

INSPECTION REPORT

GARTREE HIGH SCHOOL

Oadby, Leicester

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120262

Headteacher: Rosemary Goldberg

Lead inspector: William Goodall

Dates of inspection: 24th - 26th May 2004

Inspection number: 266102

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	10 - 14
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	798
School address:	Ridge Way Oadby Leicester Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE2 5TQ
Telephone number:	(0116) 271 7421
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Phil Smith
Date of previous inspection:	1 st November 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large middle school in the Leicestershire system, taking pupils from the age of 10 through to 14 from the town of Oadby, the city of Leicester and surrounding villages. It is heavily oversubscribed and numbers have consistently exceeded the school's planned admission numbers. There are more boys than girls in most years and about a quarter of the pupils are from ethnic minorities, mainly British Indian. These include 17 per cent whose parents have indicated that their mother tongue is not English, although only two are at an early stage of learning English. The area served by the school is relatively advantaged on social and economic measurements and the proportion claiming free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average, but the proportion with statements is higher than the national average and the school accommodates the county's unit for hearing impaired pupils. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to Year 6, although overall it is around the national average. The school shares a site with a primary school and an upper school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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14404	Alan Rolfe	Lay inspector	
12003	Andrew Marfleet	Team inspector	English
20457	Brian Fletcher	Team inspector	Mathematics
31159	Clive Simmonds	Team inspector	Science
17923	Mike Shaw	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
1782	Andrew Lyons	Team inspector	Design and technology English as an additional language
31685	Valerie Girling	Team inspector	Art and design
11672	Peter Harle	Team inspector	Music
23268	Kevin Corrigan	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship
27226	Richard Cribb	Team inspector	Religious education
32147	Ann Wallis	Team inspector	Geography
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. It is well led and all the pupils achieve **very well** from the time they arrive in the school to the age of 14, when their standards are **very high**. Teaching is **good** and pupils learn well. Leadership and management are both **good** overall and the school provides **very good** value for money. Pupils in the hearing impaired unit are integrated very well into the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well by the age of 14 and make very good progress through the school; boys and girls and different groups achieve equally well.
- Their attitudes and behaviour are very good and these help their learning.
- The headteacher has a clear vision, a sense of purpose and high expectations to improve the school further.
- There is consistently good teaching, especially for the older pupils.
- Opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom are very good.
- The curriculum arrangements do not help continuity and progress in some subjects.
- The monitoring of departments is inconsistent.
- Provision for art and design is unsatisfactory.
- A daily act of collective worship is not provided for all pupils.

The school has made **good** progress since the previous inspection in 1999. Standards have risen and teaching has improved considerably; there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Whole school planning has been developed effectively, although monitoring is still inconsistent. The music department has been turned around and is now satisfactory, but the issues highlighted in the last report about the curriculum for art and design still remain and provision has declined to be unsatisfactory. The school remains unable to provide a daily act of collective worship.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	A*
mathematics	A	A	A	A*
science	A	B	A	A*

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils have attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*

Standards are **very good** and pupils achieve **very well** in their time in the school. Pupils enter the school with overall attainment around the national average and they maintain similar standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Science results are comparatively lower than English and mathematics. By the end of Year 9 they have made considerable progress and the value added score, based on improvement from Year 6 to Year 9, is very high.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above the national averages, being in the top 5%, and very high compared to similar schools. Standards in these subjects have been rising faster than the national average. By the end of Year 9 in 2003, standards were judged, by teacher assessments, to be above national expectations in most subjects apart from music. Standards seen during the inspection are good in most subjects, being very good in English, French, German and mathematics. They are satisfactory in citizenship, but are unsatisfactory in art and design. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good overall, including those in the hearing impaired unit. Pupils' personal qualities and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. Their attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good and racial harmony is excellent. These are strengths of the school. The pupils are punctual and their attendance is very good. These factors make a positive contribution to their learning and personal development.

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good** with many very good features. Teaching is **good**, especially for the older pupils. There are many very good features, including the teachers' high expectations, their good subject knowledge and the use of national strategies to plan lessons. Most are specialists in their subject. Pupils respond well and the consistently good teaching enables them to progress steadily and achieve very well through their time in the school. The assessment of pupils' work is good overall, but inconsistent between subjects, being unsatisfactory in art and design and citizenship. Targets are set using extensive data on each pupil's achievements and used well. The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. It has some good features, but the arrangements for the teaching of geography, history and religious education in Years 7 to 9 limit continuity and progress, as do those for art and design, as was noted in the last inspection. The Year 6 timetable is good; it provides a link between primary and secondary models of teaching. Opportunities for extra-curricular study are very good and extend pupils' experiences and awareness. The accommodation is poor and teachers work hard to overcome the limitations on space and resources. The strong links with other schools and the local community are now developing further and the school works well with parents. Pupils' academic and social development is supported well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both **good**. The headteacher provides good leadership and has developed a very clear vision for the school which is starting to have a positive impact. Governors give good support in planning for development and monitor school performance well. Very good use is made of the limited funding to try and improve the resources and support curriculum development. Monitoring management systems are not yet sufficiently rigorous, nor are they consistently applied at department level. The leadership and management of art and design are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are **very positive** overall. Although individual parents raised some personal issues, there were no consistent areas of concern and most parents felt that any problems were dealt with to their satisfaction. The pupils' questionnaire indicated that they felt that this was a good school to be at and that they were taught well and expected to do their best. Other responses were, however very negative and many concerns were expressed over

behaviour, bullying and support. When these concerns were investigated in detail through discussions and interviews with a range of pupils, none was upheld.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Monitor the work of departments more rigorously, by;
 - Ensuring that assessment is accurate and consistent within and between departments and is used effectively to improve standards.
 - Reviewing curriculum arrangements to ensure continuity and progression in all subjects.
 - Improving the provision in art and design;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards attained by the age of 14 are **very good**, and pupils achieve **very well** in their time in the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their first year, but by the end of Year 9 they have made very good progress and the value added score, based on improvement from Year 6 to Year 9, is very high. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above the national averages and very high compared to similar schools, in the top 5 per cent. Standards in these subjects have been rising faster than the national average. By the end of Year 9 standards are also above national expectations in most subjects. Standards observed in the inspection were satisfactory in citizenship, but unsatisfactory in art and design. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good overall and there are no significant differences between different groups of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the national tests for 14 year olds are well above the national average and very high compared to similar schools.
- The trends in improvement are above the national average up to the age of 14.
- Value added improvement between the end of Years 6 and 9 is very high.
- Standards in English and mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 9.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Standards of achievement in art and design are not high enough.

Commentary

1. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment around the national average according to the assessments done by the school. Pupils' progress in their first two terms is satisfactory overall and in 2003, they maintained these standards in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6. Results for English and mathematics were average but those for science were below the national average. The overall rate of improvement in these tests is broadly in line with the national trend. There are, however, variations in the trends between each subject. English results have improved at a slower rate than nationally whilst those for mathematics and science have improved faster than the national rate. In comparison with similar schools, standards are average in English and mathematics but below average in science. These are represented in the table below:

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.3 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (26.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 185 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In Years 7 to 9, overall achievement is very good and improvement between Year 6 and Year 9 is very high in comparison with the national average. The new value added score from the ages of 11 to 14 is very positive, although that up to 11 was not. Standards since the last inspection have been rising at a rate faster than the national average. Good teaching in most subjects combines with pupils' very good attitudes to ensure this level of achievement. In the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 results have been consistently well above average. In 2003, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science. The school exceeded its targets in all three subjects. Compared with schools that had attained similar results at the end of Year 6, standards were very high in all three subjects and in the top 5 per cent nationally.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.4 (35.9)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	38.0 (36.9)	35.4 (34.7)
science	36.2 (35.2)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 191 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. By the end of Year 9 in 2003, using teacher assessments, standards were also judged to be above national expectations in most subjects apart from music. Standards seen during the inspection were very good in English, French, German and mathematics, good in science, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history, religious education, design and technology, music and physical education. They are satisfactory in citizenship, but are unsatisfactory in art and design.

4. The school carefully analyses achievement in English, mathematics and science, setting targets accurately. In no subject is there any difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well, as do pupils with special educational needs.
5. Pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy and standards are good throughout the school. National strategies are used very well to plan and deliver challenging lessons. Pupils use these skills in other subjects which also helps to raise their standards. Pupils can handle the demands made of them to use information and communication technology (ICT) well in all subjects, although its use in art and design is unsatisfactory. Pupils use ICT well for research and to present their work attractively. They are confident in their use of computers.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. The school uses information well from primary schools and its own tests to identify pupils and to set targets for them, including in statements. Although these tend to be literacy based, they also cover personal and social needs. Pupils' innate abilities in the areas of verbal and non-verbal reasoning are assessed well on entry and account is also taken of additional needs linked to behaviour. Good use is made of the information gained to set pupil targets. Overall, the majority of pupils with special educational needs achieve well by the end of Years 6 and 9. This is a result of overall good teaching and satisfactory curricular arrangements. However, more could be done in a minority of subjects to help pupils' progress by evaluating improvements on a pupil by pupil basis and developing techniques to help staff to differentiate their teaching. Those pupils with significant emotional and behavioural needs make good progress with their behavioural targets as a result of careful monitoring and effective support arrangements from a range of staff.
7. The pupils who are in the early stages of the acquisition of English as an additional language (EAL) receive focused help both in lessons and by withdrawal from class which enables them to make good progress in their language development. Their specialist learning support teachers provided by the LEA ensure that they are making good gains in learning, to equip them to access all their lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships with others are **very good** and racial harmony is **excellent**. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, are **good**. Attendance is very good and punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a very positive contribution to their learning.
- Relationships across the school are very good.
- Pupils of all ethnicities in the school integrate very well and racial harmony is excellent.
- The school's good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning makes a strong contribution to their personal development.
- Attendance is very good, well above the national average.

Commentary

8. Pupils' very good attitudes to work make a positive contribution to their learning. In discussion, virtually all pupils say they enjoy coming to school and are able to identify favourite subjects. A significant number of pupils participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. The majority of pupils are very interested in what they are doing and take an active part in all parts of lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers' instructions, maintain concentration over time and make a positive contribution to classroom discussions. Most pupils take a pride in their work, willingly talk about what they are doing and readily explain their ideas to others. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the hearing impaired unit show the same positive attitudes to school as their fellow pupils. They develop very good social skills, are polite and welcoming and show care and consideration for others. They understand the impact of their actions on others and behave well.
9. The very good behaviour of pupils helps to create a very good climate for learning in class. In many of the lessons seen, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good and often exemplary. Pupils work hard and enthusiastically, co-operate well together and with their teacher and, therefore, make very good progress during the lessons. Pupils are very well aware of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. They have a very good understanding of the school's system of rewards and sanctions. They accept readily the principle of sanctions as an appropriate response to any instances of unsatisfactory behaviour. Outside of lessons, boys and girls of all ethnic backgrounds mix together very well. Before and after school, at lunchtime and breaks, they chat and socialise easily together without any signs of inappropriate behaviour. Racial harmony is excellent. Pupils are courteous and treat the school's accommodation and equipment with care and respect. There is no evidence of pupil generated vandalism and little or no litter around the school.
10. Bullying is an occasional problem, as it is anywhere, but the school has good anti-bullying procedures to enable them to react quickly and positively to known instances of bullying. There are very few recorded racist incidents, but the school treats these seriously and takes appropriate action to maintain racial harmony. In the last academic year 16 pupils, nine boys and seven girls, were subject to 23 periods of fixed-term exclusions; there were no permanent exclusions. Evidence from the school's records indicates that the use of exclusion is appropriate.
11. In the pupil survey undertaken before the inspection a significant number of pupils indicated that there were instances of poor behaviour, bullying and racist incidents; these views were investigated during the inspection. Formal interviews with pupils in all year groups, informal discussions with a wide range of pupils, observations of pupils in

lessons and around the school and inspection of behaviour records did not provide any evidence to support the views expressed in the pupil survey. Indeed, inspectors consider behaviour to be very good, bullying an occasional problem and very few recorded incidents of a racial nature. Pupils are very aware of the issues involved and are open and willing to discuss them freely. Various theories have been aired about why the answers to the questionnaire were so negative, but they were totally at odds with the views the pupils expressed when asked.

12. Overall, the school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. Collective worship, although not daily, includes time for prayer and thoughtful reflection, enabling them to develop self-knowledge and spiritual awareness well. This is enhanced by work in religious education, art and design and science. In personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons pupils are encouraged to explore their feelings and emotions and their relationships with friends and family. As a result, they gain a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and they are aware of the school's code of conduct which encourages pupils to be responsible for their own actions and consider the impact of their actions on others. Pupils are encouraged to help one another and show consideration for others, for example, the "Peer Support Scheme" helps pupils to become more mature and consider the needs of others. Relationships between staff and pupils and the pupils themselves are very good. Staff present very good role models, openly valuing pupils' opinions and ideas, thus promoting their self-esteem. There are many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups and the school council encourages them to participate in decisions that affect the school community. Pupils are enthusiastic about charitable fund-raising that will benefit others less fortunate than themselves. Through these and many other activities, pupils are developing well as responsible members of a community. In religious education, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism are studied along with Christianity, effectively promoting the pupils' cultural development through a greater awareness of the beliefs and traditions of other major world faiths. Well-planned trips to museums, theatres and art galleries also help to broaden pupils' cultural awareness and help pupils understand the nature of contemporary multicultural society.
13. The level of attendance is well above the national average. Short term monitoring of absence is good, the school makes first day contact with parents of pupils who are absent and where no reason for absence has been received, but the school is unable to ask the education welfare officer to become involved until absence falls below 80 per cent, which is too long.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5
National data	6

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.3

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	585	20	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	20	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	114	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	10	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	15	1	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**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** with many very good features. In almost a quarter of lessons seen teaching was very good or better. Pupils' enthusiasm and positive attitudes help their learning. The assessment of pupils' work is **good** overall but varies markedly between subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high proportion of good and very good lessons and a few excellent ones.
- There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- Teachers have very good subject expertise and very high expectations so pupils are challenged to produce their best work. Most are specialist in their subject.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and effective learners and consequently achieve very well.
- The monitoring of departmental assessment procedures, although satisfactory, is not sufficiently well developed to ensure consistency across all departments.
- Assessment in citizenship and art and design are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 105 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (2%)	22 (21%)	58 (55%)	23 (22%)	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.

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some very good features. A high proportion of good and very good lessons were seen during the inspection and the scrutiny of pupils' work showed that consistently good teaching is a feature of the school. The long-term impact of this good teaching is to raise standards significantly so that pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Pupils and parents are appreciative of the good quality of the teaching and support given by teachers across the school. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection when just over one in ten lessons was unsatisfactory. The school now has a clear focus on improving teaching and learning and recent staff training has helped to bring about these improvements.
15. Teaching is very good overall in English and physical education. It is good in all other subjects except art and design where it is satisfactory. There were no unsatisfactory lessons as there were last time and the teaching of music has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
16. A very good feature of teaching is the very high expectations that teachers have of their pupils. These are reflected in lessons that are taught at a good pace and in activities that challenge pupils of all abilities to think for themselves. This is especially the case in English where pupils successfully study very demanding texts. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects, most being specialists and use this well to ask probing

questions which extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils respond well to their teachers and are enthusiastic and effective learners. Well-structured lessons using national strategies for teaching are used successfully in most subjects to ensure that pupils' learning is systematic and well considered. Pupils are clear about what they will learn and are given good opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills through a varied and interesting range of activities. They are able to review what they have learnt and consolidate what they know and understand.

17. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and to the very good teaching they receive, particularly in English. Other subjects contribute to the development of literacy, but not in any consistent way. The school has a literacy policy, but not an individual co-ordinator. There is a recognition that the whole school policy to develop the teaching of literacy across other subjects needs to be more rigorous and this is being addressed at a senior level. Since the previous inspection, a policy for numeracy across the curriculum has been set and reference to it is made in all schemes of work. Pupils are competent in mathematics and use their skills well in other subjects. Good teaching of basic skills in ICT ensures the pupils can use them in all their subjects, but in several it is not yet fully developed. Although the school has increased the number of computers, including a set of laptops, some subjects report difficulties booking the computer rooms at the times they wish.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Good arrangements are usually made for pupils supported in class. Effective liaison operates between teachers and assistants; in the better lessons seen, the quality of these partnerships is reflected in the consistent approaches, well-paced lessons and appropriate relationships, including the use of humour. Support staff find different ways of explaining tasks to pupils and help them manage their behaviour. Pupils are therefore able to sustain their attention in lessons and their learning improves as a result. Teaching is also good where pupils are withdrawn from lessons. Noteworthy features are the emphasis on improving personal development and the consistent attempts to enhance confidence and attitudes to learning so that pupils can succeed in their class work. In some whole class groups, planning did not always tailor the work and learning materials to the needs of a minority of pupils with learning difficulties, which is an unsatisfactory feature. Lessons of good quality were seen in English and mathematics; teachers demonstrated first-rate class management and teaching strategies which helped pupils to make significant gains in both their learning and their self-esteem.
19. Although the specialist learning support teachers from the local education authority who teach the EAL pupils are skilled and experienced, there is no whole school detailed policy for implementing a learning strategy for these pupils. In consequence, it does not impact on all areas of teaching in the curriculum as fully as it should, although teachers know all their students well and can adapt their teaching to match the needs and abilities of most of them.

Assessment

Overall the quality of assessment of pupils' work is **good** although there are inconsistencies. A strong feature is that targets are set for departments very efficiently based on extensive pupil

performance data. Each department is provided with a detailed progressive profile of every pupil's achievements and their predicted attainment levels. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and reviewed regularly. The use of data to set individual targets for pupils varies between subjects as does the overall quality of assessment of pupils' work. The quality of assessment ranges from very good in science, design and technology and ICT to unsatisfactory in art and design and citizenship. The monitoring of departmental assessment procedures, although satisfactory, is not sufficiently well developed to ensure consistency across all departments. As a result of a lack of standardisation and moderation, several of the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 appear generous when compared to the standards seen in class and the work reviewed in folders.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall and has some good features, but arrangements for the humanities and art and design are limiting progress. Extra-curricular opportunities, such as support for learning, music and sport, are **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **poor** but the provision of both teaching and non-teaching staff is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Curriculum provision in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall but aspects of it can hinder achievement. The timetable arrangements for teaching the humanities, art and design and design and technology are unsatisfactory and can hinder continuity and progress.
- Curriculum provision in Year 6 links the primary and secondary phases and is good.
- Opportunities for work outside of normal lessons are good and participation in lunchtime and after school activities is very good.
- Resources and accommodation are unsatisfactory and limit the range of learning opportunities that can be provided.

Commentary

20. The school curriculum is satisfactory overall. In Year 6, the curriculum is good; it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Statutory requirements for religious education and for the sex and relationships, alcohol and drug misuse aspects of the cross-curricular issues course are all met. The statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not met despite the school's best efforts.
21. The organisation of the curriculum in Year 6 is good. It is taught in a "base" with one teacher for part of the week. Pupils have the benefit of specialist teachers and facilities in foundation subjects and in addition pupils also have the opportunity to begin their study of French. Curriculum provision in individual subjects is good overall. However the timetable arrangements for music and art and design are unsatisfactory, since pupils have one six weeks' unit of work in art and design and in music pupils have one lesson every three weeks; this adversely affects continuity of learning and the progress pupils can make.
22. The organisation of the timetable in Years 7 to 9 enables core subjects to organise their own teaching groups according to pupils' aptitudes and capabilities. However the timetable arrangements for geography, history and religious education as one group and art and design and design and technology as another hinder continuity and therefore

pupils' progress in these subjects. Teachers work hard to overcome these difficulties and are successful in minimising the impact upon pupils' achievement in some subjects. History, geography and religious education are taught in a humanities 'carousel' allowing each subject equal time to deliver the programmes of study but since there are gaps in the time between the different aspects of the course, continuity is difficult to achieve and pupils' progress is slowed. In art and design a similar arrangement exists. The way in which the curriculum has been planned means that although pupils make good progress in design and technology, the curriculum arrangements slow pupils' progress in art and design, despite the teachers' efforts. This arrangement was a concern in the previous inspection and has not been adequately addressed. Standards have declined since then.

23. Overall, given the numbers of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), the school's curricular response has been satisfactory. Individual education plans (IEPs) are prepared promptly and are appropriate for purpose. They are reviewed well. The provision in statements is implemented comprehensively. The accommodation for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory; there is no specific space for working individually with small groups or individuals as the department only has one room, which is well appointed. Other, less suitable, spaces have to be found. Resources for SEN teaching are satisfactory overall. However progress, particularly in literacy, is sometimes limited by a lack of the availability of computers.
24. The school currently works well with the upper school, its primary feeder schools and other high schools to ensure the transition from one stage to the next is smooth and that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in learning. For example pupils have e-mail and other links with the upper school so that they can begin their coursework folders in preparation for GCSE courses in Year 10 and 11.
25. The school offers a very good range of clubs and activities at lunchtimes and after school and these are well attended. Participation in sport and the arts outside lesson time is very good. The school enriches the curriculum well through events such as theatre visits, music, field courses, 'booster classes' and visits abroad. Good support for study outside the school day is provided through homework clubs, a German club which gives all pupils the opportunity to study a second language in their own time and summer schools for the 'gifted and talented'.
26. There is a good match between teachers' qualifications and experience and the subjects they teach. Teachers are usually specialists in their subjects and many are very experienced. This has a significant impact upon the delivery of the curriculum in Year 6; pupils have access to specialist subject teachers and facilities; this enriches their learning experience and prepares them well for Years 7 to 9. The school has technical support in ICT, science and technology.
27. Resources are inadequate. There are shortages of appropriate equipment in science and art and design. In design and technology machine tools are in poor condition. This makes the delivery of the programmes of study difficult and the teachers have to work hard to overcome this.
28. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall; rooms are too small and cramped in the majority of subjects, severely limiting the range of activities that can be provided. Noise from adjacent classrooms is a problem in English and design and technology. The school

is very popular and this has put a strain on accommodation; the drama studio has to be used as a classroom and the technician's room is used as a workshop, which is a concern. Plans for a new building are well advanced, but a lack of space is the main problem. There are many good displays around the school that add to the sense of achievement and celebration of learning. All are very well looked after, respected by pupils and add considerably to the ethos of the school.

Care, guidance and support

This is a **caring** school, which provides a safe and secure environment where pupils feel happy and can learn and develop. Procedures for pupils' support and guidance are **good**. The school actively seeks and values pupils' views of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and help to provide a good standard of pastoral care.
- There are very good procedures for the induction of pupils into the school.
- The school actively seeks pupils' views of the school.
- Child protection procedures are good.

Commentary

29. The school is committed to providing a safe working environment for staff and pupils. The health and safety policy meets statutory requirements. However, there is some lack of clarity in the lines of responsibility for management of health across the school. First aid provision is good and good records of accidents and injuries are maintained. The arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher is the designated teacher and has received appropriate training.
30. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, contributing positively to the high standard of individual care, support and guidance, which ensures pupils' feel happy, confident and secure. The school's pastoral system is well organised. Form tutors and heads of year know their pupils well and are responsive to pupils' needs both inside and outside the classroom. Staff value the pupils and form tutors stay with pupils after their first year in school, which enhances the continuity of care. Pupils say that this has increased their confidence in approaching staff should they have any problems, either of an academic or personal nature and say that appropriate advice and guidance would be forthcoming. Pupils are well supported academically, which contributes to all pupils' achievement, but some feel they are not always given sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve or develop their work. The pastoral provision is further enhanced by the provision of a "Drop In" advice clinic and the use of outside agencies when required. Pupils in Year 9 have a good programme of careers education and guidance and have access to a Connexions personal adviser, who provides a wide range of personal support. The Connexions agency provides valuable support for vulnerable pupils and pupils may access advice directly or via the connections website. The school provides very good care and support for pupils with special educational needs, which has a positive impact on their learning.

31. The school has very good procedures for the induction of pupils into the school. Parents are given a wide range of information and guidance about these procedures and how they can help to prepare their children for school life and help them at home. Parents and pupils have opportunities to visit the school and meet with their teachers prior to admission. The school has very good links with their feeder primary schools. High school staff attend feeder schools, accompanied by Year 6 pupils to talk to Year 5 pupils, staff provide work for pupils that will be continued after transfer and the advanced skills teachers attend feeder schools to take English and mathematics lessons. Pupils have a two-day induction process that includes meeting their form tutor, experiencing a range of lessons and a sports afternoon. Early in their first term pupils attend a two and a half day residential visit; pupils say this provided very good opportunities to make friends and get to know their teachers.
32. Overall the identification and support for pupils with special educational needs is good and reviews and target-setting arrangements are well managed. For example, pupils with behavioural needs receive thoughtful and effective support. Arrangements to link assessment in special educational needs to school systems are satisfactory and the department monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs in curriculum subjects well.
33. The school actively seeks pupils' views of the school mainly through the school council, pupil questionnaires and suggestion boxes and makes very good use of pupils' contributions. This ensures not only that pupils feel valued and fully part of the school, but also contributes to their understanding of citizenship and the part they play in a community. The school puts a high value on pupils' views and takes them into consideration when reviewing policies and procedures.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a **strong** partnership with parents, which supports their children's progress. Links with the wider community make a **good** contribution to pupils' learning. Educational links with other schools and the contribution to wider partnerships are **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive very good information from the school.
- Parents' views of the school are good.
- The school's good links with the wider community enhance pupils' learning.
- There are very good links with other schools, which amongst other benefits ensure good transfer.

Commentary

34. Overall, the quality of information given to parents is good. The school brochure and annual governors' report provide a wide range of information about the school and its activities, however, they do not fully meet statutory requirements. Some details are

missing. Regular newsletters and letters about specific events ensure that parents are kept up to date about current school activities. Parents are invited to two parents' meeting each year, one with their children's tutor and one with subject teachers, at which time they can discuss their children's progress. Attendance at these meetings is variable. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory; most provide a clear indication of standards and achievement, but they do not always identify areas for further development or indicate ways to improve. The school actively seeks the views of parents through the use of questionnaires that are analysed so that their views may be incorporated into new or revised school policies and procedures. For example, the school has sought parents' views on the school's vision, behaviour management and the new building project. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged by the school to co-operate in reviews of progress and to help with their children's learning.

35. The school works very hard to develop a good partnership with parents and to deal effectively with any complaints or concerns. It has recently established a co-ordinator to oversee the pupil, parents' and community partnerships, although this has little impact as yet. Overall, parents' involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory; a small number of parents help in the school and accompany pupils on school trips. The Gartree High School Association organises social and fund-raising events; significant amounts of money have been raised to finance additional learning resources.
36. The school's links with the community are good and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. A range of visitors to the school enhances pupils' learning in, for example, art and design, music and religious education. Visits to a local museum and library support pupils' learning in art and design and design and technology; local field trips support pupils' learning in history and geography; and links with the local parish church support religious education and pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Links with Leicester Educational Business Partnership make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in science.
37. The school's links with other educational establishments and its contribution to wider partnerships are very good. Strong links have been established with the local upper school, to which the majority of the pupils transfer. These include staff links in sport and technology and very good arrangements for transition include effective liaison between subject teachers, units of work that provide a bridge in teaching between schools and the transfer of information relating to pupils' academic and social skills. Very good links exist with other middle schools and primary schools in the local area and the headteacher attends meetings relating to the family of schools in the area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

38. The leadership and management of the school are both **good**. They are based on the vision of ensuring high standards through high quality teaching and learning. There is a strong commitment to develop excellent community links. Governance is also **good** in spite of some omissions. The governors give the school good support, contributing well to the strategic planning. Whole school improvement work is well supported by skilled analysis of pupils' results, but monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that developments are consistently applied across departments.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good leadership and has developed a very clear vision for the school.
- Governors give good support in planning for development and monitor school performance well.
- Very good use is made of the limited funding to try to improve the resources and support curriculum development.
- Monitoring and management systems in the curriculum are not sufficiently rigorous, nor are they consistently applied at department level.
- Staff are involved well in the processes of whole school planning and share in the vision for the school outlined by the headteacher.
- The leadership and management of art and design are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

39. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are well informed, working closely with the teaching staff to develop the school further. As 'critical friends', they challenge and support the headteacher well. They ensure that the school fulfils most of its statutory duties, including promoting inclusive policies in relation to special educational needs, race equality, disability and sex. However, the governing body has not been able to fulfil its statutory duty to provide a daily act of collective worship. During the inspection, they were alerted to an ongoing health and safety issue in design and technology, which is being addressed.
40. Governors know their role well and are fully aware of their responsibility to ensure the high quality provision for all pupils. Committees of the governing body oversee specific areas. They are fully involved in strategy for the future development of the school.
41. The headteacher is a good and effective leader, who has made significant improvements to the school since her appointment in September 2002. She has a very clear vision for the school and this is shared not only with her senior management team but also her staff. There is a clear sense of purpose and she has high aspirations for the pupils and a strong commitment to excellent provision for them. The promotion of the school as a part of the community, particularly through links with local feeder schools and the high school is a key factor in the vision. The developing strategic plan reflects and supports this fully.
42. The leadership has been significantly strengthened by the appointment of advanced skills teachers who are implementing teaching and learning strategies and promoting subject links with feeder schools. In general the leadership at departmental and pastoral level is good. Departmental leadership is good and better in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, citizenship and physical education, but that in art and design is unsatisfactory. Issues raised in the last inspection have not been addressed.
43. The management of the leadership team is good overall and effective procedures are in place to monitor progress. There is good data gathering and analysis systems are established. The mentoring of selected pupils by senior staff is very good. However,

monitoring at other levels of pupils' progress is inconsistent. This is seen in the way assessment, marking and home study are implemented at department level. The checking of pupils' planners for records of home study through the pastoral system is also inconsistent. There are several areas where management responsibilities are unclear, such as in the monitoring of subjects within the Year 6 curriculum, because the Year 6 team are seen as separate from the rest of the school for many aspects.

44. The performance management of teaching staff is used as an important tool, setting clear targets that enable them to develop their careers. This links well to staff development planning, which is effectively managed. The advanced skills teachers play a very important role in the delivery of in-service training. The work of the school improvement groups is particularly strong and all teaching staff are well included in school development work through this. Support staff are also very well involved in the life of the school and are supported well by in-service training.
45. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is effectively managed. There are good systems for developing pupils' individual education plans and monitoring their work. Procedures for data analysis and recording individual pupils' progress are good. Heads of department are generally well informed about pupils' needs, but there is an inconsistency in the provision of classroom support across departments. The governing body fulfils statutory requirements with a named governor who is well informed and linked to the special needs department.
46. There is no specific co-ordinator for English as an additional language, but there are good links with the relevant agencies through the special educational needs co-ordinators. Records are kept so that the additional funding is made available to the school by the LEA support staff. Whole school plans are as yet insufficient to develop teaching and learning of this group of students in all their lessons.
47. The headteacher and governors have the improvement of the SEN provision and the development of educational inclusion as major priorities and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher ensures both that the behavioural support provision operates efficiently alongside the learning support provision and that all staff are aware of the SEN policy. There is good co-ordination of resourced provision, with the school dipping into its budget to offer extra financial support. The leadership and management of both special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) are very good; their administration is meticulous and they manage the support staff extremely well. Both are experienced and respected members of staff. However, almost all of the SENCOs' time is taken up with routine administrative tasks and small group teaching. As a result, there is sometimes insufficient time to advise and support subject departments thoroughly in their efforts to boost the quality of teaching and the achievement of lower attaining pupils. Similarly, the major contribution made by the committed support staff is sometimes limited by lack of time for essential planning. Provided that the senior managers and the governors continue to evaluate the SEN provision carefully and make full use of the many strengths, the capacity for continuing improvement is good.

48. The school financial management and control systems are very good. The governing body's finance committee are closely involved in financial planning, working well on budgetary control. The tight constraint on funds means that the governors hold the school rigorously to account. Procedures are carried out in line with best practice and thoroughly scrutinised. The acquisition of computer equipment is a good example of this.
49. The budget is well planned in full recognition of priorities identified in the school's development plan. In addition to basic funding, subject departments can bid for funding to address the school improvement plans and also for curriculum development, but some science books were damaged in a flood and their replacements have not yet arrived, and there are some gaps in resources in design and technology. The proportion of the budget allocated to resources for learning is low in comparison to national averages, but rose significantly in 2002-3. Some subject departments are still not adequately funded to provide the basics, such as microscopes in science.

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	£2,162,902
Total expenditure	£2,138,582
Expenditure per pupil	£2,742.82

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	£89,690
Balance carried forward to the next year	£140,502

HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT

50. There are five full-time pupils with a hearing impairment and all have statements of special educational needs. They are attached to the unit which is an integral part of the local education authority's overall inclusive provision for special educational needs and has a capacity for ten pupils.
51. Attainment at the end of Years 6 and 9 cannot be judged because the group is too small for valid comparisons to be made. However, school and local authority data indicates that attainment varies between individuals according to the extent of their individual needs but is overall below the national average for all pupils.
52. Achievement is good. Pupils are tested on entry and at half-termly intervals; their results and other evidence from the inspection show that pupils progress well in relation to their prior attainment and the targets set for them. Achievement is particularly good in both social communication and language acquisition. Pupils learn well. Their relationships with each other, mainstream pupils and both teachers and support staff are very good.
53. Teaching by unit staff, including support staff, is good. They understand thoroughly the needs of the pupils and make good provision for the teaching of basic skills, especially social communication. Planning is good for both small group and whole-class work. In the latter, class teachers and unit staff work very well together. Staff and teachers of the deaf plan lessons and individual education plans (IEPs) well. As a result, teaching helps both the quality of learning and standards of achievement. For example, in a lesson to design a maze, well chosen strategies encouraged deaf pupils to listen and look carefully and to take turns so that they could understand the characteristics of the maze to be designed. Teachers include social targets in IEPs to help pupils relate positively to each other and to adults. Pupils settle quickly and communicate well using their audiological aids. Unit

staff develop pupils' self-discipline well so that their learning is helped. They also teach pupils to control any frustrations they may have about their difficulties in communication. Assessment is generally used well to plan lessons and national tests are taken when appropriate to a pupil's level of linguistic development. However, there are weaknesses in arrangements to measure the smaller gains made by pupils in language acquisition with the result that some learning objectives are not always expressed precisely.

54. The school provides a curriculum which promotes the learning of pupils satisfactorily. There is usually an appropriate emphasis on language development which forms the basis of their intellectual progress but this varies from subject to subject. IEPs are detailed and targets are both framed well and monitored carefully. There are good arrangements for pupils to take part in mainstream lessons and topic work. IEPs are drawn up carefully and staff usually do well to adapt teaching in mainstream classes to their pupils' needs. Good use is made of assessment data to set targets. There are good numbers of teaching and other staff to support the learning needs of the pupils. The very good levels of learning support, including classroom, therapy and medical, is a strength that enables those with the most profound needs to benefit fully from their education.
55. Accommodation is good and the head of the unit has produced a particularly welcoming and attractive environment which the pupils like and respect. The unit's audiological resources are very good and have played a large part in enhancing the communication skills of all pupils.
56. Pupils receive good quality support which results in a warm and caring environment. As a result, they enjoy school and make good progress. Adults know the pupils well and are aware of their individual needs. For example, an effective multi-disciplinary approach through teachers of the deaf, other teachers and support staff contributes significantly to pupils' achievements by ensuring that their needs are both identified and addressed. There are very good arrangements to encourage independence training in the pupils and the unit has good procedures for monitoring academic and personal development. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses are identified through accurate screening arrangements and levels of attainment are recorded carefully.
57. The quality of leadership and management is very good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. There is a clear sense of direction; the organisation of the provision is linked to a strategy which places a high priority on aural approaches to learning which have proved successful. Relationships within the unit and across the school are excellent; they are mainly responsible for the successful inclusion of the pupils in the corporate life of the school. The head of the unit has a secure strategic grasp of the developments necessary for further improvement, including the need for continuing development of assessment strategies. There is, therefore, a good capacity within the present systems for continuing improvement.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and test results at the end of Year 9 are well above average.
- Achievement is very good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Teaching strategies are affected by limitations in accommodation and resources.

Commentary

58. National test results for 2003 in English at the end of Year 6 were close to the national average, particularly for those pupils reaching the expected Level 4, although fewer than average reached the higher levels. The results were an improvement on those in 2002, halting a downward trend over the previous three years. The scores were also close to the average for similar schools. National test results at the end of Year 9, however, were well above average and very high in comparison with similar schools. The results improved on those of 2002. A significant feature of the 2003 results was the very high percentage of pupils reaching levels above those normally expected.
59. The test results were mirrored by the work seen during the inspection. Standards in Year 6 were average and in Year 9 were well above average. Pupils have very good speaking skills and the quality of much of their writing is very good. The written work being done by the highest attaining pupils in Year 9 is very impressive; some pupils are producing extended pieces of writing on *Through the Tunnel* by Doris Lessing, for example, that would not look out of place in a GCSE coursework folder. Even lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs can write at reasonable length. Achievement, satisfactory in Year 6, is very good by the time pupils take their Year 9 tests.
60. The positive attitudes of the pupils are clearly a contributory factor; behaviour was good or better in all the lessons seen, with pupils showing a desire to learn. The other major reason that they learn very well is that they receive very good teaching. The teaching in Year 6 is good; in Years 7 to 9, where they are taught exclusively by specialist teachers, it is very good. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils and are not afraid to set challenging tasks. All the teaching groups include pupils that cover the range of ability, but the work is pitched high, for example in the Year 9 lesson that looked at a passage dealing with the treatment of the elderly. Different tasks were given to different groups within the class, allowing the most able to identify examples of ellipsis and to comment on irony in the text. Teachers are very good at asking searching questions. The texts they

use are quite advanced; novels and poems were seen being taught that are more usually seen in A-level classes. Some very imaginative methods were seen in the lessons. A few teachers have a problem fitting all their planned work into 50 minute periods; the use of starter activities is to be encouraged, but they are not always short and snappy. Good use is made of teaching assistants where they are available, so that pupils with special needs are able to make as much progress as the others. Most of the pupils from ethnic minorities are very competent in English; there are just a few who are at an early stage of learning English and they receive good support.

61. The head of English has been in post since the start of the school year, but has worked in this school over quite a few years and is already stamping his authority on the department. The subject is very well led and managed. The department documentation reveals very good self-knowledge and detailed planning and analysis. There is a strong and experienced team of English teachers who are given appropriate challenge and encouragement to be innovative. Ideas are shared, although timetabling to a large extent prevents staff seeing each other teach. Staff know each other well and contribute to the development of the teaching, which has had an impact on standards. The non-specialist staff in Year 6 are given good support. The teaching rooms are, however, mostly rather small and (in one case) separated by a partition that allows noise from one room to be heard in the next. The cramped conditions do not have a significant impact as the pupils are so co-operative. The former drama room, a larger space, is now used mostly for English lessons. Sadly, drama does not feature as a separate subject here. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used as much as it might be, because of the lack of easy access to computers, although many pupils would appear to have personal access to computers judging by the work in their folders.
62. At the time of the last inspection, provision in English was judged to be good. It is now very good, there are higher standards being achieved in Years 7 to 9. This good improvement is in large measure due to the quality of the teaching and to the pupils' own positive attitudes to learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. The average standards in literacy that pupils join the school with are still evident by the end of Year 6, but by the end of Year 9, standards are well above average. This is due to the positive attitudes pupils have to learning and to the very good teaching they receive, particularly in English.
64. Other subjects contribute to the development of literacy, but not in any consistent way. The school has a literacy policy, but not an individual co-ordinator. There is a recognition that the whole school policy needs to be applied more rigorously across the curriculum, which is being addressed at senior level.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in French and German.
- Teaching and learning are good and enable pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning and behaviour is very good.
- Curriculum provision is very good and enhanced by extra curricular opportunities.
- Assessment is used very well to meet pupils' needs and involve pupils in tracking and planning their own learning.
- Leadership and management are good and teachers work very effectively as a team.
- Opportunities for pupils to use the language themselves are limited and pupils lack confidence in speaking and responding spontaneously.

Commentary

65. There are no national standards for the subject at the end of Year 6, but the pupils achieve a solid foundation in their first year. Standards at the end of Year 9 in both French and German are well above average. This represents very good achievement overall and good achievement in relation to attainment at the beginning of Year 7. Standards in writing, reading, listening and pupils' understanding and application of grammar are well above average and pupils use a very wide range of structures and vocabulary to communicate their ideas. They lack confidence in speaking and responding from memory or without reference to written notes and models. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 9 and this is due partly to good teaching and learning and partly because they begin Year 7 having a firm foundation in French as a result of lessons in Year 6.
66. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very positive and their behaviour is very good. They have very good relationships with their teachers and are concerned to do well. In lessons they settle very quickly with care not to disturb others and they display high levels of concentration. They respond with enthusiasm to pair work activities, games and competitions. They are keen to contribute to discussions about how lesson objectives can be achieved and take opportunities to evaluate their own work and progress very seriously. They are keen to learn; many pupils give up their lunchtime once a week to learn German.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There are examples of very good practice and clear evidence of good achievement in pupils' work and the standards pupils' achieve in lessons. Teachers work very well as a team and create a very supportive and conducive atmosphere for learning within the languages area. In a minority of lessons where control and management of pupils are not rigorous enough and opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are missed, progress is slowed and time is lost. Teachers know pupils very well, marking is thorough and gives pupils good guidance about how to improve. Lessons are well planned in short, manageable steps with clear presentations which provide an appropriate level of challenge and enable pupils to understand and use new language and structures successfully themselves. On the few occasions where pupils lose concentration and become restless it is because they find tasks too difficult, mainly because of the way they are presented or because they have had too little practice beforehand. All teachers have a very good and often excellent command of the languages they teach so that pupils benefit from very good role models. Teachers match the language used very well to pupils' previous experience and capabilities and this is very effective in developing pupils' listening skills. Discussions of starter activities effectively consolidate previous learning and prompt pupils to suggest ways objectives can be achieved. This together with pupils' own evaluation of their progress is very effective in motivating pupils and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning.
68. In many lessons the emphasis on reading, writing and listening to the detriment of speaking and responding has the effect of encouraging pupils to be dependent upon written notes and, in French, adversely affects pronunciation and, in turn, their confidence. Opportunities to use the language themselves are sometimes limited; teachers question pupils skilfully, enabling all to

succeed in responding but some pupils are reluctant to volunteer in front of the class. Pupils make rapid progress in lessons where they are given opportunities to practise new language informally and to use it to give and gather information. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on shopping for food, pupils rapidly increased in confidence in speaking and responding as a result of pair work, using price lists to play the part of shopper and shopkeeper and working out how much the shopper had to pay. Pupils' confidence in speaking also rises significantly when they participate in games.

69. Leadership of the department is very good; management is good. The head of department has a very clear vision of the way forward. Teaching and learning are closely monitored and there is very good support for newly qualified teachers. Clear policies are consistently applied across the department. Self-evaluation procedures are used well to identify areas for improvement and appropriate action is taken. Very good curriculum planning is enhanced by the provision of a language in Year 6 and by extra-curricular opportunities such as trips abroad and the German club. The department has made good progress since the last inspection; standards have been maintained but there is still scope for further development of pupils' independence in manipulating the languages themselves, particularly in speaking and responding. The use of assessment has improved significantly as has the use of information and communication technology to support and extend pupils' learning as well as to provide the means for pupils to work independently. Access to computers is difficult and there are insufficient textbooks. These were issues in the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very high achievement of pupils in Year 9 that has been sustained over several years.
- Good quality teaching overall and a strong shared commitment to maintaining good standards.
- Insufficient planned use of information and communication technology to support and enhance learning.
- A need for greater consistency in assessment and target setting.
- The very positive attitudes of pupils to learning that enable them to make good or very good progress.

Commentary

70. The national test results for Year 6 in 2003 show a marked improvement upon those of the previous year and are in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. The test results in Year 9 also show a rising trend and are well above the national average and very high in comparison with similar schools. The results compare favourably with those in English and science. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls.
71. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 are reaching national standards. Pupils enter the school marginally below the levels expected for their age but, during the two terms prior to the national tests, they make good progress and achieve well. In successive years pupils' progress accelerates and by the end of Year 9, the work seen is

well above average. Progress and achievement are very good. Pupils are very well prepared for transfer to the upper school and in the final term of Year 9 complete a bridging project that equips them well for work in Year 10. In all years, pupils are arranged in sets based upon prior attainment, which improves the match between the work set and the pupils' needs. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well against their personal targets, because they often work in smaller classes and they are given good support by classroom assistants.

72. By Year 6 nearly all pupils have a sound grasp of the four rules of number and know the names and properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils know how to find perimeters and areas of compound shapes using metric measure. They also understand how to plot points using coordinates and, unusually for pupils of this age, are confident in the use of negative numbers. Pupils know how to draw and interpret simple graphs that illustrate, for example, favourite pets or crisps. By Year 9, building securely on previous knowledge, pupils solve simple and simultaneous equations by calculation and by graphical methods. Most understand probability and conduct experiments with coins and dice to prove hypotheses. Pupils conduct local surveys, for example, the colour of cars in the school car park and illustrate the results by bar charts and pictograms. Pupils construct three-dimensional models and draw them accurately on isometric grids and, in preparation for upper school, pupils learn the angle theorems of a circle and use them to solve problems.
73. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and confidently anticipate the next stage in learning, which promotes an enthusiastic response from the pupils. Relationships are very good and based upon mutual respect. This fosters a good climate for learning and several pupils remarked that learning is fun. Teachers have high expectations of work in the classroom, home study and behaviour and nearly all pupils respond well to successive challenges. Less investigative work was evident than at the previous inspection, so that some teaching and learning were less imaginative than they might have been. Pupils' work is generally well marked and a great deal of assessment material is collected. The use to which this is put is inconsistent, so that teaching objectives are not crystal clear. There is a need to establish pupil targets in all years. Although pupils have the opportunity to work in the computer suite from time to time, information and communication technology is not yet a regular part of lesson planning. Classes are well and sensitively managed. Open-ended questions carefully distributed ensure that pupils are closely involved in their own learning.
74. The leadership of the department is good. A clear vision for the maintenance of very good standards is shared by all who teach mathematics. There is a good sense of direction and a strong shared purpose. Teachers and teachers' assistants work well together and always in the best interests of the pupils. Overall day-to-day management is efficient, but there is not enough consistency in assessment, target setting and the presentation of pupils' work. Resources are good but insufficiently used to support learning. Some rooms are cramped and are less than ideal for efficient teaching. Teachers do well to overcome the problems that too little space imposes. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Teaching is better. Standards achieved at the end of Year 9 have improved. Attitudes to learning are now good or very good.

Numeracy across the curriculum

75. Since the previous inspection, a policy for numeracy across the curriculum has been set and reference to it is made in all schemes of work. Pupils are competent in mathematics and use their skills well in other subjects. For example in science, pupils demonstrate good numeracy skills in calculation, measurement and graph work. Pupils collect and tabulate the results of experiments very well. In information and communication technology, pupils set up and interrogate a database and in design and technology, pupils measure and mark out accurately and use scales well. In history pupils chart historical events on a time line and, in geography, they use their knowledge of co-ordinates to read maps.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Very good achievement has led to well above average results in national tests at the end of Year 9.
- The quality of leadership is very good and provides clear vision.
- There are insufficient learning resources.
- Teachers plan very well to suit the needs of the majority of pupils.
- Pupils are very good at practical work.
- There is insufficient storage space.

Commentary

76. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were in line with the national average, but were below the attainment of pupils in similar schools. They were comparatively lower than in English and mathematics. Boys had slightly higher results than girls. The results have improved since the previous inspection.
77. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average and very high compared with the attainment of pupils in similar schools, based on their relative previous achievement in Year 6 National Curriculum tests. Girls had slightly higher results than boys. There has been considerable improvement since the previous inspection and the trend is above that shown nationally.
78. Standards seen in lessons in Year 6 are average. This represents good achievement for many pupils including those with special educational needs and pupils whose heritage language is not English. Good strategies are employed so that pupils of all abilities show increasingly good literacy skills which support their understanding of science. They are very competent at practical work and this was demonstrated in a Year 6 class of pupils of varying abilities who carried out an experiment on different types of measuring using a range of scientific equipment.

79. Standards in the current Year 9 are above average. This represents very good achievement by most pupils. Their practical skills have become more sophisticated and they show confidence when carrying out investigative experiments. They collate, tabulate and analyse results effectively. Higher attaining pupils can identify anomalies and errors and often redraft work to eliminate these. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment can construct balanced chemical equations and analyse what they mean giving them an understanding of reactions. This was seen in the transition work linking the school with the comprehensive school on the same site. This work prepares the pupils well for the GCSE science course.
80. Teaching is good with a large number of very good features. Strong features of the most effective teaching are very careful planning of lessons and a thorough assessment of pupils' progress. Assessment informing pupils how to improve is good. They receive well focused feedback on their work which helps them to understand it better. Teachers check pupils' understanding by asking probing questions about their work. This encourages pupils to develop their thinking skills by considering their answers carefully. Planning is strengthened by the sharing of innovative ideas and good practice and all teachers are involved in the continuous curriculum development programme. The sharing of good practice and innovation increases the range of teaching strategies and helps to raise standards.
81. The department is led and managed very well and there is a focus on ensuring the highest possible standards. Innovation is strong and sweeping curricular changes have been made. The leadership places a high priority on helping to develop teachers' skills and sharing their good practice. The improvement in standards reflects a department with ambition, but lack of major learning resources are holding back further development. There are insufficient microscopes, preventing pupils from studying cells effectively. The overhead projectors are few in number with some being very old. This prevents some classes having access when other classes are using them. Textbooks which were irreparably damaged by flooding have yet to be replaced. This prevents many pupils from supporting their school work effectively with home study. The laboratories provide satisfactory areas in which to teach and learn, but there are insufficient storage areas for day to day apparatus and being kept in laboratories reduces working areas. Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection. The use of ICT has improved considerably, but there is still insufficient data logging equipment. Teachers now have much higher expectations of high attaining pupils and challenge them more thereby raising their achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils are confident to test ideas because they are capable, independent learners.
- Detailed assessment provides pupils with good information about the progress they are making and how to improve yet further.

- Pupils are very interested in their work because they understand how it helps their work in other subjects.
- Greater knowledge of what pupils have learnt before they enter the school and what they will learn after the age of 14 would help pupils achieve even more.
- Skilled technician support ensures that computers are well maintained.

Commentary

82. Pupils enter the school with standards below average in this subject. Pupils achieve well so that by the end of Year 6 their work is at an average standard. Good achievement continues throughout Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9 the standard of work seen during the inspection was above the national average. In 2003 published teacher assessments showed pupils to be below the national average. Standards are higher now because revisions to the course they study allow more pupils to reach higher levels.
83. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers have good knowledge of these needs and respond by setting suitable work. In some classes these pupils are well supported by teaching assistants who provide additional explanation to ensure understanding. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Minority ethnic pupils achieve at the same rate as other pupils.
84. By the end of Year 9 pupils design web pages using a programming language. The higher attaining pupils include features such as animation. However, most pupils do not formally evaluate their work to the same level of detail as they do for other aspects of the standards they are achieving in the subject.
85. Pupils achieve well for two main reasons. Firstly, they are consistently well taught and so their learning is good. Secondly, they have very good attitudes to their work. These two factors are very closely related. The very positive attitudes are strongly reinforced because teachers very frequently use topics from other subjects in ICT lessons. This leads to pupils having a very good understanding of how their learning will be useful. For example, pupils use information about flooding when learning how to present information attractively and investigate mathematical sequences when being introduced to spreadsheets. Frequently, lessons develop pupils' literacy, for example when pupils discussed the limitations of a computer spellchecker. A good contribution is made to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A good example was seen when pupils reacted most maturely when an unexpected image appeared during an Internet search (in spite of the very good steps the school takes to attempt to ensure that pupils do not access such images). The subject also makes a good contribution to pupils' citizenship learning for example when modelling the cash flow of a fairground using a spreadsheet.
86. Good teaching encourages pupils to explore software. Pupils respond very positively and are not wary of 'seeing what happens'. Teachers make pupils aware of good quality on-line materials. These make a good contribution to learning because pupils use these for information and guidance. One very good example seen was when a pupil who had been absent through illness for a considerable period of time, worked independently through such material so that he covered work missed without the teacher having to take time

away from the rest of the class. Pupils display much greater levels of self-confidence and independence than generally found at this age.

87. Pupils' work is accurately assessed and the information is well used to inform pupils of the progress they are making and how to improve further. Parents are provided with detailed information on what their child has learnt and the next steps of their learning. Because pupils enter the school from many different primary schools, their learning, on entry, varies widely. Teachers do not have detail of what each pupil has learnt. This can slow learning at the start of Year 6.
88. The subject is well led and managed. There is a clear vision of the contribution ICT makes to learning. A demanding yet realistic plan is being developed in the subject. Good awareness of what pupils learn in other subjects ensures that the work in ICT is highly relevant to pupils.
89. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have been maintained. Pupils learn more effectively now because they no longer have to share a computer. A knowledgeable technician ensures that computers are well maintained. The school had no such provision at the time of the previous inspection. The use of homework is now good with imaginative use being made, for example to research a business for use in the following lesson.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

90. A good level of skill ensures that pupils can handle the ICT demands of all their subjects, but a lack of access to computers limits their use in several subjects. Computers are very well used in modern foreign languages where they make a particularly telling contribution to the learning of German. In science, pupils combine results from experiments and quickly produce graphs analysing their work. Insufficient use is made of ICT in English, mathematics, art and design and music. Although the school has increased the number of computers, including a set of laptops, some subjects report difficulties making use of computers at the times they wish.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in geography are above average.
- Pupils achieve well because they are challenged to produce their best work.
- Teachers use a variety of teaching methods and resources which engage pupils interest.
- The present arrangements for teaching humanities in Years 7 to 9 result in a lack of continuity in pupils' learning in geography.
- Marking and assessment are not yet consistent enough to ensure the accurate levelling of pupils' work at the end of Year 9.

Commentary

91. In the 2003 published teacher assessments pupils' standards were well above average at the end of Year 9.
92. Currently, standards attained by pupils in Years 6 to 9 are above average. This represents good achievement for pupils whose standards in geography are average when they enter the school. Pupils in Year 6 can locate places accurately on local, regional and national maps and use geographical words confidently in their spoken and written work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive constructive individual help from teachers and classroom assistants. In Year 9 pupils have a good understanding of more complex geographical topics and, for example, understand the impact of 'fair trade' on less economically developed countries. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well by working in groups and sharing information sensibly.
93. Overall teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and sometimes it is very good. Teachers plan and structure their lessons well so pupils move quickly from one task to the next and no learning time is wasted. Pupils are interested in their work because teachers use a range of attractive resources and lesson activities are varied to include, for example, fieldwork, role-play, quizzes and extended writing. Teachers ask probing questions which challenge pupils to think for themselves and produce their best work.
94. The leadership of the department is good. Appropriate priorities have been identified for development and new schemes of work and assessments are being put in place. Management of the department is satisfactory. The marking and assessment of pupils' work is not yet monitored sufficiently rigorously to ensure the accurate levelling of pupils' work at the end of Year 9. The present arrangements for teaching humanities in Years 7 to 9 mean that teaching time is shared between history and geography. This results in a lack of continuity in some pupils' learning in geography.
95. Improvement since the previous inspection is good because pupils now achieve well in Years 7 to 9. The department has both the capacity and commitment to improve further.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national average in Years 6 and 9 and pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Unsatisfactory behaviour sometimes affects learning and the range of activity is limited in small classrooms.
- Literacy, ICT skills and citizenship are developed well but the present arrangement for teaching humanities limits the development of skills and understanding for some pupils in Years 7 to 9.

- There is inconsistency in marking and assessment that undermines the accuracy of the identification of the levels of pupils' work at the end of Year 9.

Commentary

96. In the 2003 teacher assessments standards were well above average in both Year 6 and Year 9. Standards at present are above average in knowledge and understanding and the pupils' ability to write about the past in a convincing and interesting way. Pupils achieve well because of the good quality of teaching and because in most lessons attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory or better. However in a minority of lessons learning is adversely affected by unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of a minority of pupils. Teachers do not always have consistently high expectations of work and behaviour.
97. Learning is good in the majority of lessons and it is very good in some because of very effective teaching that enables pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Planning is good and teacher knowledge is secure although most teachers are not history specialists. In a particularly good lesson very effective use of the interactive whiteboard ensured that all pupils not only learned a great deal about the events of 1066, but also really enjoyed the learning experience. In Year 6 pupils can write about aspects of the life of the Aztecs and understand why human sacrifice was part of their culture because this topic has been planned very well. The range of teaching activities ensures that most Year 9 pupils have good research and investigation skills, although these are less well developed in Year 6. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 understand that sources of evidence about Hitler's Germany can be biased and that propaganda and manipulation of the media were key elements in sustaining the Nazi regime. The written work of some Year 9 pupils is of an exceptionally high standard although the work of some other pupils shows a weakness in basic literacy skills. Planning for lessons always has a good focus on helping pupils to improve their writing and computers are used to improve presentation.
98. Understanding of citizenship is promoted well. In Year 8 higher attaining pupils understand about the economic arguments for the slave trade and all pupils understand the reasons why so many captives did not survive the middle passage. Pupils are encouraged to think and investigate for themselves and take part in role-plays, for example voting for candidates for the throne. Lack of space limits the range of activities and the use of group work in some classrooms. Below average and special educational needs pupils are supported well but the highest attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the provision of higher level work in class or homework tasks. The present arrangements for teaching humanities result in some lack of continuity in history.
99. The management of learning is satisfactory although monitoring does not yet ensure consistency in marking of pupils' work. The new head of the humanities faculty provides strong leadership and has identified key issues for improvement in the development of schemes of work, resources and assessment procedures. Assessment information is used in planning lessons and setting tasks but not in target setting. Assessment has not been sufficiently rigorous and procedures used have tended to overestimate the number of pupils achieving the higher levels. Standards have been maintained and resources

improved ensuring satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

- Pupils achieve well because the well-planned teaching develops their knowledge and understanding of religion.
- Pupils learn well because teachers encourage them to discuss and explore issues that are relevant to their own lives.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and this helps them to make good progress.
- Pupils need to receive regular information on how they are doing and need to be shown what they can do to improve the standard of their work.

Commentary

100. There were no teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Years 6 and 9 in 2003 declared.
101. In Year 6, pupils have made good progress and have a good religious knowledge for their age, but their understanding is only satisfactory. Standards of their work are average and they achieve well overall. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils continue to make good progress. Their standards by Year 9 are above average and their achievement is good.
102. Pupils learn well because they are encouraged to explore a range of religious ideas and discuss them frankly. The good teaching begins in Year 6 and is based on a structured approach. Relevant activities are well chosen and lessons planned to ensure that pupils can acquire a good knowledge of religious leaders, places and practices. Pupils' progress is good, because the teachers match work well to the needs of the class, including those who have special educational needs. Teachers develop pupils' vocabulary well and, by Year 9, most explain religious practice using the appropriate religious terms. Good collaborative work gives pupils a clearer understanding of religious practice, as was seen in a Year 6 lesson on the local mandir. Pupils in the class were able to describe the temple well because they had been to visit it. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils explained human suffering well. They explained clearly how newspaper stories described types of suffering that individuals might experience. They were challenged to explain their own opinions about each story and consequently achieved well because their understanding of a difficult concept was above expectation for their age. When Year 8 pupils explored the meaning of and reasons for, prayer they too achieved well, because they clearly learned about the importance of ritual and belief to people of different faiths. Although most pupils have a satisfactory idea of their progress, they are not well informed about their level of attainment compared to pupils in other schools. Marking is not rigorous enough and most does not show pupils how they can develop their work.
103. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Schemes of work are well developed and in line with the present requirements of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus. The department is aware that a development plan based on the newly written Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus is needed. Monitoring of marking, home study and pupil learning is not rigorous enough.
104. Relationships between the teachers and their pupils are good. Consequently, pupils behave and respond well. This underpins the good achievement and progress they make. The curriculum and assemblies provide good opportunities to develop pupils spiritually, morally, culturally and socially.

105. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Good progress has been made in teaching and learning, but the humanities department still has no subject specialist for RE and the amount of time given to the subject limits pupils' rate of progress.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching is good and well organised, which ensures that pupils design interesting projects and make work of quality.
- All the areas of design and technology are not covered effectively in the timetable.
- There are good relationships between staff and pupils so that lessons are enjoyable and productive.
- Assessment is very good and this allows pupils to know where they are and how to get better.
- ICT is not used effectively in all areas because there are too few resources
- Health and safety issues raised in the inspection need considering carefully.

Commentary

106. Pupils enter the school with standards just below the national expectations. By the end of Year 6 all pupils have made satisfactory progress and have reached the national expectations. This is because they are taught by specialists with appropriate resources and follow good teaching programmes. At the end of Year 9 in 2003 pupils' attainment was assessed as being above national expectations and many pupils were working at a higher level.

107. They have good experiences of working in food, textiles and resistant materials and use graphics well to support their design work. Progress is good and all pupils achieve well, although this can be limited by not having a continuous programme of study due to the "carousel" arrangements with art and design. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attainers also achieve well and boys and girls both produce work of good quality with little discernable difference in standards. Pupils from ethnic minorities are often able to bring their home cultures into their design work and this is a strength.

108. Teaching and learning are good overall; they are often very good and sometimes excellent. The quality of relationships enables pupils to work very well together and for teachers to be both demanding and supportive. The teaching in textiles is inspirational. The teacher sets challenging and complex tasks that the pupils can work at an appropriate level to match their interests and abilities. Pupils are proud of their work and can explain in detail what they have designed and how they are going to complete their project. In addition, during the inspection, a visit was made by a designer from a leading high street fashion house to show Year 9 pupils how products are designed commercially. The presentation included fabric design, cutting and decoration to produce fashion products and give them an understanding of the processes involved. Many of the designs shown were just going to be launched in the shops and the pupils were excited to be given a preview.

109. In food, the pupils are encouraged to design and make products of quality and various companies support the work of the department. Lessons are very well managed and pupils work well together; the positive relationships are a great strength.
110. In resistant materials all pupils produce quality artefacts that they take home. Designs then are focused on the needs of the user and many pupils spoke of what their family member wanted of the clock they were designing. There were thoughtful responses when pupils considered how easy it would be to read their clock and one girl considered whether or not she should use home language script for her clock on her grandma. She decided against it because it would make it more difficult to read, showing a clear justification for her decision making.
111. At the end of every lesson in the subject each pupil contributes to the discussion. They talk about what they have learnt so that others can build on it. The leadership and management of learning by the whole team are very good and enable them to work together very effectively. The assessment of pupils' work is a real strength. Pupils assess each other's work regularly using criteria that they have worked out. They too are given helpful regular feedback and at the end of each project given National Curriculum levels. They then work out their own improvement strategies in conjunction with their teacher.
112. There are three main weaknesses, however. Firstly, the arrangements for timetabling of the subject are poor. This means that art and design is included in the series of experiences that pupils follow and this leaves a gap in their continuous learning of design and technology, restricting progress. The second is in the level of resourcing. The National Curriculum requirements are met, but some aspects are not covered in depth as there is a shortage of learning materials. Although there have been improvements in the provision for ICT it has not been sufficient to provide the full opportunities for pupils to research for information regularly and really use computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) as regularly as they should.
113. The third is that there has not been a proper analysis of risk for pupils conducting tasks in the department, for example, pupils moving from one area to another remaining constantly supervised. In addition, many of the machine tools have not been upgraded to modern standards, with proper emergency stop buttons fitted. The use of the technician's workshop is inappropriate in its present condition.
114. Overall, since the last inspection progress has been satisfactory and the school has committed itself to overcome the health and safety weaknesses.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is not timetabled regularly and learning is not continuous, gaps of time between blocks of art lessons adversely affect achievement over the four years in the school.
- Pupils have very good attitudes which contribute positively to their learning.
- Attainment is below average.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Monitoring is not effective enough to ensure the curriculum builds on previous learning and is consistent for all pupils.

Commentary

115. The pupils' attainment on arrival at the school is broadly in line with the national average. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 indicated that the pupils were attaining levels well above the national average in art and design, but in the work seen in class and in folders during the inspection both Year 6 and Year 9 pupils are working at a level below that expectation. The acquisition of skills and knowledge and understanding suffers from lack of continuity and whilst there is some variation in levels of work, they do not achieve as well as expected by the age of 14.
116. The requirements of the National Curriculum for art and design are met. Drawing in line and shape is more developed than the use of tone in both pencil and colour. There are opportunities to experience working in paint, printmaking and clay and to use computers for research and word processing. Pupils are introduced to the work of both European artists and some other cultures. There is less opportunity for experimenting, investigating, modifying and refining their ideas through systematic use of a sketchbook and to explore artists' work and the beliefs of other cultures in sufficient depth due to a lack of and in some cases the poor use of, timetabled time.
117. There is a lack of continuity due to the gaps between blocks of art and design lessons, which can be up to three terms. The scheme of work does not consistently build on previous learning, and so adversely affects achievement over time. This was highlighted in the previous inspection report. Monitoring of the curriculum is insufficient to ensure that each pupil has a consistent experience through the art and design department in their four years. Homework is not used well as a way of overcoming the limited time available. Trips are not used effectively to stimulate and inform pupils' work and provide a context in which to create their own art, design or craft work.
118. The quality of teaching and learning in individual lessons seen is satisfactory overall. Some good teaching was seen where time was allowed for investigation and experimentation and pupils were encouraged to be more individual in creating their final pieces. Planning takes some account of the differing needs within the class and the teacher shows examples of work and uses practical demonstration effectively to ensure all pupils understand what to do. In the lessons seen that were satisfactory, pupils do not achieve as well due to a lack of pace and productivity. Instructions are given and outcomes are predictable, with pupils given little scope to be creative and individual. Progress is recorded regularly but marking and assessment are not used to inform the teachers' planning to suit to the individual needs of pupils in the class and the identification of appropriate levels for each pupil are not very accurate. Pupils behave

very well and appreciate the teacher's help. They speak confidently and listen respectfully to the teacher and to one another.

119. The art and design curriculum makes less of a contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils than might be expected, especially the spiritual and cultural aspects. There are opportunities to reflect upon their own work and that of others, but not to explore and understand the beliefs that inspired the creation of art from other cultures. Pupils have some opportunities to learn about artists' work and about another culture but not in sufficient breadth, depth or variety to be satisfactory.
120. Resources are insufficient to support this knowledge and understanding. There are some miscellaneous items to use for observational work, and plants from the school greenhouse are used for study, but there is a lack of other good quality natural objects or artefacts from other cultures. Books and posters are barely adequate to support learning. Although computers are used there is insufficient opportunity and equipment to develop work using computers. There is insufficient directed time set aside for good communication between the teachers who teach art and design and the subject leader, who does not. This means that the passing of information is largely informal and that contributions to the department development plan are insufficient to raise standards. They are not made as a result of focused discussion and systematic evaluation of data. Issues raised in the last two inspection reports remain and attainment and achievement have deteriorated, therefore the quality of leadership and management and improvement since the last inspection are unsatisfactory.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality composition work was heard from Year 9 pupils and good musical ideas were performed well.
- Since the last inspection very effective strategies have been put in place to raise standards and to improve teaching and learning.
- Some good ICT-based composition was seen, but ICT is not central to the experience of most pupils
- The assessment system does not yet fully reflect National Curriculum criteria or levels in all topics in pupil-friendly terms, which limits the pupils' self assessment.
- The Year 6 timetable involving music makes continuity, skill development and National Curriculum coverage difficult.
- The accommodation is still cramped, overcrowded and inflexible.

Commentary

121. Attainment in music is below the national average on entry to the school. By the end of Year 6 it is at the national average. Teacher assessments for the end of Year 9 in 2003 indicated that standards were below average; however, in work and lessons seen it is now above average by the end of Year 9 and some excellent composition work was heard at this level.

122. Standards in lessons seen in Year 6 were around the national average, which is remarkable when pupils only receive one music lesson every three weeks. They showed understanding in practical terms of pulse, beat and rhythm and were singing in two parts at a basic level. In Year 9 work is above average, and this was clearly shown in recordings of group compositions involving keyboards and vocals in unison and two parts - both alto and descant. Musical ideas and performance skills were of the highest quality. Some of the instrumentalists taught by visiting instrumental staff played at a high level.
123. Achievement in Year 6 is very good and good in Years 7 to 9. Listening and analysis is used well to develop aural awareness and pupils draw clear links between music and emotion. Many pupils use their strong verbal fluency effectively to explain their responses to music. The current balance in lessons with Years 7 to 9 places too much reliance on learning about, rather than through, music. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and the more musically able are given opportunities to harness and develop their talent. Boys and girls achieve equally well, as do those from ethnic minorities.
124. Teaching and learning are very good in Year 6 and good in Years 7 to 9. The music teacher has been unwilling to take risks and build on his own enthusiasm, but the potential, if what was seen with Year 6 is carried through to all years, is enormous. In the best lessons, relationships are good and pupils are confident. Preparation and target setting are strengths and lessons are well structured. At its best, teaching harnesses enthusiasm, excitement, fun and hard work and pupils respond with equal enthusiasm and vitality. Listening and analysis, skill development, pair and class discussion and learning by doing were all observed.
125. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school and department priority to address the issues at the last inspection has been entirely appropriate and other policies have had to be postponed. However, good work has been done on the foundations of assessment and some high quality ICT-linked composition work was seen. The accommodation is still overcrowded and inflexible. The curriculum is broad and balanced, but world music is underused. ICT is rightly seen by the department as a major development issue, as is assessment, where a good foundation has been laid. It does not yet link National Curriculum criteria and levels in all topics using pupil friendly language and self-assessment is minimal. Instrumental teaching is strong, but there is no provision for financial support if it proves necessary, which could limit pupils' involvement.
126. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, with significant improvement in almost all of the issues mentioned, especially teaching; there remains further development work in ICT and assessment.

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the subject and by the end of Year 9 are above the level expected nationally.

- Teaching and learning are very good with specialist teachers delivering expert, well structured lessons which enable all pupils to make progress.
- The joint heads of department act as good role models, set high expectations of pupils and ensure staff work effectively as a team.
- Provision of and participation in, extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Accommodation and resources are very good.
- Pupils are very well behaved and have a positive attitude towards physical education (PE).

Commentary

127. Standards are average on entry to the school. By the end of Year 6 they are at the level expected nationally and above this by the end of Year 9. Some pupils go beyond this level. The majority of pupils make very good progress in lessons and all pupils achieve well in the subject and those with special educational needs achieve as well their peers.
128. The department is well staffed with specialist PE teachers who deliver very well prepared and well structured expert lessons containing the relevant teaching points to ensure pupils make progress in developing their sporting skills and knowledge. Teachers set high aspirations in terms of participation, behaviour, performance and kit and this is reflected in the very positive attitude of pupils and ensures that they are very well behaved in lessons. They listen carefully to teachers, work productively as individuals and in groups and have a good grasp of what they need to do to improve. Evaluation of each other's work in lessons is very good, with teachers encouraging pupils to play a coaching role in improving their peers' performance and equipping them with the means to do this, for example by emphasising key words and teaching points, but lessons occasionally contained too much teacher input at the expense of pupil activity. Some health and safety issues were pointed out and tightened up, for example when teaching throwing events in athletics.
129. The department is managed jointly by two staff, sharing responsibilities. This works effectively with both acting as good role models and setting high expectations of pupils. Teamwork is developed within the department promoting the sharing of good practice. Schemes of work have been rewritten into a more flexible format to assist with the delivery of differentiated lessons and in monitoring pupils' progress and this is linked effectively with the revised assessment procedures.
130. The PE curriculum meets statutory requirements in Years 7, 8 and 9 but there is no swimming offered in Year 6. The provision of and participation in, extra-curricular activities is very good and pupils and parents are very appreciative of the PE facilities, the range of sports offered and the specialist PE teaching. Curriculum time is relatively generous with pupils offered 30 minutes more than the recommended two hours per week. Accommodation and resources are very good, particularly outdoors, where the school has access to extensive playing fields, courts and hard areas.
131. The department's draft improvement plan is comprehensive but does not include explicit references to standards and the success criteria are too general. Most cross-curricular themes, for example literacy, numeracy, ICT and citizenship, are embedded in the department's work and as a consequence the subject makes a positive input to the school's promotion of them. The department also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development although these are not as explicit in teachers' or the department's planning. The very good standards identified in the last report have been maintained, particularly in terms of teaching and learning which is a real strength of the department.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the subject is good, the teacher demonstrating a clear commitment for developing the subject further.
- There is no formal monitoring of the citizenship curriculum to ensure all aspects are covered.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is not yet fully in place.
- Some departments, for example history, promote citizenship very well, but it is inconsistent.

Commentary

132. Standards in citizenship are satisfactory at the end of Year 9. It is taught across all subjects and in personal, social, health and citizenship lessons once a week; detailed assessment of the standards attained in the subject is therefore difficult. Some subjects have identified clearly where citizenship strands can be delivered and make specific references to them in lessons, for example in history, where understanding of the subject is promoted very well with pupils being encouraged to think about and investigate relevant issues.
133. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some instances of very good teaching of the subject were observed, for example in the delivery of the module 'what is your community?' where the teacher's very good materials and good engagement and involvement of pupils ensured all made very good progress. However, not all staff clearly identify for pupils where and when citizenship strands are being delivered in lessons.
134. The school meets the statutory requirements for citizenship. The head of department has undertaken the required audit of departments' curriculum content to identify potential areas where the citizenship curriculum might usefully be delivered. However no formal monitoring of the citizenship curriculum is yet in place and the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in the subject is underdeveloped, currently relying heavily on pupils' own assessment of how well they are doing and what they understand. The school has also recently begun reporting the subject to parents of Year 9 pupils as required, using these self-assessments.
135. Leadership of the subject is good, the teacher in charge having a clear vision for developing the subject further. She is an excellent role model for pupils and staff and is committed to developing the subject further. Management of the subject is satisfactory, with several key aspects still to be addressed, for example, the monitoring of curriculum coverage and the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress across the curriculum. There is sufficient curriculum time devoted to citizenship with the formal teaching of discreet citizenship modules, such as on the global economy and community skills, supplemented with delivery of other strands through subject areas. Other opportunities also exist at the school for pupils to develop aspects of citizenship, for instance through the school council, peer support and several community links.
136. Resources are not yet sufficient to assist in the teaching of the citizenship curriculum, but these are in the process of being developed. All the relevant areas for the development of the subject have been identified in the department's improvement plan although the targets and evaluation criteria are not explicit enough. The subject was not reported in the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

