

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FERNWOOD SCHOOL**

Wollaton, Nottingham

LEA area: City of Nottingham

Unique reference number: 122838

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Witheford

Lead inspector: Mr D Pittman

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 260921

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

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### **Terms used in this report**

*Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils and students of all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**).*

*Inspectors judge the **standards** reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The pupils' **achievements** reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational **value added** over time. In this report, **similar schools** are defined as those where pupils had comparable prior attainment .*

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Comprehensive                           |
| School category:             | Community                               |
| Age range of pupils:         | 11-16                                   |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                   |
| Number on roll:              | 892                                     |
| School address:              | Goodwood Road<br>Wollaton<br>Nottingham |
| Postcode:                    | NG8 2FT                                 |
| Telephone number:            | (0115) 9286326                          |
| Fax number:                  | (0115) 9854250                          |
| Appropriate authority:       | The Governing Body                      |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr Richard Andrews                      |
| Date of previous inspection: | 14 <sup>th</sup> September 1998         |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Fernwood is a smaller than average comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16 and is situated in a residential area of Nottingham. The school is heavily oversubscribed with 892 pupils on roll. The school is part of the Excellence in Cities initiative, being actively involved in the programme for gifted and talented pupils. It has been a Beacon School and now plays a leading role in the Local Education Authority programme for 'Transforming Secondary Education' in Nottingham, working in conjunction with other schools. The proportion of pupils with first languages other than English is above average. Thirty-eight pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds but, broadly, these backgrounds are above average. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, is below average, and for those pupils with statements it is well below average. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--|
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| 13786                          | S Walsh      | Lay inspector  |  |
| 30702                          | P Bowyer     | Team inspector | Mathematics  |
| 19214                          | G Price      | Team inspector | English  |
| 23188                          | J Maunder    | Team inspector | Science  |
| 31096                          | J Thornhill  | Team inspector | Information & communication technology,<br>Citizenship |
| 31129                          | J Pickering  | Team inspector | Art & design   |
| 23891                          | P Slape      | Team inspector | Design & technology                                    |
| 20497                          | V Williams   | Team inspector | Geography, History                                     |
| 17404                          | J Tolley     | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages                               |
| 30072                          | J Skivington | Team inspector | Religious education, Music                             |
| 7926                           | J Bowden     | Team inspector | Physical education, Special educational needs          |
| 15678                          | J Radford    | Team inspector | English as an additional language                      |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Fernwood is a very effective school which gives very good value for money. Standards are well above the national average** at the end of both key stages. Pupils achieve very well as the result of **very good teaching**. The quality of **leadership and management** provided by the headteacher is **excellent**. Pupils' personal development is significantly enhanced by an ethos that is supportive, yet also based upon high expectations. The staff show a strong commitment to the shared objectives of continuing improvement; and the extra-curricular provision is very good. Relationships are very good; this is reflected in high standards of behaviour and the developing maturity of pupils.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in tests and examinations are well above national averages and are significantly above the standards for similar schools.
- The school is very effectively led and managed, the leadership of the headteacher has very successfully created a climate of challenge, support and improvement.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good; this promotes very effective learning amongst pupils. Pupils' achievement is, overall, very good, but it has been unsatisfactory in music.
- Pastoral care is very strong and promotes very positive relationships within the school.
- The curriculum provision is good; the vocational dimension is not extensive and citizenship is not yet fully independently provided. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well in some areas of the curriculum but lacks consistency of use in some subjects.
- There are areas within the school where accommodation still remains unsatisfactory. The significant rebuilding programme will address these issues; for example, in mathematics, music, design and technology and drama.

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have been on an upward trend. The quality of teaching is now a strength of the school. Assessment procedures are very effective in tracking pupils' progress and setting relevant targets for pupils. New facilities are now provided in sports and the 'new build' programme will improve facilities in arts, design and technology and science.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2000        | 2001 | 2002 | 2002            |
|   | A           | A    | A    | A               |

*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 11.*

Examination test results over time show continuing high standards and an improving trend. **Overall, achievement is very good** – pupils make significant progress given their broadly average standards on entry to the school. **Standards** at the end of Years 9 and 11 are **well above average** in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science). These high standards are also reflected in the results for modern foreign languages. Generally, achievement at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is very good. Although there is some variation in the achievement of boys and girls, it is not significant, and all groups continue to make very good progress.

Pupils respond very well to the school's very good provision for moral and social education and good provision for spiritual and cultural education. This results in their **personal development** being **very**

**good.** Relationships between each other are very good and relationships with staff are excellent. **Behaviour and attitudes are very good**, exclusion rates are low. Pupils' enthusiasm for schoolwork, regular attendance and mature attitudes promote very good achievement.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good.** The school is very effective in identifying the individual needs of pupils. The overall quality of **teaching is very good** and helps promote high standards of achievement. Teaching in modern foreign languages is of a consistently high standard. Teachers' detailed planning and subject knowledge helps to promote and develop pupils' skills very well. The school has successfully created an ethos for learning based upon high expectations and positive working relationships. The active encouragement of teachers helps to motivate pupils and leads to high productivity. Pupils are keen and interested learners. The assessment framework is very effective and is a model of good practice - target setting and planning procedures have been significantly improved. Staff are provided with high quality information which allows them to track pupils' progress very accurately.

The curriculum provides a good range of worthwhile curricular opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils. Enrichment, including extra-curricular provision and support for learning outside the school day, is very good.

The school has a very effective pastoral system. Pupils are very well supported and any underachievement is quickly identified. Very good care, support and guidance contribute significantly to pupils making significant gains in academic achievement and personal development.

The school is popular, oversubscribed and enjoys a very good reputation in the local community. The school has very effective links with parents and good links with the local community.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very effectively led and managed.** The **leadership** of the headteacher is **excellent.** Rigorous and robust systems have been put in place to **manage** the school **very well.** The leadership and management of senior managers and other key staff are very good. **Governors** carry out their responsibilities well and are **very supportive** – they have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

**Parents** are very satisfied with almost all aspects of the school. A few parents felt that they were not well informed, but inspectors concluded that the reporting system was very detailed and relevant. **Pupils** enjoy being at the school. They feel that they are taught well and they are very helpfully supported in their academic and personal development.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

**The things the school should do to improve are:**

- Improve the current insufficient re-enforcement of numeracy across the curriculum.
- Ensure the provision of specific lessons for citizenship and extend the use of computers in some subjects.
- The accommodation in mathematics and drama is inadequate.

**and, to meet statutory requirements:**

- Ensure greater consistency in providing for a daily act of collective worship.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Examination and test results over time show continuing **high standards** and an improving trend. **Achievement** at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is **very good**. Although there is some variation in the achievement of boys and girls, it is not significant, and all groups continue to make very good progress. Standards in all the core subjects are well above average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 9. The value-added is significant given pupils' attainment on entry.
- Standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics, and modern foreign languages are particularly high.
- Results in GCSE examinations are well above average and are significantly above similar schools.
- Overall achievement is very good reflecting the hard work of pupils and staff.
- Achievement in music has been unsatisfactory but is rapidly improving due to staffing changes.
- Overall standards have continued to improve since the last inspection.

#### Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 35.7 (34.5)    | 33.3 (33.0)      |
| Mathematics   | 37.6 (37.0)    | 34.7 (34.4)      |
| Science       | 34.8 (35.0)    | 33.3 (33.1)      |

*There were 174 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  | 67 (66)        | 50 (48)          |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades  | 97 (96)        | 91 (91)          |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades  | 99 (100)       | 96 (96)          |
| Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects) | 41.1 (n/a)     | 40 (39)          |

*There were 172 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9, the combined results were well above the national average. In English and mathematics, standards were well above average and above average for science. Overall standards in these subjects were well above those of similar schools. The overall trend in test performances is above the national picture. In general, pupils achieve very well and make significant progress in their studies. There is a rising trend in GCSE results. The examination results in 2002 for the higher grades were well



above average. Examination performance in most subjects was significantly above national figures, with very good standards being achieved at the highest grades in art and design, technology, science, history, and German. Overall achievement in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is very good. Examination results for 2003 indicate that the school has improved upon its high-level of performance. The targets set for 2002 and 2003 were successfully met, being exceeded by 5 percentage points in 2003. The targets have been realistic and appropriately challenging.

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

2. Standards seen in lessons and in the samples of pupils' work match the test and examination results closely. By the end of Year 9, overall standards are well above average, being particularly high in mathematics, English, geography and modern foreign languages. Given that pupils' attainment on entry is average, their achievement by the end of Year 9 is very good. Teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils to think for themselves. Outstanding teaching in modern foreign languages leads to high achievement and very good learning in lessons. Achievement in music has not been as high as it should have been.
3. The pace and challenge of lessons continues in Years 10 and 11. Overall standards continue to be well above average. Though the inspection took place early in the school's academic year, standards were particularly good in mathematics, English, science, geography and modern foreign languages. Pupils build very successfully on secure foundations established in their earlier years in the school. Generally, they continue to achieve standards that are well above expectations. The value-added measures compiled by the school and the Local Education Authority indicate significant improvement through the successive key stages.
4. Gifted and talented pupils are very effectively challenged by the work in their lessons and are able to reach their potential. They are well catered for out of school, with many initiatives to broaden their experiences.
5. In common with other groups of pupils in the school, most pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well and achieve at a very good rate in relation to their capacity and earlier attainment. Pupils coming into the school at different ages with little or no knowledge of English, generally achieve very well in understanding and expressing themselves in English as a result of very effective individual support and their own determination to succeed. A small number of pupils with English as an additional language do not achieve as effectively as they should, because of lack of confidence. The school has now introduced a programme of special support for some of the younger pupils to boost their achievement.
6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, across all years, is very good. All are entered for GCSE examinations and, in 2002, all achieved at least one 'G' grade pass – one pupil achieving five A\* to C grade passes.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils respond very well to the school's very good provision for moral and social education and good provision for spiritual and cultural education. This results in their **personal development being very good**. Relationships between each other are very good and relationships with staff are excellent. **Behaviour** and attitudes are **very good**, exclusion rates are low. Pupils' enthusiasm for schoolwork, regular attendance and mature attitudes promote very good achievement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for moral and social education is very good and provision for spiritual and cultural education is good. This promotes very good personal development.
- Pupils have very good attitudes. They are very confident, articulate and work hard.

- Behaviour is very good. Despite severe disruption through extensive building work, the school remains a very pleasant and orderly community.
  - Pupils from a wide variety of cultures work very well together. The school promotes racial harmony very successfully.
  - There are high levels of attendance.
7. The majority of pupils really enjoy school. They are secure and confident as a result of excellent relationships with staff. Pupils are enthusiastic, keen to work hard and are very willing to take on responsibilities. They exhibit very mature attitudes and are assured and articulate. The school expects very high standards of behaviour and very successfully ensures that behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school. The school actively encourages very good personal development and its excellent ethos promotes tolerance and respect, resulting in racial harmony. Bullying is unusual and is addressed quickly by senior members of staff.
  8. Pupils are able to reflect on life's fundamental questions but sometimes, in lessons, they are willing to passively receive information from teachers rather than having the opportunity to actively question and explore issues. There are some very good opportunities in art and design lessons to draw spiritual inspiration from music and poetry. Pupils show respect for other cultures and viewpoints and listen well to each other. Their values and behaviour are based on an honesty and openness promoted by the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Many staff are willing to draw and reflect sensitively on their own personal experiences, and this allows pupils to gain a deeper understanding of emotions, moral dilemmas and social responsibilities. The school does not meet its obligations to involve all pupils in a daily act of collective worship. However, the assemblies observed were of a high standard and made some very strong points about cultural diversity, the differences between right and wrong, and about responsibilities. A spiritual dimension is included that pupils are able to appreciate and understand. This was especially successful in an assembly that used very modern music to promote a message of peace, tolerance and understanding, not only for the world, but also within the school community.
  9. Almost all pupils have very good attendance records. Pupils arrive punctually at the start of the school day. Present arrangements for mathematics lessons, with classrooms being away from the main building, mean that these lessons do not start on time. Parents are very aware of the importance of good attendance and actively encourage their children to attend regularly. The school has effective systems to verify the reasons for absence and truancy is not tolerated. This results in very low rates of unauthorised absence.
  10. In normal lessons, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are very good. In art and design, for example, this is as a result of good teacher-pupil working relationships and, in mathematics, it is as a result of good grouping arrangements. In withdrawal lessons in the study support department, pupils behave very well and are keen to learn and make progress. Where pupils with special educational needs receive extra support from teaching mentors in normal lessons, other pupils take this for granted and they, themselves, often ask for help. The school's strength in addressing issues of inclusivity is shown in the support it gives to pupils who have learning difficulties.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

| Authorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data        | 7.1 |
| National data      | 7.8 |

| Unauthorised absence |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data          | 0.2 |
| 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*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

| Categories used in the Annual School Census         | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 583                  | 24                                | 1                              |
| White – any other White background                  | 38                   | 1                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 14                   | 1                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black African                     | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 9                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 3                    | 3                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian                     | 92                   | 1                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani                  | 58                   | 2                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 5                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 21                   | 5                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – African                    | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 8                    | 1                                 | 0                              |
| Chinese   | 7                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 9                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

*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 by the school is **very good**. Pupils' achieve very well because of the **high quality of teaching**. The **commitment to learning**, which is shown by pupils' attitudes to work, is conducive to **high standards**. Staff are provided with high quality information which allows them to track pupils' progress very accurately.

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of **teaching is very good** and consistently promotes **high standards of achievement**. Pupils are keen and interested learners.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very effective planning and subject knowledge help to promote and develop pupils' skills very well. Standards of attainment are high.
- The active encouragement of teachers helps motivate pupils and leads to high productivity.
- Teaching methods are very effectively geared to pupils' different levels of ability.
- The management of behaviour is very good and is built upon the very good relationships that exist in most classrooms.
- Assessment procedures are detailed and provide pupils with good guidance as to how to improve. However, assessment procedures in music are unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 119 lessons

| Excellent | Very good  | Good       | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor     | Very Poor |
|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| 7 (5.9%)  | 32 (26.9%) | 46 (38.8%) | 32 (26.9%)   | 2 (1.7%)       | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (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.*

11. Pupils are taught very well throughout the school. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good, with examples of excellent teaching. For example, teaching is very effective and stimulating in art and design, modern foreign languages, music, English and mathematics. The minimal amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen was mostly related to insufficient diversity of activities to reflect the different levels of capability within the class.
12. A particular strength is the consistency of the quality teaching across subjects. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to the pupils and the school. They form a self-evaluative group, supporting one another well. The school has a rigorous programme for teachers' professional development and training. Each member of the leadership team supports other teams of teachers. The school has set clear aims for improvement in teaching and learning.
13. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, expertise and show enjoyment of their subject, which is often enthusiastically shared with their pupils. In a very good Year 10 mathematics lesson, the very effective questioning elicited good quality answers and promoted high levels of pupils' self-confidence, enabling them to ask the teacher when they experienced difficulties. The excellent teacher/pupil relationships ensured the lesson proceeded at a good pace. The very high expectations of the teacher resulted in very good learning and high standards. In the best lessons, teachers set suitably challenging tasks. Another strength of the teaching is the teachers' use of discussion and activities, enabling pupils to express their own views and ideas.

#### **Example of excellent practice – modern foreign languages**

In a Year 10 German lesson, pupils rapidly became confident and competent in describing household tasks and their opinions in past, present and future tenses. A brisk pace was maintained throughout, pupils were fully involved in evaluating their own progress and entirely engaged by activities. Very clear demonstrations, given in German by the teacher and supported by very effective and supportive questioning, enabled all pupils to easily identify and apply patterns in the language. Excellent planning and high expectations, giving pupils short achievable steps in learning allowed them to gain rapidly in confidence through a very good variety of appropriate and interesting activities. Very effective whole-class practice of key words and phrases, followed by frequent opportunities for pupils to try out the new language themselves in pairs, resulted in very rapid progress so that by the end of the lesson all pupils were able to speak at length and in detail about what they did to help at home and what they thought about it.

14. The very good teaching evident in lessons enables and consolidates pupils' learning. Explanations are clear and questioning is effective in moving pupils' learning forward and helping them to recall previous learning. Starter activities promote an interesting beginning to the lessons. For example, in a very good Year 10 science lesson, the starter activity was used effectively to assess pupils' prior knowledge and understanding of the lesson topic. Building on what pupils understand and know is a positive feature of most lessons. Good management of pupils, regular assessment throughout the lesson and expectations of pupils to use the correct terminology, result in very good progress.
15. The homework set is purposeful, challenging and used well to reinforce learning. Good opportunities are provided for accelerated learning in lessons. A range of visits and visitors to

the school motivates pupils and promotes their learning. The most able pupils are also the school motivates pupils and promotes their learning. The most able pupils are also challenged and encouraged to extend their thinking beyond the confines of the syllabus. The evidence from pupils' work over a period of time confirms the consistency of the very good teaching pupils receive.

16. Pupils are keen to achieve well. They make clear advances in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Their intellectual, physical and creative efforts are developing well.
17. Teaching and learning have improved significantly since the previous inspection. The big improvement is largely due to the way the school has focused on pupils' learning. Staff training has been directed towards encouraging pupils to think about how they learn and to be fully involved in their learning. Stimulating teaching is a particular feature of modern foreign languages, and bears fruit in consistently high examination results.
18. The quality of teaching and learning in small group withdrawal lessons in the study support department is very good. Very effective and efficient starts to lessons ensure pupils are quickly engaged. Pace, progression and challenge keep pupils on task and lessons are very well planned. Summative sessions at the end, involve pupils in stating their views as to what they have learned as well as encouraging them to comment on the quality of the lesson itself. In mainstream lessons, teachers know the needs of those pupils with special educational needs because of very good quality individual education plans. This helps teachers plan their lesson to meet the needs of these pupils well.
19. Where observed, teaching mentors provide effective help and support in mainstream lessons to pupils with special educational needs. In English, for example, this is very effective in Years 10 and 11. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, the teaching mentor provided very effective support and intervention strategies to deal with pupils with severe learning difficulties. As a result of this, the learning of other pupils in the lesson was not unnecessarily disrupted.
20. The quality of teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is very good in withdrawal sessions and makes a significant contribution to their learning. It is generally good or very good in whole-class lessons. Teachers are well informed about their pupils' needs, and in-class support is of a high quality so pupils make very good progress. Assessment in withdrawal groups is very good and pupils have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve.

## **Assessment**

21. The school's procedures for assessment of pupils are a model of good practice. The overall quality of assessment procedures is very good. The thoroughness of the system enables the senior management team to identify any underachievement by pupils accurately and rapidly. This system (which has been in place for about three years) involves a central collation of academic progress for every pupil, together with previous national examination results and evaluations on effort, behaviour and homework. These data are then analysed to predict future examination results and to set targets for all pupils. The whole process is efficient and very effective, with appropriate action being taken for pupils who are falling behind.
22. The assessment data are available to departments and to pastoral staff, allowing form teachers, heads of year and departmental leaders to keep close track of pupils' progress. Reports to parents, made twice a year, contain relevant information on progress and on pupils' attitudes to their work.
23. Whilst the processes of assessment for the whole school are very good, there is some inconsistent practice in the work of departments. For example, modern foreign languages makes full use of the provided data and analyses it in many ways, including calculations of value-added gains by pupils. However, in English, the department processes the data only

slightly and staff in that department remain unaware of their value-added gains. Some information is inaccurately transferred to the main system, for example, in physical education, where *optical mark readers* have not accurately scanned the given data. There is also an inconsistency between departments in the tracking of pupils' progress. The practice is good in science, but needs development in history and geography.

24. Marking of regular work in some departments remains routine, for example English, with a lack of comments that would help pupils to improve their work.

## The curriculum

The curriculum provides a **good and broad range** of worthwhile curricular opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils. **Enrichment activities**, including extra-curricular provision and support for learning outside the school day, are **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides a broad range of learning opportunities that cater well for pupils' interests, aptitudes and particular needs.
- Opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities, are very good.
- Teachers provide a very good level of support for pupils outside of lessons.
- Gifted and talented pupils are very well supported through a wide variety of activities.
- The school has detailed plans for developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and understanding of citizenship across the curriculum, but this is yet to be implemented fully in numeracy and citizenship.

## Commentary

25. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and enables all pupils to achieve well in all subjects and develop in a rounded way. It is reviewed regularly and updated to take account of new developments to improve its relevance to the pupils. For example, at present the school is in the process of effectively implementing the Key Stage 3 Strategy and developing literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, and provides an appropriate alternative curriculum for some pupils in Years 10 and 11. However, although the school has detailed plans for developing pupils' numeracy and understanding of citizenship across the curriculum, these are yet to be implemented fully. Similarly, the use of ICT is not yet fully developed across the curriculum and, at present, the lack of resources presents difficulties.
26. Expertise from outside the school is used very well in most subjects to enrich the curriculum. Visiting speakers, for example, in science, and artists in residence are used to enrich lessons and the school maintains very well established links with the local college to provide an alternative, vocational curriculum for groups of pupils in Years 10 and 11. The school also provides pupils with opportunities to take part in other initiatives, such as the Employability Graduation Award, where pupils spend some time at the local college to follow vocational courses and achieve NVQs in subjects such as health and beauty, motor mechanics, nutrition and the Youth Award. All pupils take two accredited units of the Work Related Achievement Project (WRAP) and participate in one week's work experience.
27. Personal development is very well promoted through a wide range of opportunities, including the personal, social and health education (PHSE) programme and other opportunities. Subjects work successfully together to enrich pupils' learning. For example, mathematics and geography departments run a collective residential week on the south coast, and the school provides pupils with the opportunity to go to an outdoor residential centre in the Peak District. In modern foreign languages, there are well-established links with schools in Germany and exchanges for pupils; there are also regular trips to France.

28. The school regularly reviews and adapts its curriculum in line with pupils' needs and aspirations and current developments. For example, all departments have recently reviewed their schemes of work in order to support gifted and talented pupils and to take account of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. In modern foreign languages, training for teachers in the TALK Project, for example, has been very successful in improving standards and creating very positive attitudes towards learning. The school is actively involved in The Transforming Secondary Education initiative in Nottingham to develop new ideas and share good practice in collaboration with four other schools.
29. Provision for extra-curricular sport overall is very good – a published programme for each week had already been completed at the time of the inspection even though it was very early in the academic year. Good attendance is evident, with the significant involvement of enthusiastic pupils. A very good range of recreational and competitive opportunities is available for pupils to broaden their experiences. New accommodation has added considerably to the breadth of extra-curricular activities on offer at lunchtimes and after school, as well as at the weekend. As a result of the dedication and enthusiasm of teachers, individual pupils have progressed to attain representative honours at city and county level, a number of boys are members of professional football academies and two individuals have achieved national representative honours in football and hockey. Football, hockey, netball and tennis teams have achieved success at city and regional level – the under-16 netball team has reached the national finals stage.
30. Overall, curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils have full and equal access to the school curriculum. The school's ethos of inclusion and support for those pupils with special educational needs has a positive impact on the social development and learning experiences of these pupils, as well as that of all other pupils in the school. Mainstream teaching, grouping arrangements and small group withdrawal sessions in the study support department, mean that pupils with special educational needs are able to access the full curriculum on offer.
31. Pupils with special educational needs also have opportunities to receive extra-curricular support, for example, at lunchtimes. This means they have the opportunity to ask for and receive extra subject and specific support and guidance, thus helping them make very good progress in their studies. Teacher mentors are dedicated, enthusiastic and committed to working with pupils with special educational needs. They have a wide range of experience and have attended, and are attending, appropriate courses to enhance their professional development.
32. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils with English as an additional language. The school is wholeheartedly committed to the policy of inclusion and the effective partnership between the study support department and subject teachers enables the teachers to plan lessons and activities which ensure pupils' access to the curriculum and provide opportunities for language learning. Specialist support in whole-class lessons gives pupils who are in need of extra help the confidence to take an active part in the lesson. Individual tuition for pupils arriving at the school with very little knowledge of English is very effective in giving them a good grounding in spoken and written English.

## Accommodation

The accommodation is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The buildings and grounds are overcrowded for pupils, teachers and parking because of ongoing major building work.
- Pupils travelling to and from mathematics are often late because of the distance between buildings.
- The physical education department enjoys very good accommodation, having recently occupied the new sports hall and soon-to-be-completed dance studio.

### Commentary

33. The standard of provision for the physical education department offers a clear insight into the high quality, purpose-built new extension, soon to be occupied by mathematics, science and expressive arts faculty. The floodlit outdoor synthetic football pitch is Football Foundation funded and offers all-year-round access by the school and local community. The rooms currently occupied by science, mathematics, humanities and expressive arts will be allocated to other curriculum areas. The library is satisfactory, although there are clear opportunities to further develop its stock, facilities for ICT, lunchtime usage and the careers corner. In spite of the current difficulties caused by major building work, the site manager and his staff maintain the premises in good, virtually litter-free condition.
34. The study support department is housed in one room close to the learning resources centre. However, there is no office for the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). As a result, there is no 'private' area available where meetings can be held with either parents or carers and pupils. It also means that the storage of confidential information on pupils with special educational needs is within the same area.

## Resources

Resources for learning are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Capitation funding is closely linked to each department's development planning and to the pupils' learning.
- Modern foreign languages are very well resourced due to the school's participation in the TALK initiative.

### Commentary

35. The physical education department is very well resourced and enjoys much new equipment, including a digicam, heart rate monitors and PowerPoint presentation equipment as well as access to the National Skating Centre. Pupils in mathematics, science, the humanities and religious education enjoy ample, good quality texts. The science, music and special educational needs departments have good ICT equipment. The special educational needs department maintains an impressive bank of learning materials for other departments to meet the needs of all pupils. The art and design, design and technology and religious education departments require further ICT hardware and software to support delivery of the National Curriculum.



36. Resources in the study support department, including ICT hardware and software, are sufficient to support pupils with special educational needs. Where necessary, pupils with special educational needs have specialist resources to support their needs.

### Care, guidance and support

The school has a **very effective pastoral system**. Pupils are very well supported and any underachievement is quickly identified. **Very good care, guidance and support** contribute significantly to pupils making significant gains in academic achievement and personal development.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's very thorough system for recording pupils' achievement supports very good monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities are very well supported and cared for.
- There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils and pupils find staff very easy to approach with academic or personal problems.
- There are no formal procedures for gathering pupils' views.

### Commentary

37. Daily routines are planned and carried out scrupulously. The school has carefully thought out procedures to minimise hazards during the current building programme. The school has appropriate effective child protection procedures that follow locally agreed procedures. However, there needs to be a second 'named' person with appropriate training.
38. There is a very effective pastoral system. Heads of year carry out their roles conscientiously and form tutors are equally effective. The system is very ably led and managed and parents find staff easy to approach. Staff have excellent relationship with pupils. Pupils can readily identify with staff and feel able to confide in them when they have problems.
39. The school's very thorough systems for recording pupils' achievement and personal development allow pastoral and academic staff to carefully monitor pupils' progress. Underachieving pupils are well supported and the teaching mentors, funded by Excellence in Cities, provide effective support for pupils who are experiencing academic or personal difficulties. Pupils receive consistent good advice and guidance. For example, subject teachers are readily available and give extra support and advice, and there are many clubs which support the completion of coursework. There is an appropriate induction procedure that promotes smooth transition between primary and secondary school. Pupils are confident and self-assured by the time they leave school and are well prepared for further education or training. The school provides effective careers education, but the school's partnership with *Connexions* is in its infancy. There are satisfactory arrangements for work experience, but in order to access a wider range of opportunities more suited to their high academic standards and aspirations, many pupils find their own placements.
40. The school lacks formal processes for gathering pupils' views. The school council is no longer functioning but Year Councils do exist, as, for example, in Year 9. The informal links with pupils are strong and pupils' views are known to staff through informal conversations and discussions in tutorials and personal and social education lessons. Pupils' views are treated with respect and acted upon where appropriate.
41. The study support department has effective relationships with outside specialist agencies – this enhances further the quality of support and guidance for those pupils with special educational needs. Annual reviews are effective and support those pupils with statements of special educational need as they move through the school. The study support department

meets fully the curricular requirements as outlined in pupils' statements of special educational need.

42. The SENCO uses, and is able to draw upon, a range of assessment data in order to enable her to identify those pupils who need support and place them appropriately on the school's list of pupils with special educational needs.
43. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils at school who are at the stages of action-plus and above on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs. These are reviewed on a regular basis and targets subsequently modified or changed. Pupils are fully involved in this process. Targets set are generally clear, concise and challenging, yet attainable by pupils.
44. The school provides very good support, advice and guidance for pupils with English as an additional language as they move through the school. This is based on the careful monitoring of detailed and well-focused comprehensive assessment records for each of these pupils.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school is popular, oversubscribed and enjoys a **very good reputation** in the local community. The school has **very effective links with parents** and **good links with the local community**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents receive very good information about their children's academic progress.
- Parents are extremely supportive of their children's education.
- The school has good links with local colleges and uses these to extend the 14 –19 curriculum
- Although the school works well with its feeder primary schools to obtain general information before children transfer, the range of curricular links is limited in some subjects.

### **Commentary**

45. The school works very effectively with parents to support pupils' learning. Parents feel a strong sense of partnership and have confidence in the school. There is regular sharing of information about children's learning, behaviour and emotional needs. Annual reports about pupils' academic progress are of a very high quality. Parents are very supportive of their children's education and this can be clearly seen in pupils' positive attitudes towards their schoolwork. There is a very active Parents' and Teachers' organisation that raises substantial amounts of money for equipment. Parents have been consulted and their views have been taken into account. A considerable amount of time is spent carefully investigating parents' concerns and the school tries to resolve issues sensitively.
46. The school is outward looking and has productive links with the local community. People from the local community make use of the school's very good quality sports facilities. The school makes good use of local resources to enhance the curriculum.
47. The transfer of information from partner schools is effective and there are satisfactory arrangements for the induction of new pupils. Links between the English, mathematics and physical education departments and primary schools are very good and help to ensure a smooth transition, but other departments, such as science, ICT and design and technology have limited contact. This can result in lack of information about what children have learnt and the skills they have in these subjects. The school has sought to share its skills and expertise with other local secondary schools and is very willing to learn from others. Links with colleges help to strengthen the school's curriculum for older pupils. A programme of visits from colleges helps pupils to make informed decisions about the next stage in their education. The school has good links with universities via the Gifted and Talented programme.

48. Parents and carers are invited to, and attend, annual reviews of pupils with statements of special educational need. Their views are recorded; hence, they are fully involved and informed as to their child's progress towards the targets set out as part of the review process. The SENCO has close links with feeder primary schools, including the Fernwood family of schools.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very effectively led and managed**. The **leadership** of the headteacher is **excellent**. Rigorous and robust systems have been put in place to **manage the school very well**. The leadership and management of senior managers and other key staff are very good. Governors carry out their responsibilities well.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is visionary and inspirational.
- The monitoring and review of performance data are of a very high standard.
- Senior staff are very experienced and provide very good role models for other staff.
- Strategic planning is very good; this is reflected in comprehensive development plans.
- The high quality of leadership shown in pastoral care adds significantly to the school's ethos.

### Financial information

#### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

| Income and expenditure (£) |           | Balances (£)                        |         |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 2,852,647 | Balance from previous year          | 112,726 |
| Total expenditure          | 2,597,748 | Balance carried forward to the next | 254,899 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 3,049     |                                     |         |

### Commentary

49. The headteacher provides excellent leadership; there is a clear sense of direction for the school. She has instilled an ethos of *always striving to improve* that permeates the school. The school has placed considerable emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning and self-review. The school is managed with thoroughness and a clear purpose to bring about improvement.
50. An effective senior management team very ably supports the headteacher. The team works well together and shows a strong commitment to the objectives of the school. It exercises its delegated responsibilities well, conducting monitoring and review activities systematically and efficiently. The quality assurance procedures that operate within the school are of a particularly high standard. This rigorous review of performance for each subject leads to targets being drawn up for both the whole school and individual subjects. Each target has clear criteria so that its success or otherwise can be measured and the level of planning for meeting these targets is particularly detailed. Consequently, the standards achieved by the school have continued to improve.
51. Governors show strong commitment and are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work. They support the school well and have been particularly active in promoting improvements to the school buildings and its environment. The governing body is an effective team and working relationships with the staff are good. Annual meetings with parents are carefully minuted; these show the care governors take to explain the school's work to parents.

Helpful information on the required areas is given in the annual report. The prospectus is an attractive and informative document, which reflects the school's values and work very well.

52. The school's staff performance management process is very effectively structured and is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants thrive on a vigorously delivered programme of professional development, taking account of individual, department and whole-school priorities. The headteacher, senior managers and governors have worked hard to recruit, train and deploy staff appropriately.
53. The high aspirations of the headteacher and senior staff have led to the well-planned reorganisation of support systems for pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language. A strong team has now been created with the focus on raising attainment in all areas of school life. Management of the individual support of pupils is very good.
54. The recently appointed SENCO is an experienced practitioner and provides very good quality leadership and management for the provision for pupils with special educational needs in the school. There is a clear focus for development of provision and the study support handbook is a very good and informative working document that informs the work of the department. The school pays due regard to the Code of Practice for special educational needs and statutory requirements are fully met.

# 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 **very good**.

|  | Year 9             | Year 11            |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards                              | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement                            | Very good          | Very good          |
| Teaching and learning                  | Very good          | Very good          |
|  | <b>Overall</b>     |                    |
| Leadership                             | Very good          |                    |
| Management                             | Very good          |                    |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Good               |                    |

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching and their own very positive attitudes.
- Very good leadership of the department is helping to raise standards in English.
- Good progress has taken place since the previous inspection.
- When planning lessons for pupils in Years 7 to 9, teachers do not always take account of the particular needs of the lowest attaining pupils.
- Planning does not make best use of the good assessment data available to departments

#### Commentary

55. In 2002, the results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 9, and in English and English literature GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11, were well above national averages. The 2003 results show continued overall improvement. This pattern of improvement has been consistent in recent years and has outstripped national trends.
56. Pupils whose skills in reading and writing are just above average when they come to the school, reach well above average standards by Year 9. This represents very good achievement. In Years 10 and 11, pupils continue to produce work that is well above average. They are consistently working close to the limits of their capabilities. Writing is generally fluent, accurate and well organized. It often shows very good awareness of how language may be modified to achieve different ends. By Year 11, many pupils have developed their written style into an individual voice that enlivens their work. Reading is a popular activity in Years 7 to 9 and this interest is sustained in Years 10 and 11. Enthusiastic engagement is evident in pupils' analytical essays on modern and pre-twentieth century texts.
57. Teachers are concerned to ensure that all pupils are challenged. They have very good knowledge of the subject and use this skilfully to pitch their teaching at appropriate levels for pupils in each year. The pace of lessons is brisk and pupils enjoy the lively mix of reading, writing and speaking activities. Planning to involve all pupils in lessons through work in small groups and pairs helps to ensure that levels of interest remain high. As a result, almost all pupils make very good progress in lessons. Occasionally, in Years 7 to 9, the lowest attaining pupils in a class would benefit from additional support or alternative approaches to ensure their very best learning. Marking is detailed and informative to give clear ideas for improving work. Pupils are always well behaved and have real respect for their teachers. This lies at the heart of the very good achievement over time.

58. The department has seen several recent changes in leadership, but each of these has been effected so as to maintain the cohesion and very high standards across the department. Evaluation of the work of the department does not yet make full use of available data about pupils' attainment. Nevertheless, good improvement has taken place since the last inspection. This is most notably evident in the higher achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 and in the better overall standard of teaching.

**Language and literacy across the curriculum**

59. Standards of literacy are above average. Pupils are able to meet the demands for reading in all subjects. Their writing is largely accurate and well presented. Almost all pupils are able to write well at length without the need for extensive planning or re-drafting. Their oral expression is also above average and most are fluent speakers. Use of ICT is very evident in the written work of most pupils.
60. The teaching of basic literacy skills across the curriculum is good. The literacy co-ordinator has used training days to help staff appreciate the importance of developing pupils' reading and writing in all lessons. The school policy for literacy is helping improve pupils' learning in English, modern foreign languages, art and design, history, religious education, design and technology and physical education. Elsewhere, its impact is not so apparent. Good practice is evident in the word-based work and the weekly library lessons in English, and in the teaching of reading skills and the focus on word patterns in modern foreign languages. In the GCSE physical education course, pupils learn how to structure their writing. Design and technology teachers make good use of writing models to improve the standards of pupils' work. In art and design, teachers make very effective links between art work and creative writing. Religious education lessons show good planning for literacy and pupils produce good extended writing. However, in most subjects, opportunities for varied reading or for reading aloud in class are limited.

**MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES – FRENCH AND GERMAN**

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

|  | <b>Year 9</b>      | <b>Year 11</b>     |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards                              | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement                            | Very good          | Very good          |
| Teaching and learning                  | Very good          | Very good          |
|  | <b>Overall</b>     |                    |
| Leadership                             | Excellent          |                    |
| Management                             | Excellent          |                    |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Excellent          |                    |

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good and often excellent in Years 7 to 11 in both French and German and, as a result achievement is very good – results are very high.
- Assessment is very helpful to pupils – they understand what they have to do to improve and their performance is carefully tracked.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very positive and behaviour is excellent.
- Leadership and management of the subject are outstanding and have led to improving standards and a high level of consistency across the department.

**Commentary**

61. Results of tests and current standards are well above average at the end of Years 9 and 11 in both French and German. In 2002 in GCSE examinations, the proportion of candidates achieving A\*-C grades was high in French and well above average in German. Results since the last inspection, and particularly over the last three years, have improved significantly and continue to do so.
62. Pupils' achievement is very good overall. Both standards and teaching have improved significantly since the last inspection. These improvements result from strong innovative curriculum leadership. The head of department has succeeded in developing a shared vision for improvement of teaching through the introduction and implementation of the TALK Project across the department, and has been tracking standards with great care. By the end of Year 9, all pupils possess a very good range of language skills and a very clear understanding of patterns in the languages and are beginning to apply them independently. Pupils are particularly confident and competent in speaking and listening, and write accurately and in detail about a variety of topics. By the end of Year 11, pupils' linguistic skills are very well developed and they operate very effectively and spontaneously in French and German using a wide range of structures and vocabulary to express their ideas and justify their views. Pupils' attitudes are very positive and their behaviour is excellent. They are keen to participate and rise to the high expectations and high level of challenge in lessons.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is very good with almost half of lessons observed being judged as excellent. Strategies employed include team games, imaginative use of the reward system to encourage participation, and clear presentations. French and German are used extensively and very effectively and pupils are given frequent opportunities to use the languages for themselves, both informally and to gather and give information. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace with pupils being fully involved in evaluating their own progress. Teachers are excellent role models; the language used in lessons is very well matched to pupils' previous experience and capabilities, presents an appropriate challenge and increases pupils' confidence as well as developing their listening and speaking skills. The focus on pupils identifying and applying patterns and on pupils' own use of the language is very effective in increasing pupils' skills and confidence. Lessons are very well planned with short achievable steps in learning, allowing pupils to build very effectively on what has gone before.
64. Leadership and management of the department are outstanding. Assessment information is used to very good effect to monitor progress and ensure all pupils achieve well. ICT is used well by pupils to draft their work. Excellent progress has been made since the last inspection because of innovative and imaginative development of teaching and learning. Standards, pupils' attitudes and the quality of teaching have all improved significantly and continue to do so. There is a high level of consistency across the department as a result of very clear vision and direction provided by the head of department.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

|  | Year 9             | Year 11            |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards                              | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement                            | Very good          | Very good          |
| Teaching and learning                  | Very good          | Very good          |
|  | <b>Overall</b>     |                    |
| Leadership                             | Very good          |                    |
| Management                             | Very good          |                    |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Good               |                    |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very high level of challenge in lessons
- There are very strong teacher-pupil relationships
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good
- The department is a strong team, effectively led
- There is insufficient use of ICT in lessons

## Commentary

65. The results in national examinations in 2002 were well above average at the end of Year 9, maintaining the trend of the past three years. In 2002 the GCSE results at the end of Year 11 were well above average and this represents a rising trend over the past few years. However, the unconfirmed results in 2003 were less good. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, boys outperformed girls, but the examination performances of the two sexes follows no obvious trend or pattern.
66. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, so the examination results show that the achievement of all pupils is very good, this being especially noticeable during the first three years. Work seen shows that the quality of classwork is very good in all year groups and there are some outstanding examples of coursework. Pupils with special educational needs make progress equivalent to their classmates. Where used, learning support assistants (teaching mentors) are very effective in helping pupils with special educational needs. Gifted and talented pupils are appropriately challenged in class, sometimes with extension work. Such pupils also benefit from extra-curricular opportunities, which include visits to the local university and participation in a national mathematics challenge. As result, the progress of gifted and talented pupils is very good.
67. Teaching is very good overall, with all staff having a good knowledge of the subject. During the inspection there were no unsatisfactory lessons seen, with most lessons being good. However, the quality of work seen and the performance in examinations, show that teaching over the long term is very good, despite the temporary accommodation being poor and some teaching groups having more than one teacher. The main strengths of teaching are the high expectations teachers have and the consistently high level of challenge to pupils. These features, when combined with very strong teacher-pupil relationships, generate pupils' very good attitudes and produce a very strong work ethos. This results in pupils' learning being very good. Lessons are well planned and contain effective question and answer sessions, which draw all pupils into the session and allow them to demonstrate their understanding. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning. As most lessons are strongly teacher-led, there are few opportunities for independent learning, except when pupils are producing coursework. Here, some pupils, especially high attainers, take the opportunity to display their well-developed skills.
68. An outstanding piece of coursework by a high attaining Year 10 pupil showed the ability to take the subject beyond the bounds of the National Curriculum. The topic (To find the maximum area for a given perimeter) was carefully chosen by the department so the opportunity existed for pupils to explore mathematics in depth. In this example, the subtlety of the exploration, delving into the first principles of calculus, combined with clarity of explanation and very good use of spreadsheets and graph-plotting programs, produced an exceptional piece of work.
69. The department is a strong team, ably led. The department is well organised and has an appropriate development plan and suitable policies in place. The monitoring of pupils' progress is good with regular assessment showing how pupils progress. However, the routine marking of classwork does not reflect National Curriculum levels and makes the setting of targets for pupils difficult. Staff are monitored formally by the head of department and there are opportunities for the spread of best practice by informal visits to classrooms and by effective meetings and discussion. Resources in the form of textbooks are good, with an ample supply. ICT provision is a weakness with inadequate usage of computers within the subject. This is an issue that was identified in the last inspection and has yet to be dealt with. However, the routine



use of calculators in the classroom is appropriate. The overall improvement from the last inspection is good, with gains made in the standards of teaching and learning, the consistency of marking and the leadership of the department.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

70. There have been strong links between geography and mathematics over the last few years, mostly with joint field trips. Here, pupils use trigonometry to calculate heights of cliffs and other natural features. As a result, numeracy and other mathematical skills in geography are very good in Years 10 and 11, although slightly weaker in Years 7 to 9. In science, numeracy skills are also well used in the topics of ratio and proportion, and various types of graph work, especially with the construction of velocity/time graphs in Year 9. In other areas of the school, the profile of numeracy is much lower; there is little awareness of numeracy in history and physical education, and in ICT there are opportunities for numerical practice that are ignored. In design and technology, accuracy of measurement is emphasised but little else is practised in terms of pupils' mathematical development.
71. The principle of developing a cross-curricular numeracy policy has only recently been instigated by the school, with the appointment of a numeracy co-ordinator, this year. The development of common practices and the formulation of a whole-school numeracy policy are aspects that have not yet received detailed attention.

### SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

|  | Year 9        | Year 11            |
|--|---------------|--------------------|
| Standards                              | Above average | Well above average |
| Achievement                            | Good          | Good               |
| Teaching and learning                  | Good          | Good               |
|  | Overall       |                    |
| Leadership                             | Very good     |                    |
| Management                             | Good          |                    |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Good          |                    |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standard Assessment Tests and GCSE results are consistently above average.
- Good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes contribute substantially to pupils' good achievement.
- Very strong new leadership is having a good effect on standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Higher attainers do not always make as much progress as they could.
- Sharing best practice in teaching is insufficient across the department.

### Commentary

72. In 2002, results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were above the national average for all schools. They were above average compared with the results of similar schools. Results were below those of English and mathematics. Unconfirmed results for 2003 indicate a significant improvement in the average point score per pupil, particularly at Level 6+. GCSE results in 2002 were well above average for all and similar schools. Boys' performance was better than that of the girls. Unconfirmed results for 2003 show a slight drop in the average point score per pupil.

73. From work seen, standards by the end of Year 9 are above average and, by the end of Year 11, standards are just well above average. When pupils enter the school, levels of attainment are broadly average in science, but by the end of Year 11 their standards are better than might be expected. They attain equally well across all the science attainment targets. They demonstrate a good and often in-depth knowledge of science and an understanding of underlying principles. For example, pupils in a Year 9 class understood the impact of humans on the atmosphere and could plan an experiment to evidence the effect increased carbon dioxide levels have. In a Year 11 class, pupils progressed well in understanding atomic structure, including atomic number, mass and electron configuration. Pupils with special educational needs show very good achievement in Years 7 to 9. Their teachers have realistically high expectations, briefing teaching mentors well on how to provide effective support. Higher attaining pupils often show good achievement.
74. The development of pupils' literacy skills is generally well supported and most pupils confidently use scientific terminology. The use of mathematics is well developed and graphical skills are good in all years. ICT skills are good, particularly for research and presenting work. However, the ability to use computers to collect and analyse data during practical experiments is less well developed.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is better in Years 7 to 9, where most teachers are implementing the new Key Stage 3 Strategy well, and some very well. However, more effective primary liaison could negate overlap with earlier work. The Key Stage 3 Strategy is beginning to influence teaching in Years 10 and 11, where some teachers are developing a less didactic approach. Teaching varies from being very good, to one lesson where it was unsatisfactory. The significant strengths in very good lessons included teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and including a wide range of interesting activities. Teachers' high expectations and enthusiasm were transmitted to pupils. In the better lessons, teachers challenge pupils appropriately meeting their individual needs. Pupils are encouraged to explore scientific ideas, reflect and think critically, and to apply their knowledge and understanding. A strong feature of these lessons is the way in which pupils show interest, ask questions, work co-operatively and concentrate for long periods. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, too much time was spent trying to gain the attention of the class and the level of difficulty of work was inappropriate.
76. The new leadership and management are strong and supportive. Teachers and technicians work well together to support pupils' learning. There are clear aims, supported by appropriate strategies to raise pupils' attainment further. However, the very good teaching skills that exist within the department are not used enough to influence and improve the practice of colleagues. Assessment, which is mainly through end of topic tests and other marked work, is good, overall. The information available from assessment is not always used effectively to plan suitable activities, for example, when pupils move from Year 9 into Year 10. Work is marked regularly but occasionally lacks rigour. Teachers' verbal and written comments are usually encouraging, but do not always show pupils what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Some teachers set suitable targets for pupils' progress, but overall, practice is inconsistent.
77. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations have improved in terms of average points score per pupil. ICT provision has improved together with resources and staff training. The quality of marking remains a weakness. There has been some improvement in matching work more closely to pupils' needs across the attainment range. A number of successful curricular initiatives have been implemented, such as new schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 and an improved assessment and tracking system.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

|  | Year 9             | Year 11            |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards                              | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement                            | Very good          | Satisfactory       |
| Teaching and learning                  | Good               | Good               |
|  | <b>Overall</b>     |                    |
| Leadership                             | Good               |                    |
| Management                             | Good               |                    |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Very good          |                    |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement in provision since the last inspection.
- Very good attitudes from pupils and teachers ensuring a constructive learning environment.
- Good teaching impacting positively on learning.
- There is a balanced curriculum in Years 7 – 9 but this is not so evident in Years 10 and 11.
- Extension of the assessment procedures in Years 7 – 9 to include target setting and evaluation of progress.
- Further development of the monitoring of cross-curricular ICT.

### Commentary

78. By the end of Year 9, pupils' skills in ICT are well above average, indicating very good progress. Pupils edit and format documents and combine text and graphics in presentations that are prepared for particular audiences. They search data in a meaningful way and create attractive leaflets to inform parents about option choices. By the end of Year 11, pupils undertaking GCSE courses progress satisfactorily and maintain the well above average results. Pupils use appropriate software to produce a range of business products to include business cards, letterheads, mail-merged letters and registration forms. They explain aspects of ICT, such as the Data Protection Act and Health and Safety issues. All pupils undertake a basic course that extends the level of achievement reached at the end of Year 9.
79. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan and structure lessons well to allow for evaluation of pupils' progress. Their good subject knowledge engenders a positive and trusting relationship with the pupils. Pace of lessons is brisk, and teachers introduce the lesson topic with clear instructions. Good worksheets ensure pupils make good progress in their skills and knowledge and in the use of ICT. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are encouraged to manage their own learning and they respond well to that trust. Teachers provide good individual support to all pupils to impact positively on learning. Special educational needs progress as well as others though there are no specific provisions for them such as differentiated worksheets. Teachers recognise that there is some inequality of progress between the genders, but no specific strategies have been developed to resolve the issue.
80. The enthusiastic head of department leads and manages the hard working department and resources well. He has introduced a new curriculum for Years 7 to 9 and recognises the areas for further development. The self-trained technician manages the hardware competently, but he has insufficient time in the school for the expanding resources.
81. The school has invested considerably in recent years but the current accommodation is unsatisfactory. The three computer rooms have modern resources, but the layout of two rooms does not provide a constructive learning environment. The amount of time allocated in Years 7 to 9 is less than the national recommendation and some class sizes in Year 9 are far too large for a practical subject. The pupil/computer ratio is still above national expectations, but access to ICT resources is limited for some subjects. A number of departments make good use of ICT and there are plans to further develop pupils' ICT experiences. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. Cross-curricular ICT has been extended with the majority of departments including it in their documentation. However, there are inconsistencies in the use of computers within departments, for example, in mathematics. Although there is adequate provision for ICT courses, there are few resources to support ICT in other subjects. There is limited access to the three computer rooms, which are heavily booked for the ICT courses, and the problems with the laptops make them difficult to use. Although teachers have been provided with training, their enthusiasm to use their knowledge is restricted by the limited access. The substantive refurbishment programme will address these issues.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

|  | Year 9         | Year 11            |
|--|----------------|--------------------|
| Standards                              | Above average  | Well above average |
| Achievement                            | Very good      | Very good          |
| Teaching and learning                  | Good           | Good               |
|  | <b>Overall</b> |                    |
| Leadership                             | Good           |                    |
| Management                             | Good           |                    |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Good           |                    |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards generally are well above average, including in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils achieve very well due to good teaching and very good relationships and attitudes to learning.
- Excellent GCSE fieldwork projects are produced but there is insufficient fieldwork in Years 7 to 9.
- More use of ICT, pupil self-evaluation and better targeting of pupils' achievement would improve learning.

### Commentary

83. Results in GCSE examinations have improved to be well above average. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the highest grade is below average. Boys perform particularly well. The subject is much less popular than the national norm.
84. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a very good grounding in geographical skills. Most use and interpret maps well and the presentation and analyses of statistical data graphically are very good. Knowledge of places is exceptionally strong, but the understanding that similar environments worldwide usually have similar characteristics, needs developing for pupils of all abilities. Higher and average attainers work very well, often producing work above expectations. Lower attainers achieve very well as do pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, when provided with teacher mentor support. By the end of Year 11, pupils have improved their knowledge, understanding and skills further. The very good achievement in Years 10 and 11 is largely due to work undertaken being focused on GCSE examination needs and interested and well-motivated pupils who work hard. The quality of GCSE projects is exceptionally high. All pupils reach or exceed expectations.
85. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers' management and control in lessons are very good; and built on very warm relationships. There is a relaxed yet purposeful air in lessons that

is conducive to good learning. Learning is effective, being underpinned by teachers' very detailed knowledge of topics taught, and presented in a structured and focused way. A great strength of the teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11, is the emphases placed on investigative skills. The teaching of visually consolidated learning in Years 7 to 9, is limited by insufficient use of local Ordnance Survey maps, local examples and atlases to help pupils understand spatial patterns. In some lessons, objectives need to be more precisely focused on what pupils will know, understand and be able to do and how they are tested for understanding at the end of the lesson.

86. The faculty is very competently run and staff work together very co-operatively. The subject is generally well managed. The subject development plan has sound priorities but these are not yet implemented. Monitoring of pupils' progress has produced improved GCSE results but pupils' self-evaluation is not used adequately in targeting pupils' learning.
87. A well-developed partnership with the mathematics department provides significant benefits for pupils in the high standards of numeracy in coursework. The Year 11 joint fieldwork in Dorset, involving detailed measurement of cliff and beach profiles, provides the bases for the very high quality GCSE projects. The fieldwork undertaken provides the most effective learning and greatly stimulates pupils' interest in the subject. However, overall fieldwork provision in Years 7 to 9 is inadequate. There is no coherent ICT programme of work, partly due to access difficulties. There are plans to remedy this in the new humanities faculty building programme for completion in early 2004. There is good improvement in raising standards since the 1st inspection, but innovations have been limited.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

|  | Year 9         | Year 11       |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Standards                              | Average        | Above average |
| Achievement                            | Satisfactory   | Good          |
| Teaching and learning                  | Good           | Good          |
|  | <b>Overall</b> |               |
| Leadership                             | Good           |               |
| Management                             | Good           |               |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Good           |               |

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership is good and provides a clear vision: management is effective and provides a well-organised course.
- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11 due to their very positive attitudes to learning and good teaching.
- A second, full time specialist teacher is needed to reduce the variability in learning
- A fieldwork and ICT programme are needed to enhance the curriculum provided.

## Commentary

88. Results in GCSE examinations are above average and the overall trend is upwards. Unusually, the subject is more popular with boys than girls and they perform well above the national average. The popularity of the subject has declined in recent years.
89. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a sound grounding in historical skills. Most have a good knowledge and understanding of events and the main people studied. Knowledge of chronology has improved and is now good. Most pupils demonstrate an ability to identify the nature and significance of source material quite well. Achievement is good in classes where pupils of all attainment levels are suitably challenged. Elsewhere it is satisfactory. However, in some lessons, gifted and talented pupils are not sufficiently stretched and pupils with special educational needs have inadequate teaching mentor support and the tasks set are too complex. By the end of Year 11, pupils have further developed their skills in using historical evidence and are confident in undertaking enquiry and using source material. These operations are well done, but critical evaluation is underdeveloped. The very detailed coursework is not sufficiently supplemented with a regular summary revision of topics. Some of the individual GCSE projects on Lincoln Castle are of high quality. The good achievement in Years 10 and 11 is due to very well motivated pupils working hard and good well-structured teaching. A few pupils achieve very well.
90. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching is usually better when specialists teach the subject. Teachers are committed, caring and supportive of pupils. Classroom management and control are built on the very good relationships existing between pupils and staff. The best teaching is lively, challenging and has good pace and high expectations. Questioning is skilfully used, often aided with visual materials, to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of issues and events and, thus, their self-learning. Learning benefits significantly from pupils' very good attitudes, conscientious engagement and desire to do well. However, learning suffers when teachers do not take sufficient time to thoroughly place the lesson in the context of study, so that pupils of all attainment levels can make the appropriate links. In some lessons, there is insufficient re-enforcement of teaching points visually on the board or the use of visual aids in teaching.
91. The department is well led and effectively managed. There is knowledgeable and innovative curriculum leadership. Good assessment procedures are evident, including the tracking of pupils' progress, but more self-evaluation and involvement of pupils in target setting is needed. A second, full-time specialist teacher of history is a priority to meet curriculum demands and reduce the variability in learning observed. ICT has been developed, but there is now need of a coherent programme of ICT skills linked to the curriculum themes taught. Generally there is a good variety of study and there has been good progress since the last inspection.

## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

|  | Year 9         | Year 11       |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Standards                              | Above average  | Above average |
| Achievement                            | Good           | Good          |
| Teaching and learning                  | Good           | Good          |
|  | <b>Overall</b> |               |
| Leadership                             | Good           |               |
| Management                             | Good           |               |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Very good      |               |

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge and use of resources support learning.
- Good assessment and monitoring of progress improves standards.
- Easy rapport between teachers and pupils encourages learning.
- Independent learning is not always encouraged in lessons.
- Room to improve the impact of ICT on self-learning and research.

## Commentary

92. A very positive feature is that almost all pupils are entered for the GCSE examination. Results in 2002 were broadly average for A\*-C grades. In the unconfirmed 2003 examinations, results improved significantly and are now above average. These are particularly good results given the limited amount of curriculum time available for the subject.
93. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average. Pupils are able to express personal and reflective views and understand the significance of faith and belief, symbols and religious practices of all the major religions. Lower attaining pupils encounter difficulties in completing assignments, partly due to the difficulty of the material and the time available.
94. By the end of Year 11, pupils are able to discuss moral problems, such as euthanasia, with awareness and understanding of the issues. Written work is often very good with some very mature, extended writing and good evaluative skills from higher attaining pupils. For example, an excellent piece of writing on cosmic awareness was produced, as was another on the Creation/evolution debate. Most pupils are confident in using appropriate religious terminology, encouraged by an emphasis on key words and concepts.
95. Pupils benefit from knowledgeable teachers who structure lessons well, have a good rapport with their pupils and keep up a sprightly pace. Resources are used well, not least the pupils themselves. A lesson on Sikhism came alive and relevant when a Sikh boy explained the symbolism of that religion, using artefacts and garments, to the whole class. Open-ended tasks allow higher attaining pupils to extend their knowledge. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning. The amount of new material introduced into some lessons can lead to teacher-dominated sessions, missing the opportunity to allow pupils' own self-learning and extended discussion. The developing use of ICT and encouragement to research religious websites and the department's own site, need further emphasis.
96. Pupils work purposefully in lessons and achieve well, given their average level of attainment on entry. Their own positive attitudes towards their learning contribute significantly to their achievement. Pace of learning is always brisk and, generally, teaching and learning objectives are met when lessons are not overloaded with factual information. Marking and assessment are good because they encourage learning and are pushing up standards. Religious education makes a good contribution to the personal and spiritual life of the school.
97. The department is well managed. Clear direction and vision have been provided by the acting head of department. The new head of department is now in place and is well supported by an excellent humanities department.
98. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Pupils are now stretched and achieve well, particularly higher attaining pupils. Standards are much higher and the quality of teaching much improved.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

|  | Year 9         | Year 11            |
|--|----------------|--------------------|
| Standards                              | Above average  | Well above average |
| Achievement                            | Good           | Very good          |
| Teaching and learning                  | Good           | Good               |
|  | <b>Overall</b> |                    |
| Leadership                             | Very good      |                    |
| Management                             | Good           |                    |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Good           |                    |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and are now above the school average for the first time.
- The quality of leadership is very good and the department works well together to clear priorities.
- Pupils make steady progress through the department because of teaching which is never less than good.
- The use of Computer Assisted Design (CAD), Computer Assisted Machining (CAM) and ICT in general is underdeveloped.

### Commentary

99. In 2002, GCSE results were above average overall and maintained their position broadly in line with the school average. In the last year, standards overall have risen significantly and are now above the school average. There are differences in performance in contributory subjects and, in 2002, results in electronic products were well below average. The proportion of pupils with A or A\* grades is very high.
100. By the end of Year 9, standards of work seen overall are above average. Pupils' practical skills are above average and specifications are well developed. Pupils generate a variety of novel ideas and, in general, these are well developed. Pupils do not always plan their making, or fully develop product evaluation. By the end of Year 11, standards of work seen overall are well above average. Pupils make very good progress from Year 10 to Year 11. They organise folio work into objectives, utilising ICT when possible. Technical vocabulary is well developed and used. Pupils research thoroughly, presenting samples of what they have found, and effectively trial processes to be used. They modify their ideas from prototype form, and extensively test their final product. In contrast, pupils do not always evaluate their products against the original specification or include third-party evaluation, particularly where there is no clear client base. In both key stages, the use of ICT for most purposes is underdeveloped, and often supplemented at home. In electronic products, pupils use Pro-Desktop CAD to design packaging, and in textiles, CAD CAM embroidery is used to enhance products, but CAD CAM is not yet significantly impacting upon standards.
101. The overall quality of teaching is good. In Years 7 to 9, teachers' good subject knowledge and expertise allow the pace of learning to be maintained, and appropriate skills and techniques are learnt through a good range of focused practical tasks. Well-prepared and planned worksheets contribute to pupils' learning and progress in lessons. Pupils work with attention to safety and hygiene. In the most effective lessons, teaching is characterised by high expectations and the use of product analysis to help develop pupils' own ideas.
102. In Years 10 and 11, teachers interact very well with pupils to set appropriate challenges, and have generally high expectations. In a good lesson, sketching skills and three-dimensional



prototype models were being developed to help pupils communicate and develop their ideas. In a very good lesson, pupils were involved in consideration of health and safety issues relating to their textile products and utilised CAD CAM to enhance their making. Project work is monitored and meaningful targets are set, but practice varies across subjects. Characteristically, pupils' attitudes are very good, they work very well together and maintain their interest throughout lessons. There is a proportion of very good teaching in both key stages.

103. The department works well together and has clear and appropriate priorities. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 is being effectively re-written to improve differentiation and assessment opportunities. The broad range of curriculum opportunities does not currently include a vocational option, and industrial links and awareness are underdeveloped. Literacy and numeracy are re-enforced well through the use of key terms and arithmetical calculations. Current limitations of accommodation impact upon learning. There is an emerging use of CAD CAM but the department is not 'ICT rich' in provision or subsequent consistent use. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Although access to ICT facilities is still limited; standards have risen; teaching is now good; homework appropriate and product analysis effectively used.
104. One Year 11 lesson in child development, and one in food and nutrition were observed. Standards in the work seen were average overall, and pupils achieved well in lessons. Pupils' attitudes are good and the courses offered are appropriate for those taking them.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

|  | Year 9         | Year 11        |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Standards                              | Average        | Average        |
| Achievement                            | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Teaching and learning                  | Very good      | Very good      |
|  | <b>Overall</b> |                |
| Leadership                             | Unsatisfactory |                |
| Management                             | Unsatisfactory |                |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Good           |                |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Challenging teaching supports enthusiastic learning.
- Classroom management and rapport creates a very good learning environment.
- Very effective use of ICT to encourage music composition.
- Pupils' under-achieve across both key stages.
- Accommodation problems affect delivery of the subject.
- Inadequate assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress.

### Commentary

105. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well above average. . Numbers of pupils taking the subject are small but on the increase.
106. By the end of Year 9, pupils' musical knowledge is broadly average. They are able to listen critically, play in time together and compose riffs (short repeated phrases) above a backing accompaniment. Most pupils can use musical terminology with growing understanding and are confident and adept at using technology. The majority of pupils' rate of achievement is, however, less than satisfactory at this stage, as their learning has been interrupted by the

departure of the music teacher last year and consequent problems in covering the delivery of the subject to a satisfactory level. These pupils are not producing the quality of music-making of which they are capable.

107. Good efforts were made to support and prepare Year 11 pupils for their examinations, with very pleasing results. Present standards in Year 11 are average but improving rapidly, particularly in performance and composition. Critical and listening skills are also evident in self and group analyses. Levels of achievement are less than satisfactory given the talent and ability of many of the pupils. Pupils who have continued to have instrumental tuition have survived this recent difficult period best.
108. Teaching is very good because lessons are well structured and challenging tasks are given. This captures the interest and involvement of all pupils. The use of ICT is very effective in supporting composition work. Teaching and learning are hampered by a lack of suitable accommodation and, in one Year 8 class, time allocated is unsatisfactory.
109. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are enthusiastic and pride in their achievements is evident. The pace of learning is always brisk and clear teaching and learning objectives are met. A significant feature of this new beginning for music is the large numbers of pupils joining the choirs, orchestra and bands, as well as an increase in the numbers taking up instrumental tuition.
110. Management has been less than satisfactory. No departmental records or recordings of pupils' work have been kept; there is, therefore, no evidence to confirm any teacher assessments made. With the appointment of a new head of department, much needed vision and direction is now in place, together with schemes of work and monitoring of pupils' progress.
111. Since the last inspection, the department, after experiencing staffing problems, has shown itself to be making good progress in even a short time. Literacy skills are developed effectively through the use of specialist terms. There are still some accommodation problems to be overcome but this will be achieved as the department prepares to move into the new building and becomes part of the faculty for the Creative Arts.

## Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

|  | Year 9    | Year 11       |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Standards                              | Average   | Above average |
| Achievement                            | Very good | Very good     |
| Teaching and learning                  | Very good | Very good     |
|  | Overall   |               |
| Leadership                             | Very good |               |
| Management                             | Very good |               |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Very good |               |

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ambition and influence of the head of department is very good.
- All pupils achieve well because of the very good teaching.
- Development planning and lesson planning are excellent.
- The assessment of pupils' work is well used to raise attainment.
- Below average time is allowed to teach art and design in Years 7 to 9.
- The shortage of ICT makes it difficult to deliver the National Curriculum.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

112. The GCSE results in 2002 were above average and well above average numbers of pupils gained A\* grades. The unconfirmed 2003 results were equally good.
113. The work in Year 9 is average and is based on observational drawing. Pupils have good knowledge of European and multi-cultural art. There are good quality paintings and collages illustrating words such as 'joy' and 'angry' and challenging versions of the Mona Lisa as an astronaut, a convict, or with body piercing. The pupils produce sculpture from plaster casts of their faces. Their acceptance of new ideas is noticeable. Sketchbooks lack the usual experimentation, but contain topics such as the seaside, with drawings of crabs, fish and bathers linked to paintings such as Cassatt's 'Children on the beach'. There is insufficient evidence of pupils using computers. Recognising their well below average skills when they arrive in school, pupils' achievements are very good. The work in Year 11 is above average, although sketchbooks continue to lack sufficient personal investigation. Observational drawing continues as the basis of all activities. There is good evidence of working at nearby Wollaton Hall and with artists in residence. Photographs record visits to centres such as the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Those who are less confident in drawing meet examination demands by increasing their study of other artists. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is very good.
114. Teaching and learning in art and design are very good. Schemes of work and lesson plans are excellent. Teachers have high expectations and very good subject knowledge. Pupils often read aloud and write about their work, thereby further developing their literacy skills. Teachers generate confidence in all pupils, irrespective of their ability, gender or race. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils responded particularly well when painting to music, initially listening to their bodies beating, breathing, then thinking of blue, red, green, so stirring their imagination. They produced angular, strident compositions in red and dark blue in response to harsh, discordant rock music, and calm green, pastoral images to Tchaikovsky's "Sleeping Beauty". Year 10 pupils learn quickly when assessment highlights the validity of different styles of working. Occasionally, homework does not challenge the whole class. Accurate assessment is linked to raising attainment, setting targets, and predicting GCSE success, while recognising the achievement of minority groups and gifted and talented pupils and curricular weaknesses.
115. The department is managed very well. The head of department's vision is wide-ranging and drives her pupils and her subject. Good liaison with other schools provides effective mentoring procedures for teachers. Planning is linked to raising attainment. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, although the department is moving to new, purpose-built studios. The lack of computers and specialist software prevents full delivery of the National Curriculum. As at the last inspection, the time allowed for art and design in Years 7 to 9 is below average. Very good progress has been made since last inspection. Standards are much higher and achievement is now very good. Teaching, learning and assessment are now very good.

## Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

|  | Year 9         | Year 11       |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Standards                              | Above average  | Above average |
| Achievement                            | Satisfactory   | Good          |
| Teaching and learning                  | Good           | Good          |
|  | <b>Overall</b> |               |
| Leadership                             | Good           |               |
| Management                             | Good           |               |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Satisfactory   |               |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and very positive attitudes from pupils help them to achieve well in their GCSE course.
- Standards are generally above average, and improving.
- Good leadership ensures that drama courses are well organised, challenging and popular.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress, especially in Years 7 to 9, are not fully developed.

### Commentary

116. GCSE results for 2002 were above average and provisional results for 2003 were even better. In the practical courses for pupils in Years 7 to 9, standards of vocal work are particularly high and ensure that overall standards of work are also better than might be expected.
117. Drama is popular throughout the school despite the absence of specialist teaching areas. Pupils enjoy working independently and make rapid progress in lessons. Teachers ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in each lesson. As a result, pupils move forward confidently, for example, when devising improvised scenes, and remain undaunted by challenging tasks. Programmes of lessons for pupils in each year have been revised to ensure that pupils build on their skills and understanding lesson by lesson.
118. Good leadership in recent years has given drama a high profile in the school, as indicated by the successful annual school productions. The new department head has a clear vision for the further development of drama within the expressive arts faculty. Specialist areas in the new building are at the centre of this planning. New procedures for assessing and recording pupils' developing practical skills are also being devised in order to monitor progress more closely.
119. Since the last inspection, the department has maintained the good provision. This year's examination results show higher levels of attainment. All drama lessons are now taught by specialist teachers, leading currently to better overall standards of learning.

## Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

|  | Year 9         | Year 11       |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Standards (Yr 11 results do <i>not</i> reflect GCSE) | Above average  | Above average |
| Achievement  | Good           | Good          |
| Teaching and learning                                | Good           | Good          |
|  | <b>Overall</b> |               |
| Leadership   | Very good      |               |
| Management   | Good           |               |
| Progress since the previous inspection               | Very good      |               |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Quality of learning is good as a result of good quality teaching.
- Standards at GCSE are well above average.
- The quality of leadership is very good and there is a clear vision for the subject.
- Achievement is good at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11.
- Curricular provision is very good and very good extra-curricular activities extend pupils' learning.
- Teachers' assessment levels at the end of Year 9 are not effectively moderated.

### Commentary

120. Results in the GCSE examination were well above average in 2002 and continue a rising trend since the previous inspection. Provisional results in 2003 show a further improvement. Far fewer girls than boys take the course, hence it not possible to comment realistically on gender differences.
121. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average, particularly in team games. Boys have a good knowledge and understanding of how to draw a defender and how to recycle the ball when actually stopped by a defender. The more physically capable show skill in support play, but others are less successful in this respect. In association football, most girls have good close control and passing skills, but the less capable tend not to control the ball well enough when receiving a pass. Achievement is good because standards on entry are below what is expected. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average. Most boys have well-developed team skills in full-sided games. In badminton, most girls have a good stance and use power in their strokes to good effect. There is, though, a tendency for some to play to an opponent rather than to place strokes to make an opponent move. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is good, despite pupils having experienced limited accommodation in Years 7 to 9. Standards in the Year 11 GCSE course are above average. Pupils have developed a good knowledge and understanding of anatomy and physiology and the links between health and fitness. Individual pupils from across all years have gained representative honours at city and county level (including two at national level) and teams have been successful at city and regional level – the under-16 netball team recently reaching the national finals.
122. The quality of teaching and learning is good across all years. Teachers have a very good command of the activities being taught. The good quality teaching is typified by pace, purpose, progression and challenge. There is consistent insistence on high standards of behaviour. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, they respond well, which helps to create a very positive learning atmosphere in lessons. All groups of pupils are, therefore, able to make good progress in their learning. Teachers circulate well in lessons, which helps to keep pupils on task. Teachers' effective use of praise and constructive criticism makes pupils aware of their capabilities. On occasion, however, there are insufficient structured opportunities for pupils to be involved in peer evaluation and coaching – this would deepen their knowledge and

understanding even further. The quality of marking of GCSE theory work is variable and pupils are not always being told what they need to do to make progress.

123. The department is managed well; very clear vision and direction is provided. Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection, particularly in the improvement of the quality and range of accommodation. Standards in the course that all pupils follow have improved, as have results of those following the GCSE course. The quality of teaching and learning has also improved.

## VOCATIONAL COURSES

### ASDAN Course

#### Commentary

124. Pupils with a wide range of academic aptitude have access to ASDAN courses that have more of a vocational perspective. **Pupils really enjoy the different learning experiences** that include more research and independent work. The course is interesting and uses a wide range of speakers from and visits to the local community. It is particularly successful in gaining the interest of lower attaining pupils. Pupils work hard and produce well-presented and well-researched work.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Personal, social and health education

#### Commentary

125. The school makes **good provision** for personal and social education. There is an appropriate provision for sex education, and for education about relationships. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught by their form tutors and this works well. Teaching is good and the relationship between tutor and pupil is enhanced. Teachers who volunteer, but who do not have specialist roles, teach older pupils. There is some variation in the quality of teaching. The most effective lessons are well organised and give pupils' ample opportunity to enhance social skills through paired and group work and relationships between pupils and staff are warm and supportive. In less successful lessons the teacher does not make it sufficiently clear what is expected of pupils, there are limited opportunities for group work and pupils lose interest in their work. The organisation of the curriculum results in some inequalities with some pupils receiving the whole of their personal and social education from extremely effective teachers and others experiencing more mundane lessons. Additionally, groupings of pupils, based on their ability in modern foreign languages, has resulted in classes that consist largely of boys who have the potential to be immature. This restricts elements of social education and pupils do not have the opportunity to hear the views of, work with and learn from pupils of different genders, abilities and aspirations.

## Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### Mains strengths and weaknesses

- Recognition that citizenship is a compulsory National Curriculum subject.
- An appointment of a curriculum leader to develop citizenship has been made.
- Development of an identifiable curriculum, but which needs to have separate provision.
- Need to identify a more cohesive monitoring structure.
- Establish a range of activities to allow pupils to experience active citizenship.

### Commentary

126. Citizenship is an emerging subject in the school. The relevant aspects of the subject have been identified and are taught currently through the personal and social education (PSE) programme and in a range of subjects across the curriculum. The school has conducted a full audit of the range of topics each department teaches. There is no formal procedure for managing the development of the subject and measuring the progress of pupils.
127. The school has appointed a curriculum leader from September this year to develop the subject. He has recognised the issues involved in managing such a diverse subject and monitoring the cross-curricular aspects. There are plans to use the departmental audit to establish a separate curriculum for citizenship, which will identify the three important strands and separate the relevant topics from PSE. The plans include consideration of timetabling issues and the creation of new schemes of work to incorporate many of those developed for PSE.
128. The school currently provides a number of opportunities for pupils to experience active citizenship with a Year 9 council, already elected, and councils for Years 7 and 8 to be elected. There is a 'buddy system' in which older pupils act as support to Year 7 pupils. A support reading scheme allows older pupils to experience making voluntary contributions to the school community. Pupils can feel part of a democratic society when they organise such activities as senior citizen parties. Mock elections at general election time provide a practical experience in the democratic process.
129. A Year 9 class was seen considering the issue of smoking. Pupils then engaged in practical citizenship by writing individual letters to the local Member of Parliament. They each received a personal response and the Member of Parliament subsequently made a visit to the school to meet the class.
130. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory; there is a recognition that there are areas for development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i>  | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>2</b>     |
| 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            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                    | <b>2</b>     |
| Pupils' achievement  | 2            |
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>        | <b>2</b>     |
| Attendance   | 2            |
| Attitudes  | 2            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                        | 2            |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development            | 2            |
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>               | <b>2</b>     |
| The quality of teaching  | 2            |
| How well pupils learn  | 2            |
| The quality of assessment  | 2            |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs                           | 3            |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities     | 2            |
| Accommodation and resources  | 4            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                             | 2            |
| 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                 | 2            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 3            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 3            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>2</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 3            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 1            |
| 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).*