reports are exceptionally good:** they are very detailed, giving an honest picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and setting specific targets for improvement. Increasingly, the school is arranging special curriculum information meetings for parents to cover such topics as how they can support the work that their children are doing at school.
51. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to be involved in reviews of progress and to help with their children's learning.
52. The pastoral system ensures that any concerns or queries that parents may have are dealt with promptly and effectively. Helpful and efficient reception staff provide a welcoming, approachable first point of contact.
53. The school works closely with local colleges in the provision of vocational courses for some of the older pupils, whose self-esteem and employability are effectively boosted as a result. There are also close and effective links with the colleges through the careers education programme. Representatives attend the annual Careers Fayre to help pupils in their search for suitable courses. Curricular links with primary schools are developing strongly in physical education. These have an additional benefit in helping prepare Year 6 pupils for their eventual transfer to the secondary school.

54. **Waverley derives exceptional benefits as a result of the Federation with Ninestiles Technology College.** The very good leadership of the headteacher, the examples set by visiting advanced skills teachers, and the experience, expertise and inspiration of the executive headteacher have all contributed to the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. The school has been able to introduce strategies, such as Discipline for Learning, confident that they will be successful, because they have proved their worth at Ninestiles. Additional funding has enabled the streamlining of communication systems for staff. Staff recruitment has become easier, staff development has improved and existing staff have had their enthusiasm and motivation rejuvenated by the clear evidence that the school is moving forward with the help of the Federation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both **very good** and have been **outstandingly effective in the rapid improvement in all areas of school life**. The headteacher has excellent clarity of vision and a very clear sense of purpose which has clearly motivated and inspired staff and pupils. Governors are very supportive and appropriately involved in managing the school, but need to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership by the headteacher is very good. She has an exceptionally clear sense of purpose and very high aspirations for the school. She is very well supported by other key staff.
- Management is very effective. The school is very well supported in all aspects of its management by the headteacher of Ninestiles Technology College.
- Strategic planning is very good. The Federation with Ninestiles Technology College has been centrally responsible for the dramatic change in the school's fortunes and the rapidly rising standards.
- Governors are supportive of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The governance of the school is, however, unsatisfactory in that it fails to ensure that statutory requirements are currently met for the National Curriculum in music in Key Stage 3 and for a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

55. The Federation strategy linking Waverley and Ninestiles Technology Colleges has been in place since the beginning of 2001. At this time the school, which was a part of the Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances Initiative, had many areas of considerable weakness. It had been identified by the Local Education Authority and by HMI as vulnerable and in need of support.
56. Although there is still much to do, **the leadership and management of the school have been extremely successful in turning the school around and bringing about considerable change and improvement in many areas**. In a little over two and a half years a failing school has been transformed into one in which, in the 2003 examinations, 50 per cent of pupils in Year 11 gained five or more passes at GCSE/GNVQ; where teaching is good overall with a significant amount of very good teaching; where staff and pupil morale is high; where pupils' behaviour is good and pupils are rapidly gaining in self esteem and confidence in their own ability; and it is gaining the respect of parents and the community.
57. The strategies employed by the leadership and management of the school are based firmly in clarity of vision, high aspirations for all the school, pupils and staff, a high level of management expertise and excellent strategic planning. Leadership has inspired and motivated staff and created very good teamwork where all are contributing so effectively to raising standards. Middle managers play a very important and very good part in improvement

and there is a strong desire, throughout the school, to succeed and to provide pupils with the best education and prospects possible.

58. This is a very inclusive school. Pupils of all levels of attainment and from a wide variety of backgrounds are very well valued and cared for. Assessment systems, which clearly analyse pupils' progress, are now becoming embedded in the work of most departments and increasingly, throughout the school, the data is being used to improve standards for individual pupils. These factors are establishing a productive climate for learning and encouraging and developing pupils' confidence in and around the school.
59. The school has over 200 pupils with an identified special educational need; this is above the national average. The headteacher has the improvement of the special educational needs provision as a major priority and appointed a new special educational needs co-ordinator last Easter. However, the co-ordinator's role is yet to develop in terms of her responsibilities for whole-school teaching quality and curricular improvement. Overall, there remains a lack of strategic clarity with regard to roles and responsibilities and the respective responsibilities of the special educational needs co-ordinator and heads of subject departments for the monitoring and evaluation of standards and achievement. As a result, those pupils with more complex needs tend to be contained rather than having their problems addressed coherently over the long term. Future improvement depends upon the resolution of the problems associated with the management of the provision.
60. The Governing Body works in partnership with the Governing Body of Ninestiles Technology College through a steering group and through placing three of their members on the Governing Body of the other school. In this way governors of both schools are kept informed about progress and developments and are able to share in understanding the good practice which has been used as the foundation for many of the successful strategies. Governors are very committed to the school and to raising standards, having a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. However, there are areas of the bodies working practice which need further development in order that governors can work more as a team to fulfil their commitment to work within the joint venture to continue to raise standards and improve the school. Governors have recognised this issue and have already had a team building workshop in order to address the area and make progress.
61. The governors and school management have a very clear view of the school's standards and where they are in relation to schools both locally and nationally. Finances are very well managed and consultation with parents, pupils and linked organisations, for example Ninestiles and the Local Education Authority, is very high on the agenda. As a result the principles of best value are well applied and are central to the work of the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1976924
Total expenditure	1983751
Expenditure per pupil	2938

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	198230
Balance carried forward to the next	205057

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving because of strong, focused leadership.
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- The Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy has been introduced successfully in lessons and pupils achieve well because of the structure and pace of the lessons.
- Not all pupils are aware of how to improve.
- Pupils who are working at grade D at GCSE are not targeted efficiently.

Commentary

62. Results and current standards reflect continuing improvement. The pupils' achievement is good and that takes into account the 2003 results as well as how current pupils are doing. There has been an upward trend for Year 9 and Year 11. This stems from strong leadership. The head of department, who arrived a year ago, has succeeded in developing a shared vision in the department for the improvement of teaching and learning and consequently results are better.
63. In work seen, pupils' attainment by the end of Years 9 and 11 is well below average. This represents good achievement and improving standards because when the pupils joined the school, their overall standards were very low. Standards in English literature, in particular, have improved, showing particularly good achievement. Most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of literacy skills by the time they have been in the school for three years. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion although they lack confidence in formal situations. Writing standards are well below average; most pupils have grasped key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar and their work is generally very well presented. Spelling remains a weak area for the majority of pupils and is gradually improving because of the impact of the National Literacy Strategy. Writing is creative and poetic; for example, in one lower achieving Year 7 class a pupil described how "My mother's smile lights up the sky." Recent initiatives to improve boys' standards include a sensitive choice of texts and a consistent approach by teachers to raise expectations. These are beginning to have a positive impact. The standards of all pupils are benefiting from a wide choice in the variety of writing assignments and increasing use of ICT to aid the presentation of work.
64. Attainment in English by the end of Year 11 is well below average. The standard of work in English literature is approaching the national average. Pupils write with understanding and appreciation of Shakespearean texts, and of literature from different cultures. They can evaluate character and theme and, overall, presentation of work is careful and consistent. Pupils can analyse media texts and research references. A minority of pupils rely too heavily on the teacher and their work is brief, lacking in detailed understanding and insight.
65. Pupils whose first language is not English and those with special educational needs make good progress overall. Pupils who require learning support in Years 7 to 9 make satisfactory rather than good progress because they are not supported consistently.

66. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and there are examples of very good and outstanding teaching and learning. In a small minority of lessons, pupils learn less than in others because the class contains too many pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties who are insufficiently supported or classroom management strategies are less strong. In the very good lessons, there is a brisk pace; pupils are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Pupils enjoy exchanging ideas with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. Pupils respond well to their teachers' caring emphasis on achievement and this helps develop the good relationships evident in the department. In a Year 10 lesson on Shakespeare's tragedies, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed examining archive photographs from the Royal Shakespeare Company to deepen their understanding. Consequently, they presented their findings in a deeply felt and expressive manner, because the teacher sensitively drew out their ideas and encouraged their thinking. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils spoke meaningfully to the class about their favourite person and basked in the enthusiastic response of the teacher and their peers. The teacher's enthusiasm infected the pupils, whose sheer joy of the lesson encouraged and developed their love of the subject. In a small minority of lessons pupils are not sufficiently involved by the teacher, so they lose interest and produce less work.
67. The leadership of the department is very good and it is well managed. The head of department has a clear educational vision that inspires both teachers and pupils. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work and departmental responsibilities; as a result, they are regularly discussing what is best for the pupils. They observe each other's lessons and this sharing of good practice is improving teaching styles, classroom management and pupils' learning. Procedures for assessment are clear and used by the head of department to set individual pupils' targets. This is not consistent in practice and ongoing assessment is sometimes bland and lacking in specific targets to guide pupils' improvement. Some lower attaining pupils are not aware of their standards or targets and therefore are not sure how to improve. Pupils' work is cross-checked for progress, standards and capability and this ensures that they are pushed to reach their potential. The relatively new head of department has developed a cohesive team.
68. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Pupils' achievement has improved and literacy teaching has been used effectively to target further improvements in English language. The main priority is to target pupils working around grade D to help their improvement to higher grades at the end of Year 11, and to further improve the GCSE standards of boys. This exemplifies the department's commitment, which reflects that of the school, to improve standards. Standards are rising, and, with the shared commitment to sharing good practice and attention to identified areas for improvement, the department has the capacity to succeed even further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

69. Management at a senior level has been successful in putting into practice strategies for the improvement of pupils' literacy skills. A range of texts, in all subjects, encourages the use of technical and specialist vocabulary especially in science, modern foreign languages and English. The library has insufficient texts to support all subjects. The English department has dictionaries available in each classroom; key words are displayed prominently in most classrooms to familiarise pupils with these words. Carefully censored Internet access allows pupils to research topics in detail. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically and sensibly in most subjects and show respect to their peers and staff by listening attentively. More developed discursive and analytical speech and writing are not consistent, however, in subjects where literacy teaching is less emphasised. In mathematics, for example, opportunities were missed to explore ideas and the meaning of words. Reading fluency is encouraged and seen to particular effect in English and science. Most subjects undertake the teaching of basic literacy skills conscientiously as a means of improving standards.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is at least satisfactory with some good teaching.
- Lessons are orderly and purposeful and relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
- The disparity in performance between boys and girls has been addressed.
- The number of pupils opting to study languages beyond Year 9 is very low.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to show initiative and use languages for themselves.
- Pace and challenge are sometimes inadequate.

Commentary

70. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 in French and Spanish are below national expectations. Standards vary depending on whether pupils are measured in the language they begin in Year 7 or the one they begin in Year 8. At Key Stage 4 the number of pupils studying modern languages is very low and although GCSE results from these pupils have been good, statistical comparisons with national averages are not possible. GCSE examination results in Bengali and Urdu have been better than in French and Spanish although this may be due to pupils' prior knowledge of these languages and other outside influences.
71. On the evidence gathered in lessons in both key stages, and from looking at pupils' books and discussions with pupils, achievement is satisfactory. This represents a major improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged unsatisfactory in 42 percent of lessons. In lessons in which pupils with special educational needs are in the minority and do not receive support from learning assistants, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Similarly, some high attaining pupils are not given the level of challenge which allows them to achieve as highly as they should. The difference in performance between boys and girls at the time of the last inspection has been remedied.
72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall at both key stages and some good teaching was observed in both French and Spanish. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, which represents another major improvement since the last inspection when it was at 30 percent. Teaching is better in Spanish than in French because teachers' planning is very carefully focused. Pupils' learning is also better because the pupils display greater motivation.
73. Teaching and learning have a number of good features. Teachers have a warm and encouraging manner and create good relationships with pupils. Objectives are clearly stated and lessons move purposefully towards them. Many different types of activity are used to promote learning: hands-on activities, use of visual aids, games and competitions, and pair work. Teachers insist on accurate pronunciation and spelling, and reinforce pupils' literacy skills. Pupils' work is carefully marked; teachers' comments show pupils what they need to do to improve. Both teachers and pupils make very good use of ICT. In Key Stage 3, both boys and girls now show equal involvement in their learning.
74. There is a low level of challenge in many lessons with an emphasis on learning individual words or phrases rather than using language for communication. A preponderance of English as the teaching language reduces the opportunities for pupils to use the foreign language for themselves and gain a sense of enjoyment and achievement in doing so. Some pupils' books are not marked in a way which shows them how to improve. In some books pupils' learning notes are inaccurate or are mixed up with other material so that pupils effectively have nothing to revise from. This is particularly important since pupils do not take textbooks or other

reference books home for personal study. In one classroom, there are no blinds: the sun dazzles pupils so they cannot see either the teacher or the board.

75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Modern foreign languages benefit from being part of the larger 'communications' faculty which has been a major impetus for improvement in the school. Teachers share ideas, work to common standards and ensure that they constantly reinforce pupils' literacy skills. Schemes of work clearly reflect the National Curriculum although their focus needs to be sharpened further to include details such as time scales to assist teachers' planning. Assessment information from pupils is used to assist planning although this is not as consistent or as carefully focused in modern foreign languages as in other subjects within the faculty. There is some monitoring of teachers' performance but this is underdeveloped. The inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work point to a need for the marking policy to be sharpened and more rigorously applied. The low numbers taking languages at Key Stage 4 indicate a need to raise the profile of European language throughout the school. Classroom resources are adequate but there is a severe lack of up-to-date reading materials – books, magazines, CD-ROMs – for pupils to use in the school library.
76. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated and there is much purposeful activity in lessons. Teachers use assessment information to assist planning and there is monitoring of teachers, although both these areas need further development. Boys now engage in their work to the same degree as girls.
77. The school is aware that to improve further the subject should build on the improvements already made. In particular the school should seek to raise the profile of languages and ensure that in Key Stage 3 pupils gain a clear sense of making progress and that they enjoy their work and have a desire to continue at Key Stage 4. The school is well placed to make these improvements.

Community languages: Bengali and Urdu

Overall, the quality of provision in community languages is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examination results in Bengali have been well above the national average for the last three years.
- Teachers are native speakers and have good subject knowledge.
- Teaching is good in three quarters of the lessons.
- Standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 9.
- There are some accommodation difficulties as teachers teach in several rooms on different floors.
- Number of pupils learning Bengali and Urdu is rather small, especially in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

78. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below the national expectations. Pupils start to learn Bengali and Urdu in Year 8 with limited literacy skills. At the moment there is no provision of teaching community languages in Year 7. Pupils have to master the script in order to write words, phrases and sentences. Considering that Bengali and Urdu are not taught in Year 7, pupils' achievement is good in both languages. Listening and speaking skills of most pupils are better developed than their reading and writing skills. For example, most pupils could answer teacher's questions correctly and talk about their hobbies in one Year 9 Urdu class, and in one Year 9 Bengali lesson all pupils were able to answer questions after listening to a text in Bengali, showing good communicative skills and understanding.
79. GCSE examination results at grades A*-C in Bengali were well above the national average in 2001 and 2002 and have been maintained in 2003. GCSE examination results at grades A*-C

in Urdu were below the national average in 2001 and 2002 and well below the national average in 2003. However, the results for A*-G were above the national average during the last three years.

80. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 11 in Urdu and at the end of Year 10 (no teaching of Bengali in Year 11) in Bengali are average. The majority of the pupils are able to read a text in Urdu about 'A visit to the fair' and answer questions about it in Urdu in one Year 11 class, and in one Year 10 Bengali class both pupils were able to translate a model letter written in English into Bengali.
81. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because in most cases they have learnt the language in either Pakistan or Bangladesh from where they came. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as they are fully supported in lessons.
82. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, paced and contain a variety of activities which motivate pupils to work hard and learn. The strong relationships that teachers establish in the classroom result in pupils learning well. Teachers are native speakers, have very good knowledge of their subject and use the language very well in lessons with a positive effect on pupils' learning.
83. Community languages are well led and managed by the head of faculty of English. Relationships in the department are good. However, there are some issues that the school needs to consider to improve further. Both teachers teach in several rooms on different floors: this causes difficulties in carrying books and equipment. For example, the Bengali teacher teaches 11 lessons in six different rooms on four different floors.
84. The last inspection report shows combined results in community languages were above the national average. Since the last inspection results in Bengali for grades A*-C have been well above the national average but in Urdu results for A*-C were below the national average in 2001 and 2002 and well below the national average in 2003. The quality of teaching has improved and there has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and pupils' achievement is good.
- The Key Stage 3 Strategy has been successfully introduced and is improving learning and achievement.
- Teaching is good overall and pupils respond well in lessons and enjoy good relationships with teachers.
- Very good leadership is driving up standards.
- Although teaching is good overall there are some inconsistencies in classroom practice.
- Standards attained in national tests and examinations are rising but are still very low and need to be further improved.
- Numeracy skills in other subjects are being well developed and are rising, with the exception of geography where provision is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

85. Standards overall are well below average. Results in national tests and GCSE examinations in 2002 are very low in comparison to other similar schools. However, when taking account of the 2003 results which were higher, there is a rising trend in results over recent years. In 2002 GCSE examination results dipped due to staffing difficulties which have now been resolved.

When test and examination results are compared against pupils' prior attainment levels, achievement is satisfactory. Achievement is, however, good and this is due to higher teacher expectations and the level of challenge of the work that is presented to pupils.

86. Planning is a general strength and in Years 7 to 9 is based on the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. Teachers use the three-part lesson structure well with effective lesson starters to motivate pupils and plenaries to extend their learning. The use of small whiteboards to display answers is an effective strategy that helps teachers to check understanding and correct misconceptions. Teachers make very good use of the school's awards and discipline procedures to praise achievement and check unacceptable behaviour. This creates a positive learning climate where relationships are good and pupils respond well to activities and are keen to learn. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and the level of challenge in most lessons is appropriate to the pupils' learning needs. There is widespread use of interactive whiteboards to present material in an interesting way and to effectively demonstrate strategies and methods. As a result of all these factors learning is good.
87. In the most successful lessons the level of challenge is high and teachers motivate pupils to achieve well through providing stimulating activities. In these lessons, there are good opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding through well-structured discussion and the sharing of mathematical thinking. This involves pupils explaining their strategies for obtaining answers. Pupils are also encouraged to contribute their own ideas using everyday language to explore the meaning of mathematical terms and ideas. However, this does not always happen and opportunities for discussion are sometimes missed in some lessons, particularly at the point in the lesson when the key words are identified.
88. Pupils' work, including homework, is regularly marked with encouraging and supportive comments. There is some inconsistency, however, in the quality of marking. In the best examples, National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades are indicated and there is advice on how to improve, although, in some of the books seen, marking was not diagnostic and did not follow guidelines given to teachers. Assessment procedures are good and pupils' progress is tracked against predicted results.
89. The head of department, who has been in post since September 2002, provides very good leadership; the department is well managed. A team approach is now in place. She has clear vision and is dedicated to improving standards along with the best possible provision for pupils. Procedures are in place for planning and evaluating the work of the department. Although teaching and learning are regularly monitored a more rigorous approach to this is needed to identify and respond to inconsistencies in practice.
90. Since the last inspection standards have risen and there has been an improvement in pupils' achievement. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been introduced very well and, as a result, teaching and learning have improved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

91. Work in subjects other than mathematics is contributing well to the development of pupils' numeracy skills and is reinforcing what is covered in mathematics lessons. As a result pupils' numeracy skills are improving. For example, in a Year 9 art lesson, pupils were required to enlarge a drawing developing their understanding and knowledge of scale. In a physical education lesson the angle in degrees turned when dribbling around cones was identified, reinforcing what had been covered in mathematics lessons and providing a good real-life example of this work. There were also examples of good practice taking place in science, ICT and English lessons. In geography, however, there is a lack of significant opportunities for developing numeracy skills, particularly in the construction of graphs and their analysis.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and public examination results have improved significantly in the past two years.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress; they know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The faculty is very well led and managed.
- The progress of a significant number of pupils is hindered by their underdeveloped literacy skills.
- There are not enough opportunities for teachers to share good practice by observing each other.

Commentary

92. In the national tests for 14 year olds in 2002, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 and above was well below the national average yet in line with those schools having pupils who performed similarly three years previously. In 2003, the proportion was a little higher. The GCSE examination results in 2002 were well below the national average for those gaining at least a grade C and in line with the national average for those gaining at least a grade G. The results are improving rapidly. In 2000, one in ten pupils gained at least a grade C in the GCSE examinations; in 2003 the proportion was almost one third.
93. Pupils enter the school with attainment levels in science that are very low. By the end of Year 9 standards have improved significantly but they are still below average by the end of Year 11. This is indicative of the good achievement and progress of pupils as they move through the school. Good achievement is also much in evidence in lessons. Pupils strive hard to meet the challenges set by the teachers and make good progress in almost all lessons in all years. Most pupils in Year 9 use correct names for organs in the human body and the higher attainers can describe functions of some of them. Year 11 pupils know the factors which affect the rate of a chemical reaction and a few can explain the effect in terms of collisions of particles. Manipulative, planning and predictive skills are at the expected levels by the end of Year 11 but analysis and evaluative skills are not as well developed. Pupils have the numeracy skills that enable them to process their experimental results and present them in various graphical forms. The literacy skills of a significant number of pupils are underdeveloped. They are able to answer questions requiring one-word answers but experience difficulties with those requiring sentences.
94. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and often better. It is good or very good in two thirds of lessons. A particular strength is the high quality of relationships between teachers and pupils. This is a major factor in helping pupils learn well. Teachers know their subject well and most make it comprehensible and interesting, often by relating personal relevant experiences or by using examples familiar to pupils. Teachers cater well for the differing needs of individual pupils. Lessons are very well planned. The best ones almost always have three parts to them. A starter activity is effectively used to focus individuals and the objectives are made clear for the main part of the lesson. This often involves group activities and/or demonstrations by the teacher. By skilful targeted questioning teachers check understanding in the final part of the lesson. Teachers manage pupils very well, adopting a firm yet friendly approach and they keep pupils busy. Support assistants are used effectively and are well aware of the lesson content beforehand. Assessment and marking are strengths. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly and pupils are well aware of their levels of attainment. Teachers also make sure that pupils know what they have to do to improve. Very occasionally, the pace is too quick and pupils are moved on to the

next task before completing one. Teachers do much to develop pupils' literacy skills. Key words are frequently emphasised; the meanings of new ones are carefully explained. Pupils are often required to read aloud to the class. There is a particular emphasis on these strategies in the course for Year 7 pupils, which is accelerating the development of their learning skills.

95. The faculty is very well led and managed. The head of faculty has established a permanent, effective team, which has a united commitment to raising standards. Her classroom practice is a role model for others to emulate. She deploys teachers well, making very good use of the expertise of individuals with particular groups. Teachers' performance is carefully monitored and classroom observations occur regularly. The qualified technicians work hard and provide much valued effective support. A GNVQ Intermediate Science course, considered to serve the needs of pupils better, has been introduced in Year 10. Early indications are that it is motivating them well. The support from highly skilled teachers from Ninestiles Technology College is much appreciated and is improving the quality of teaching.
96. Since the last inspection results in the national tests and GCSE examinations have improved significantly. Teaching is now much better, as are the attitudes and behaviour of pupils. During the inspection there were no incidents of anything approaching serious misbehaviour (an issue at the time of the last inspection). Assessment and monitoring procedures and target setting for individuals have developed considerably. The accommodation has been refurbished and computer programs can now be projected onto screens in every laboratory. This facility is used most effectively by teachers.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The GNVQ results in 2003 for ICT were better than 2002.
- Leadership and management are good. The head of faculty is well aware of areas for development and is committed to further improvement.
- The quality of assessment is good; in Years 10 and 11, it helps pupils to set targets for their work.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils, who are very interested in the subject and this is reflected in high standards of behaviour.
- The school has good hardware and software resources.
- Management, monitoring and assessing of cross-curricular ICT are not yet secure.

Commentary

97. When pupils enter the school in Year 7, standards are extremely variable. Overall, standards are below average, but improving at good rates as pupils move through the school. In relation to this, their achievement is broadly average in Year 9 as they have good opportunities to learn ICT skills. In Year 7, pupils can log on to the network, access the Internet and have basic word-processing skills. Their keyboard skills are less well developed, which slows their work in some instances.
98. The teachers' assessments undertaken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate standards were well below the national average, compared to 2003 when approximately twice as many pupils reached the national expectation, Level 5 or above. Boys' results overall were better than the girls, which is the reverse of the case nationally. By the age of 14, pupils understand how to gather, process and output information in text and image form. They also learn to develop strategies of small group working, for example when constructing spreadsheets and interpreting data as to best value and variable mobile phone tariffs.

99. In the 2003 examinations two thirds of pupils attained a pass or above grade at GNVQ. Asian or Asian British-Pakistani pupils in particular reflect this good rate of improvement where over 50 per cent more pupils achieved a pass or above grade compared to 2002. Overall, pupils' achievement is broadly average. All pupils take GNVQ ICT in Years 10 and 11 and make use of a variety of skills. In spreadsheet work, pupils understand how to use complex formulae to work out breakeven costs, which they display with line graphs and bar charts. Pupils know how to set up databases, understand fields and how to search and query databases. In presenting information, pupils make use of more advanced word-processing skills and have confidence in importing images to enhance presentations.
100. Teaching is good overall; it is often good or very good and at least satisfactory. The advanced skills teacher from Ninestiles has provided excellent and very effective support for the faculty. Teachers make effective use of their good subject knowledge to give clear explanations, which helps pupils to learn. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils and the positive attitudes displayed by pupils contribute to their learning. Lesson planning is good, particularly in Year 10 and 11 where course schemes are divided into small units. The information about, and what is required to ensure pupils complete, the units are well prepared and available to pupils on the school network. This enables pupils to work independently and at their own levels. In the satisfactory lessons there are some good features, but in some instances teachers assess factual knowledge and do not always identify pupils' capacity to apply ICT independently. Weekly after-school lessons, along with well-attended opportunities during holiday periods, have a positive impact in boosting pupils' performance. Teachers make very effective use of technology with the school network. The use of data-projectors and interactive whiteboards are effective in helping pupils to understand processes, enabling them to see them clearly what is displayed.
101. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of faculty, who is ably supported with a committed team of teaching and support staff, has a clear vision for future development. The profile of ICT has been raised considerably in a comparatively short time. Weekly whole-team planning meetings along with the assessment scheme are strengths of the department.
102. There has been significant financial investment in the overall provision of ICT, including the purchase of laptops for teachers and whole class use. Deficiencies in control and computer-assisted manufacturing equipment are in part offset by annual visits to the City Learning Centre.
103. Since the last inspection there has been a considerable improvement in the provision for, and the use of, ICT. The school is now well placed to improve further and to embed this aspect effectively in all areas of teaching and learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

104. The use of ICT across the curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. All but a few teachers have undertaken intensive training on the use of ICT as a tool to enhance teaching and learning. Teachers, therefore, make very effective use of technology, for example, the school network, the use of data-projectors and interactive whiteboards, all of which are effective in helping pupils to understand processes, as they can see them clearly displayed. *PowerPoint* presentations are well used, for example in English, for drafting and re-drafting work. In music, pupils have good opportunities to use keyboards, and, in Year 10 and 11, weekly visits are arranged to Ninestiles Technology College to further extend hands-on opportunities. The design and technology department use the Internet well to support learning; however, resources to control the manufacturing of objects are limited. Pupils studying art are encouraged to use ICT independently, manipulating scanned images that are photographed by pupils or retrieved from the Internet. For example, in Year 7, pupils research the Internet to research images of Islamic designs to inform their work. Pupils use ICT in almost all subjects

with confidence, but ICT objectives, for example in mathematics, have yet to be embedded in all departmental schemes of work.

105. Curriculum mapping has not been completed and departments are therefore not aware of their contribution to developing ICT skills or using whole-school assessment criteria to help judge pupils' performances. The department should now ensure that the good practice emerging, for example from the implementation of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, is identified and used effectively as a tool in the development of ICT across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of planning and assessment helps pupils to learn.
- Teaching and learning are good overall across the school.
- Standards of attainment are improving and most pupils achieve well.
- The head of department has insufficient management time.

Commentary

106. Results and current standards are similar in Years 9 and 11 and are below average. However, this is an improvement over recent years and pupils' achievement is good across the school and particularly in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' achievement looks set to improve further and standards are higher in the current Year 11 than they were last year. A particular feature of achievement in Year 11 is that the pupils do as well in history as in the other subjects they take. Standards, achievement and teaching have all improved since the last inspection. The department has lost an experienced historian as a result of promotion but has been able to appoint another specialist this term. The major task for the department is to sustain its impressive rate of improvement.
107. In Years 7 to 9, teachers follow a curriculum which incorporates placing events chronologically, strengthening the pupils' knowledge and skills of both interpretation and communication. This is enhanced by the increasingly effective use of the literacy strategy and ICT. As a result, pupils learn well and lay a firm foundation for GCSE study. Pupils' learning is also helped by the subject knowledge and confidence of the teachers. This was seen when Year 9 pupils worked well at different tasks on the computer to test historical evidence and write a report. The department recognises that standards will improve when it broadens its approaches to the mixed ability classes. In some lessons, insufficient account is taken of the means that some pupils – particularly those with verbal reasoning difficulties – use to learn about history. An example was seen of an inability to balance exposition, effective questioning, independent work and checking for understanding.
108. In Years 10 and 11, pupils pursue a GCSE examination course which is enhanced by the effective use of explanation, carefully structured written tasks and the use of *PowerPoint* presentation to produce, for example, interesting and accurate accounts of the development of medicine. Pupils in Year 11 benefit from some well-planned and organised lessons which are characterised by high expectations. These have a beneficial effect on their understanding of how change can be interpreted and how to select and communicate information. History has very good assessment systems to help pupils learn: they all know what they have to do to improve and target setting is effective. Currently, the difficulty confronting most pupils is related to making links between events and changes and giving reasons for them. This was seen in work on the Weimar Republic. Teachers know and enjoy their subject and those seen during the inspection help pupils to produce work which is appropriate in quality and quantity.

The result is that learning is good and pupils enhance their understanding. An excellent example seen was when a teacher with a Year 11 explained aspects of the Black Death.

Example of outstanding practice

This lesson on the causes of the Black Death was the last of a long morning but it engaged and excited all pupils throughout.

This was because the class teacher understood how pupils learn about history and adjusted his planning and strategies accordingly. He began with some starter questions to show how little 14th century medicine had advanced since the Greeks. He then used the board well to map clearly their ideas before setting them to work on various texts. All lesson targets were addressed as pupils developed their ideas and the class teacher used a *PowerPoint* presentation well for further clarification. Changing the activity, pupils worked in pairs with factor cards to work out how the disease spread. They agreed that it was linked to trade, transmission by fleas on rats and standards of hygiene. This was then drawn deftly together by the class teacher through sympathetic and effective questioning which drew in some hitherto quiet girls who made thoughtful contributions. Finally, a writing frame was jointly constructed and the class was ready to complete an assignment on the causes of the spread of the Black Death.

109. The leadership and management in the subject are very good. The head of history is a senior member of staff with competing responsibilities but he has developed the subject so that it is the first humanities option of choice for many pupils in Year 9. Nevertheless, it is important that he has sufficient non-contact time to support appropriately the new member of the department and thus sustain the subject's improving standards.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination performance has improved.
- The department has made good progress since the last inspection.
- Good use is made of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress and record achievement.
- Fieldwork projects promote effective learning opportunities.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not achieving as well as those in Years 10 and 11.
- More demanding learning opportunities are limited for higher attaining pupils.
- There is a lack of opportunity for pupils to develop numeracy skills, especially in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

110. In the GCSE examination in 2002, the numbers of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A*-C were well below the national average but showed an improvement in 2003. This is part of an upward trend. At the age of 14, the teachers' assessment in 2002 shows that attainment is well below the national average, with 25 per cent of pupils reaching the expected level or above, compared with 66 percent nationally. In 2003, 38 per cent of pupils reached the expected level or above. This represents an upward trend. The performance of girls is significantly better than that of boys.

111. Pupils are making satisfactory progress with satisfactory achievements in Years 10 and 11. Most pupils are confident with short answers and have a satisfactory understanding of the work. They are encouraged to explore key questions in fieldwork studies, although this method of working is not widespread in lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to improve their

understanding of physical geography by emphasising key words and their meanings, such as those used in study of the River Colne. The identification of landscape features is better developed than their understanding of how these features were formed. The construction and analysis of graphs are limited: for example, climate graphs of the Tropical Rainforests are not explored beyond the simplest level. Few opportunities exist for using data in lessons although, when an activity is based on fieldwork there is evidence of use of data. Pupils speak well in lessons although their writing skills are less well developed.

112. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in both key stages, with some good teaching. Teachers use appropriate language suited to the needs of their pupils and particular attention is given to the meaning of geographical terms. Sometimes not enough attention is given to the beginning and end of lessons so that pupils can see clearly what they are going to learn and how well they have done. The good relationship between teachers and pupils has a positive effect on learning and any instances of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively. Lessons are clearly understood by the majority of pupils although the higher attainers are sometimes not sufficiently challenged so that they can make further progress. Teachers track pupils' attainment and progress in lessons and most pupils are aware of how well they are doing. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants. Homework is set regularly and is monitored.
113. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There are clear ideas on how the subject should move forward. For example, there are plans to raise the attainment of lower attaining pupils taking GCSE examinations and an awareness of the need to meet the demands of pupils with English as an additional language. Schemes of work cover statutory requirements although further development is necessary to include a numeracy strategy. There is also a need to clearly identify citizenship and spiritual moral, social and cultural opportunities.
114. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Examination results have improved and accommodation changes have increased access to resources. There is purposeful leadership which means the department can continue to move forward.

Religious education

The statutory agreed syllabus determining the provision of religious education is the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. The **provision of religious education is good at both key stages** and the subject makes a significant contribution to the academic development of pupils and to their personal development. Those positive aspects of the subject mentioned in the previous inspection have been consolidated and the contribution made to the overall goals of school improvement is significant.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching and management of the subject.
- The very good standards achieved by pupils in external examinations.
- The good resources available to support and enrich teaching.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for and commitment to the subject.
- There is a need to further develop Key Stage 3 pupils' understanding of core beliefs of religions.

Commentary

115. The attainment of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils are knowledgeable of three world religions, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism, and bring a lively interest to their work. Levels of concentration are good and they have the capability to work independently and collaboratively in a disciplined learning environment. The development of pupils' understanding of the core beliefs of the three main religions studied is an area for improving learning.

116. Attainment in Years 10 and 11 where all pupils now follow a GCSE examination course in religious studies is very good. With 64 percent A*-C grades in the most recent examination, performance is above the national average and this is indicative of pupils working on the frontiers of their capability.
117. Teaching is consistently good. A scholarly classroom ethos engages pupils as active learners and thinkers. An excellent range of resources is utilised in lessons planned to a faculty model. The well-managed use of time is a feature of lessons that challenge pupils and ensure effective learning.
118. In the temporary absence of a head of department, the faculty gives crucial support to teaching and learning. There is a positive team spirit that contributes to the maintenance of further development of the subject in the school.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New arrangements for the leadership and management of the subject and teachers' shared commitment to improving standards are significant strengths.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned, enabling pupils to acquire sound basic skills and knowledge.
- A good range of material areas and projects is offered to pupils.
- Good classroom management leads to pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes overall.
- Although standards of attainment are below average, achievement is satisfactory over time.
- The range of teaching and learning strategies does not challenge and extend pupils, or give them enough opportunity to be independent in their learning. Assessment is not used sufficiently to predict potential and set individual targets.
- The accommodation and provision for resistant materials, graphic products, systems and control and computer-assisted design and computer-assisted manufacture (CAD/CAM) do not meet the technological requirements of the subject.

Commentary

119. Standards of work are below those expected at the end of Year 9. However, pupils' achievement in relation to their standard when they enter the school is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy design and technology. Over time, through working with a range of materials, they make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of materials and they are able to use a range of hand tools and equipment competently. Higher attaining pupils complete tasks well, but lower attainers do not always pay enough attention to detail or complete tasks, and their research and design skills are below average. Pupils are developing skills in evaluating their final product but they do not always assess work against the criteria in their design specification. Pupils with special educational needs are able to make sound progress in line with their ability because they are well supported.
120. In Year 10 and 11 most pupils are currently working below national standards; however, this represents satisfactory achievement over time. Pupils' performance in GCSE examinations is below the national average. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are developing a good understanding of design processes. Higher attaining pupils produce work that shows detailed research, good design skills and techniques, considers the views of their clients, and make good products. Average and lower attaining pupils reflect limited design skills, weaker drawing techniques and

organisational skills, and lack rigour in the evaluation of their design ideas. The standard of girls' work is generally higher than boys'.

121. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory, with some good features and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers mostly manage pupils well and their high expectation of behaviour creates a positive attitude in pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge, give clear explanations and plan lessons well. In the most effective lessons, new knowledge is introduced and existing learning reinforced through a series of well-planned activities. In many lessons, teachers give considerable direction as they guide pupils through structured tasks. Although this ensures the development of basic knowledge and skills, on occasions it inhibits pupils' ability to work independently. In these lessons pupils would benefit from the use of a wider range of teaching strategies. Teachers do not always make the best use of product analysis and investigative work as they introduce new projects. Where teaching is less effective it is often because the lessons lack challenge and the demands made of pupils in their learning are insufficient. As a consequence, in these lessons, some pupils are uninterested and learning is slow. The use of ICT to build on pupils' understanding of design processes is developing; however, further provision for work using CAD/CAM and systems and control is needed. Literacy strategies are emphasised and pupils are positively encouraged to use appropriate technological vocabulary.
122. Pupils' work is regularly marked and assessed. However, the methods used are not consistent across the department and lack clear criteria, resulting in it not being as helpful to pupils as it might be, often lacking in constructive comments and targets for improvement. Teachers do not always make enough use of assessment information and what has been learnt during lessons to help to plan for future lessons.
123. Leadership and management of the subject are both good. The newly appointed head of department has made a good start in assessing the needs and priorities for development and has a clear vision of the department's aims. Teachers have a strong, shared commitment to raising standards and there are areas of good practice within the department. These strengths need to be shared more widely. Assessment systems for monitoring teaching and learning, and for tracking the progress of pupils in design and technology, are in their early stages of implementation and are not, as yet, being used to set targets for improvement for the subject and pupils. Technician support is limited and does not provide the level of support required in the workshops. The condition of the accommodation and level of resources for resistant materials, graphics products, systems and control, and CAD/CAM are unsatisfactory, and do not provide for the technological requirements of the subject.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

Overall the quality of provision in art is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are close to the national average and are the best GCSE examination results when compared with other subjects on the curriculum.
- The very good relationships between the teachers and pupils are having a positive effect upon the progress.
- The progress made by the majority of pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 is impressive.
- There is a lack of opportunity for pupils to use computers in art.
- The systematic monitoring of teaching and learning should be introduced.
- The challenging nature of work for the most able could be improved.

124. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their skills, knowledge and understanding are well below average.

125. By the end of Year 9 teachers' assessment and scrutiny of work indicate that the standard of attainment is average. The majority of pupils achieve well and some very well. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress. There is no significant variation in the progress and attainment of boys and girls. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, improve in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
126. In 2002, the GCSE examination results at grades A*-C were below the national average (at 40 percent) but were the best school results when compared with other subjects. All pupils entered for the GCSE examination in 2002 gained a pass. In 2003, GCSE A*-C grades improved considerably to 58 percent and are average compared with national results. The quality of teaching and the opportunities available to the pupils together with their positive attitudes result in the good level of progress being made. In all lessons, a good learning partnership exists between the pupils and their teachers.
127. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. Lesson planning is effective. The majority of lessons are challenging but could be improved for the higher attaining pupils. Classroom organisation and management are effective. Teachers promote a clear code of conduct in lessons. Relationships between the teachers and the pupils are very good. Pupils are encouraged to share ideas and materials and assist in the distribution and collection of materials and equipment. Key words are introduced into most lessons as part of the school's literacy policy. Therefore, throughout all year groups, the majority of pupils are reasonably articulate when discussing their work and many are capable of understanding and using technical language. Opportunities for the promotion of numeracy are limited but concepts of scale, proportion, perspective and area are introduced. Regular references are made to the work of significant artists and cultures in order to raise creative and visual appreciation. Opportunities for outside visits and the employment of visiting artists could be improved. Classrooms contain good displays of work. Assessment is satisfactory but more use should be made of assessment data as an influence on future curriculum development. Work is marked at periodic intervals, usually linked to the completion of a project. Homework is set but could be used more effectively. Additional opportunities should be provided for all pupils to gain experience of using computers in art as this is currently insufficient.
128. Both the leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The department is part of the faculty of design and technology. The head of the faculty is a new appointment and at the time of the inspection had been in post for little over three weeks. Department documentation needs improving. The systematic monitoring of teaching needs to be introduced to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning. Accommodation is good; resources are sufficient for need and used effectively.
129. The previous inspection stated that there was a lack of use of computer applications, insufficient variety in media offered to pupils and limited use of research in homework. All except the use of computers have been addressed successfully and the department has made a good level of improvement since the last inspection.

Drama

Commentary

130. Although the provision for drama was sampled during the inspection only a small number of lessons was observed. However, from this somewhat limited data in the time available, in the lessons observed, it is possible to draw the following conclusions from this evidence:- Drama teaching requires a different approach to classroom management and this needs developing so that the focus of the pupils is constant. In a Year 11 lesson, dramatic presentations were lacklustre, and pupils could not sustain a character because of weaknesses in classroom management and insufficiently targeted lesson planning. Related extra-curricular activities,

such as the drama productions, celebrate pupils' achievements and increase their involvement.

Music

Overall, the provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The advanced skills teacher provides excellent leadership.
- Good teaching and learning leads to good achievement.
- Good schemes of work are being progressively developed.
- Good assessment procedures are integral to all lessons.
- Year 7 pupils do not have music lessons and the amount of time allocated in Years 8 and 9 is insufficient.

Commentary

131. The school has been through a very challenging period in endeavouring to provide music in the curriculum. The previous music teacher was absent for lengthy periods. The graduate trainee now in post is in her third week of teaching. She is on a part-time timetable, and is receiving excellent mentoring from an advanced skills teacher, through links with a partner school. Although Year 7 pupils do not take music lessons this term, the headteacher has done her utmost to meet difficult staffing problems in music, and is constantly reviewing the situation.
132. Due to circumstances, it is not possible to judge levels of attainment on entry into the school. No Year 9 files were available for scrutiny, and no Year 9 classes could be observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to judge progress from Years 7 to 9. The most recent GCSE examination results were well below the national average, but they were in line in the previous year. Year 11 pupils are now receiving some of their tuition in the partner school. They have good attitudes to their studies and are on target to gain grades A*-C if their levels of achievement are maintained.
133. During the inspection, Year 8 classes were observed. Standards are below average, due to the intermittent tuition they received last year, but in these lessons all pupils achieved well. By the end of the lessons, all played at least two lines of Beethoven's *Fur Elise* from manuscript, all understood the meaning of 'chromaticism', and most played the keyboards smoothly, using the Italian 'legato' direction.
134. Teaching is good, and leads directly to the pupils achieving well. A particular strength is the use of assessment, which is integral to every lesson. Pupils know exactly at what levels they are performing, and what they must do to reach the next level. Lessons are prepared in minute detail, and very good use is made of technology. Particularly effective is the use of the interactive whiteboard. Too much time can sometimes be spent on the introduction to lessons; also, the pacing of the development of lessons can be rather slow. The trainee teacher is working on these aspects, supported by expert guidance from her mentor.
135. Pupils have good attitudes to their studies, and there is good behaviour in lessons. Boys and girls equally enjoy practical work, and concentrate fully when they are using keyboards. Many come to the music room to do extra practice when the room is free.
136. Leadership of the department is already showing great improvement, through guidance from the advanced skills teacher. Policies are in place for addressing provision for pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils, and other aspects, and these are being up-dated. Other inclusion issues, and a focus on literacy and numeracy in music lessons, will gradually be taken on board. Schemes of work are being produced, and also

lesson plans, which are challenging and imaginative. A new music room has been established, which raises the status of music in the school. Technology resources are satisfactory. Headphones have been acquired for use with keyboards, and these are contributing to the progress pupils make. More keyboards, so that pupils can have one each for practical work, would also enable better achievement.

137. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. All the signs now are that this is a developing and improving department.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

The overall provision for physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is very well lead and managed.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout all age groups.
- There is an innovative approach to curriculum development.
- The continuing links with primary schools are a strength.
- There is scope for the further extension of higher achieving pupils in lessons, to help them move to the next level of performance.
- Further development of self-evaluation as a tool to reinforce learning in lessons is needed.
- In order to meet recommendations, the school needs to increase the time allocation for physical education, in Years 10 and 11, from one to two hours each week.

Commentary

138. By the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments show that standards are in line with those nationally. By the end of Year 11 standards in core physical education are at the national average. The GCSE physical education results for 2002 were amongst the strongest for the higher grades A*-C, although overall results were below the national average.

139. By the end of Year 9 pupils' achievement is good and by the end of Year 11, pupils make satisfactory achievement in core physical education lessons. There is also evidence of good and very good progress in both age groups. In a Year 9 boys' table tennis lesson seen, pupils exceeded their previous targets through well-structured drills that encouraged them to support one another in their scoring system.

140. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

141. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout all age groups and the best teaching enables pupils to make better progress than might be expected. All pupils in a Year 10 girls' dance lesson were able to develop their movement ideas in terms of space and quality of movement. Responding to very effective teacher intervention and differentiation, pupils worked adventurously on the task, producing final sequences that showed a developing sense of form. This reflected very good levels of achievement for a group of average ability.

142. The leadership and management are very good, with excellent aspects. There is a clear vision for the department and the strategic planning reflects the aims of the school. Staff are motivated to develop their strengths and the excellent support of the school sports technician has inspired well-directed, paired teaching and enrichment opportunities for pupils. Performance data is regularly reviewed and assessment systems are used to direct pupils towards higher levels of attainment. The recruitment and deployment of staff are effectively managed and there is a clear commitment to staff induction and professional development.

143. Innovation in the curriculum is shown in two areas. The range of activities offered through Years 7 to 9 caters well for pupils' capabilities and their cultural backgrounds. The development of an alternative approach to teaching GCSE physical education uses a range of teaching methods that best suits the learning styles of those pupils with language development difficulties.
144. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Example of outstanding practice

In a Year 7 dance lesson the boys were taught the difficult concept of expression in an inspiring and very highly effective way.

The aspect of effort or quality of movement was introduced through the teaching of a simple gesture – demonstrated sensitively – and reinforced through the explanation 'dance can speak to people'. The pupils were totally engrossed and able to enrich their movement sequences with clear dynamic contrast and powerful qualities of expression.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Although the provision for vocational courses was sampled during the inspection only a small number of lessons were observed. However, from this somewhat limited data in the time available, in the lessons observed, and from discussions with senior managers, it is possible to draw the following conclusions:-

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pathway structure for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- The consultation with pupils and parents is a strength.
- The leadership and the management of vocational courses are good.

Commentary

145. Vocational courses are provided through a progressive structure which has been planned to develop skills as well as pupils' experience. It starts in Year 8 with opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, i.e. receptionist duties, and moves through citizenship and careers education in Year 9, to a variety of options in Years 10 and 11.
146. There is major focus for this area of experience in Key Stage 4, where, after much consultation between the school, the pupils and their parents, the school provides carefully planned pathways to meet individual needs and aspirations. The range of courses provides a structured continuum from an academic bias to one which is more practical and vocationally biased. All pupils follow GNVQ ICT.
147. The course structure has only recently been developed and all the indications are that it is very successful, not only in meeting the educational needs of individual pupils but also in involving their families in the process through consultation and discussion within the school.

Business

148. Applied GCSE in Business was introduced in 2003 for Year 10 pupils. In these lessons pupils clearly understand how to search for and interrogate specific information, for example when comparing advantages and disadvantages of sole-traders. Teaching is at least satisfactory and occasionally good. Lessons are well planned to include carefully selected, stimulating,

course materials. The activities, which engage the pupils, are well chosen and effective in helping pupils to understand work-related business matters.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Citizenship is taught as a distinct subject in the curriculum and is well co-ordinated.
- Lessons are well planned and pupils' attitudes are good.
- Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce pupils' literacy skills.
- Opportunities for responsible participation on the part of pupils are limited.
- The monitoring of teaching and the use of assessment information from pupils to assist teachers' planning are underdeveloped.
- The links between citizenship and other subjects within the curriculum are good.

Commentary

149. Standards of pupils' written work are closely linked to their standards in literacy and as such are below national expectations in both key stages. However, the depth of thinking and the nature of the insights shared by pupils in lessons, although not formally measured, suggest a good level of analysis on the part of many pupils. On the evidence seen in lessons, from looking at pupils' folders and discussions with pupils, achievement is good.
150. Teaching and learning are good overall. The school is unusual in offering separate citizenship lessons on the timetable and this allows for a well-co-ordinated approach. A committed and experienced team of teachers from a range of subject areas teach the lessons using a variety of very good resources, many of which they make themselves. For example, in one lesson on caring for the environment, the teacher had taken pertinent photographs of the local area surrounding the school. In another lesson, on bias in the media, pupils studied popular stories taken from the newspapers of only a few days before. Such 'tailor-made' resources produce a good response from pupils who see the relevance of the topic to their own lives. Teachers use a variety of approaches, including class discussions, group work, pair work, visual aids and ICT, to increase pupils' motivation. Individual written work also features. It always has a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills including accurate spelling and the widening of vocabulary.
151. In citizenship lessons, pupils are banded by levels of attainment. This means that higher attaining pupils do not have opportunities to share ideas with lower attaining pupils and vice-versa. Such a mingling of views would enhance pupils' development in this area. In the lower sets pupils are often over-reliant on the teacher's input and support. Pupils with special educational needs, however, are adequately supported and make good progress.
152. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader knows the subject's strengths and weaknesses well. After a period of turbulence, new schemes of work have been put in place and a team of experienced teachers established. Citizenship, as a new subject, covers topics which are still being taught in other lessons such as history, science or English. Further opportunities for teachers to meet together to share ideas and good practice will help to address this. Assessment information from pupils is beginning to be used to assist teachers' planning. However, opportunities need to be increased for pupils to participate in responsible action as citizens, for example through the School Council or action in the local community.
153. Citizenship has been introduced since the last inspection. As a result of its introduction the school is well placed to make a significant impact on pupils' development as citizens

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).