

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DENBIGH HIGH SCHOOL**

Luton

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109683

Head teacher: Yasmin Bevan

Lead inspector: David Gosling

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 24th September 2004

Inspection number: 268376

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Type of school:             | Comprehensive                             |
| School category:            | Community                                 |
| Age range of pupils:        | 11-16                                     |
| Gender of pupils:           | Mixed                                     |
| Number on roll:             | 1066                                      |
| School address:             | Alexandra Avenue<br>Luton<br>Bedfordshire |
| Postcode:                   | LU3 1HE                                   |
| Telephone number:           | 01582 736611                              |
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| Appropriate authority:      | The governing body                        |
| Name of chair of governors: | David Kilby                               |

Date of previous inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> March 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Denbigh High School caters for pupils aged 11-16 and it currently has 1066 pupils on roll, 567 boys and 499 girls. About 77% of the pupils come from Asian backgrounds, with the vast majority either from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds. Overall, about 95% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 85% have a first language which is not English. Many of the pupils are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below the national average and the proportion with special educational needs is above the national average. There is a high mobility of pupils, with significant numbers joining the school after Year 7 or leaving before they reach the end of Year 11. The school has won a number of awards, including: two school achievement awards for improvements to pupils' standards; an Investors in People award; Sportsmark; the Nokia Citizenship Award; and a Healthy Schools Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |              |                | Subject responsibilities                                      |
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| 9053                           | V. Phillips  | Lay inspector  |   |
| 33295                          | E. Noden     | Team inspector | English, English as an Additional Language                    |
| 31238                          | G. Clubb     | Team inspector | Mathematics   |
| 4922                           | M. Driver    | Team inspector | Science   |
| 32231                          | A. Lyons     | Team inspector | Information and Communication Technology, Leisure and Tourism |
| 32367                          | J. Pike      | Team inspector | Art, Citizenship  |
| 33419                          | R. McDonough | Team inspector | Design and Technology   |
| 35060                          | K. Robinson  | Team inspector | History, Geography  |
| 32208                          | D. Aitken    | Team inspector | Modern Foreign Languages                                      |
| 31503                          | K. Sadler    | Team inspector | Music   |
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| 23307                          | N. McDonough | Team inspector | Special Educational Needs                                     |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school is very effective**, with outstanding features and it provides very good value for money. Pupils' achievement is very good overall, and excellent at the end of Year 11 where the government value-added score from the end of Year 9 is one of the highest in the country. The school's vision that "high achievement for all is our shared responsibility" is being achieved with great success. Key to this success is the outstanding leadership by the head teacher. She is supported by an energetic, committed and highly skilled team of governors, senior managers and teaching staff who are relentless in their efforts to raise standards and give their pupils the best chances possible. An ethos has been created in the school where pupils are expected to do well, whatever their levels of disadvantage, and where individual pupils and their cultures are valued and supported. The standard of teaching is very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- There is excellent achievement by pupils by the time they leave the school, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language
- Leadership by the head teacher is outstanding; the school is led by the head teacher and senior staff with passion, drive and rigour and an excellent relationship with the community has been established
- The ethos is excellent, with a balance between support and care, and high expectations
- Heads of Year are excellent: they know their year groups very well and rigorously follow up underachievement
- Teachers have a high level of subject expertise, and are supported by a comprehensive professional development programme
- Teachers are not yet using pupil assessments consistently in the classroom to target work on individuals and groups of pupils

**The school has made a dramatic improvement since the previous inspection.** The proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE has more than doubled and the proportion of teaching that is good or better has almost doubled. The key issues raised in the last inspection have all been addressed well and the school has moved from one with more weaknesses than strengths to one of the most successful in the country.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2001        | 2002 | 2003 | 2003            |
|   | C           | D    | C    | 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 attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** On entry to the school the children's results are well below the national average. At the end of Year 9 the standards attained in 2003 National Curriculum test results were also well below the national average but they were in line with schools with similar attainment on entry. This year's provisional results show a significant improvement in mathematics and science and, taking pupils' work into account, achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. By the end of Year 11 achievement is excellent. Results were in line with the national average in 2003 and in the top 5% of similar schools' results. Provisional results for 2004 indicate that this achievement has been sustained. The excellent achievement by the end of Year 11 is due to very good teaching and, equally important, to some outstanding work by heads of year and form tutors who know exactly which pupils could do better and ensure there is appropriate support provided for them.

**The pupils make excellent progress with their personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** They develop very mature attitudes to learning and treat each other with respect, whatever their ethnic or cultural differences. They have a great pride in the school. Behaviour and attendance are very good. The pupils' behaviour is marked by a refreshing openness and courtesy towards teachers and other adults.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good.**

**Teaching is very good overall:** it is good for Years 7-9 (Key Stage 3) and very good for Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4). There are significantly more lessons which are good or better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. This is partly explained by the school targeting its stronger teachers at Key Stage 4 and a few instances of misbehaviour from boys in particular as they learn to adjust to the high expectations of the school. The key strengths of teaching are the high levels of subject expertise of teachers and the excellent relationships they establish with pupils, both of which lead to the high quality of pupil engagement and interest in lessons. The key area for development is more consistent targeting of different work in lessons, and in homework, on individuals and groups of pupils based on their level of attainment.

The curriculum provided is good. It provides a broad range of courses which meet pupils' needs, including vocational courses. The curriculum for Design and technology (DT) at Key Stage 3 does not meet statutory requirements. The school takes exceptional care of pupils and has excellent arrangements in place for advising and supporting them. Relationships with parents and are very good and they are excellent with the local community. These links make a significant difference to pupils' ambitions, attendance, willingness to work and their achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The school is led and managed with drive, and a passionate commitment to all pupils achieving their potential. The leadership of the head teacher is outstanding and the leadership provided by other key staff is very good; the leadership team and heads of year are excellent. An exceptional feature of the school is the way the senior staff take every opportunity to talk to pupils out of lessons and take an interest in their achievements and concerns.

Management systems are very good, including the rigorous approach to school self-evaluation and performance management. The school's own self-evaluation is very accurate and is providing a very accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. The governing body is very good. Governors know the school well, are prepared to challenge where there are weaknesses, and have high expectations. The leadership and management of subject leaders is good overall. All statutory requirements are met, except for DT at Key Stage 3 where the failure to meet requirements is having an adverse impact on standards.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

At the parents' meetings, and in interviews with pupils, both parents and pupils stressed the high quality of relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults. They emphasised the respect and tolerance shown by pupils for other people. Parents and pupils think that the teaching is very good and that the school has high expectations. A particular strength highlighted by parents and pupils is the support provided for new pupils in Year 7, and for Year 9 pupils when they choose their options. Some parents and pupils expressed concerns about

the pupils' behaviour in the survey but behaviour at the school is very good and improves as the pupils move up the school.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- To ensure that all class teachers make good use of assessments to inform the planning of work for individual pupils and groups

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Ensure that the National Curriculum for DT at Key Stage 3 is in place



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

The standards achieved by pupils are very good overall. Pupils' achievement at Key Stage 4 is excellent, with GCSE results in line with the national average in 2003. Standards were well below the national average at Key Stage 3 in 2003. Results improved considerably in 2004, however, and the pupils make good progress and achieve well, given their attainment on joining the school.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results have improved dramatically in recent years and achievement by the end of Key Stage 4 GCSE is excellent, including that of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL)
- There is good achievement at Key Stage 3 and the trend of improvement in results is above the national trend at Key Stages 3 and 4
- Pupils achieve particularly well in English and this lays the foundation for their success at GCSE
- Achievement at design and technology (DT) by the end of Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory

#### **Commentary**

1. GCSE and National Curriculum results for 2004 are still provisional and most of this section, therefore, is based on 2003 results. It should be noted, however, that the 2004 provisional results indicate that end of Key Stage 3 results have improved and that the very high achievement by the end of Key Stage 4 has been sustained.
2. Parents are rightly very happy with their children's progress and the standards they achieve. Pupils enter the school with attainment well below the national average but they make very good progress overall and their achievement at GCSE is excellent. The school gained the 11<sup>th</sup> highest state school value-added score in the country in the 2003 National Value-Added results which measure progress from Key Stage 3 to 4. It was also one of the highest performing schools in the National Value-Added Pilot for Key Stage 2 to 4. The key reasons for this exceptional success are: the excellent leadership of the school, which has created an ethos of high expectations; excellent relationships between staff, pupils and the community; close tracking of pupils' progress and the rigorous follow up of any underachievement; and very good teaching.
3. Compared with schools nationally, the standards attained by pupils in their Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests were well below average in 2003. At Key Stage 4 in 2003, standards were significantly higher. Pupils attained above the national average for their average GCSE points score (based on points for grades) and for 5 or more GCSEs at A\*-G. Attainment was in line with the national average for 5 or more GCSEs at A\*-C. The school's 2003 targets for Key Stage 3 English, mathematics and science results were not met. At Key Stage 4 targets were exceeded; the school's target of 51% of pupils gaining 5 or more grades at A\*-C was exceeded by 6%.
4. In recent years the trend in performance at Key Stages 3 and 4 has been above the national trend. There has been an outstanding improvement in GCSE results; in 1993 only 17% of pupils gained 5 or more grades at A\*-C; at the time of the last inspection in 1999, this had risen to only 27%; by 2003 the percentage had more than doubled to 57%.
5. Pupils' achievement, taking into account their attainment on entry to the school, is good at Key Stage 3 and excellent at Key Stage 4. The Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test results for the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science overall were in line with those attained by similar schools in 2003; and at 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE they were very

high. The improved results at Key Stage 3 in 2004 and the standards of achievement seen in pupils' work and books indicate that achievement is good at Key Stage 3. The reason for the disparity in achievement between the key stages is that the school has focused, with great success, on improving GCSE results. The school states that it has targeted its strongest teachers on Key Stage 4 in recent years and the inspection findings confirm that there is more high quality teaching in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3.

6. Girls have outperformed boys from 1999-2003 at Key Stage 3 but the picture improved in 2003 when the gap was similar to the national gap. At GCSE in 2003, the gap between boys' and girls' performance was lower than the national gap.
7. The more able pupils achieve well at the school. At Key Stage 3 in 2003 performance at level 6 and above was above the average for similar schools. There was a smaller proportion of grade As and A\*s at GCSE than the national average in 2003 but this was a reflection of the intake. The provisional figures for 2004 show a significant increase in these top grades.
8. Pupils with SEN achieve well at Key Stage 3 and there is excellent achievement at Key Stage 4. The foundations laid at Key Stage 3 and the rigorous support provided lead to the excellent achievement at Key Stage 4. This is partly evidenced by the high proportion of the school roll entered for GCSE subjects and the high proportion of pupils entered who gained at least one grade at A\*-G. There was also a very small percentage of unclassified grades at GCSE – lower than the national average.
9. In 2003 there was no significant difference in attainment by the wide range of ethnic groups within the school and the LEA analysis of ethnic data showed the attainment of the main ethnic groups to be above their LEA average. Standards of more advanced EAL learners are in line with all pupils, as measured against benchmarked data and their achievement is excellent. At Key Stage 3 most pupils with EAL are progressing at a very good rate in relation to their capacity and at Key Stage 4 they make excellent gains as their literacy skills develop.
10. At Key Stage 3 in 2003 pupils achieved better in English than in mathematics and science. This was partly because of staffing difficulties in mathematics and science which have now been resolved. Provisional results for 2004 for mathematics and science show significant improvements with targets exceeded. The strength in attainment in English at Key Stage 3 has been a key contributory factor to the school's success, especially given the high proportion of pupils joining the school with EAL. At Key Stage 4 in 2003 the pupils achieved best in religious education (RE) GCSE. Lowest achievement was in mathematics and science but, as at Key Stage 3, provisional results show a significant improvement in these subjects this year. The only subject where achievement at Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory is DT; this is because on the narrow curriculum on offer.
11. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 many are weak at basic reading and writing skills. This is partly a reflection of the large numbers of pupils with EAL. The high quality of the English, SEN and EAL support is reflected in the 2003 results which showed pupils overall to be performing well above similar schools nationally in English, despite many having difficulties on entry. There is less progress in developing numeracy and basic arithmetic is not as strong. Pupils' achievement at information and communication technology (ICT) is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4 because of good specialist subject teaching.

### **Key Stage 3**

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 30.6 (31.5)    | 33.4 (33.3)      |

|             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| mathematics | 30.2 (30.4) | 35.4 (34.7) |
| science     | 27.9 (29.2) | 33.6 (33.3) |

*There were 196 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

## Key Stage 4

### Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003

|   | School results | National results |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades  | 57 (40)        | 52 (50)          |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades  | 92 (93)        | 91 (91)          |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades  | 99 (98)        | 96 (96)          |
| Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects) | 31 (32.7)      | 34.7 (34.8)      |

*There were 212 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good and a significant factor in how much they achieve. Their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fostered by the school's exceptional ethos. Improvement has been excellent.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's culture of self-belief and high achievement gives pupils a desire to learn and do well
- Pupils' personal qualities develop very well in response to the school's inspiring ethos and leadership, which steer its work
- Relationships are outstanding and make a significant contribution to the purposeful, calm and friendly atmosphere that supports learning so effectively
- Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and attendance ensure that their chances of success are high
- Punctuality to school and lessons, though satisfactory, is not as good as levels of attendance

### Commentary

12. The idea that "high achievement for all is our shared responsibility" is threaded through the school's life and work, for example in the way teachers value and praise pupils consistently for trying hard in class. It results in a very keen, shared sense of purpose and drive to succeed. Staff, led with zeal by the head teacher, coax and encourage pupils constantly. Her passionate commitment to nurturing pupils' self-belief, love of learning and determination to do well is unmistakable. Pupils are motivated to persevere with their work and to 'have a go' in lessons because teachers and other staff make them feel that they 'can do it'. Vibrant displays use every plausible cause for celebration to promote pride in the school and personal achievement. Pupils are very keen to see their own names in the foyer as part of the school's success story. "You really want to get your photo on that wall of achievement"! An ex-pupil added that, "striving for success is infectious. I still look at my photo when I visit".
13. The school shapes pupils' personal qualities impressively, particularly the sense of personal, social and community responsibility at the heart of its life. All strands of personal development are reinforced constantly through everyday routines and interactions, particularly pupils' moral understanding and social awareness. As a result, although younger pupils, particularly boys, are often quite immature, their work ethic and sense of responsibility develop remarkably by Year 11. The head teacher and senior managers take the lead decisively in setting the tone of quiet courtesy, consideration and respect for others, within which values such as honesty and tolerance blossom. Pupils have golden opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and experiences within subjects such as RE and in the best lessons. In an outstanding English lesson, Year 8 pupils had dazzling chances to show empathy with characters in a novel when role-playing parts in a 'radio interview' following the 'death' of one character.
14. All pupils' cultures and aspirations are valued highly. Harmonious relationships contribute significantly to the calm, civilised atmosphere in which learning and personal development flourish. All pupils, whether they are new to the country and learning English for the first time or those from white British background, are very keen to work and feel valued by the school. Pupils of all ages and

backgrounds are complimentary about staff who give up time and go out of their way to help and encourage them. The resulting rich sense of community is striking, reflecting a 'highly successful and happy school' impeccably.

15. Attitudes are very good, characterised by a willingness to work hard and strong motivation to do well, particularly among older pupils. Behaviour is very good, in line with school codes, which pupils helped to shape. It is better among older pupils who have adapted successfully to the school's focus on high achievement. Younger pupils, particularly boys, sometimes lack the skills and maturity needed to make the most of opportunities to learn. In time, they adapt to the school's very high expectations, helped by the example set by older pupils, particularly prefects, and by staff. Bullying and instances of racism are very rare and dealt with promptly. The school takes in a diverse range of pupils, including a few very troubled individuals, but the exclusion rate is relatively low, with no recent permanent exclusions. The school is deeply committed to being welcoming and inclusive, so exclusions are used as a last resort and managed very carefully to help pupils make a fresh start successfully.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

| Categories used in the Annual School Census         | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 66                   | 2                                 |                                |
| White – Irish                                       | 2                    |                                   |                                |
| White – any other White background                  | 26                   | 1                                 |                                |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 4                    |                                   |                                |
| Mixed – White and Black African                     | 3                    | 1                                 |                                |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 8                    |                                   |                                |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 8                    |                                   |                                |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian                     | 15                   |                                   |                                |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani                  | 374                  | 4                                 |                                |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 352                  | 7                                 |                                |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 58                   | 4                                 |                                |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 28                   | 5                                 |                                |
| Black or Black British – African                    | 89                   | 1                                 |                                |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 4                    |                                   |                                |
| Chinese   | 3                    |                                   |                                |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 12                   |                                   |                                |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 14                   |                                   |                                |

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

16. Pupils are very proud of the school and its achievements. The school has worked relentlessly and successfully to help parents understand and share this focus on doing well so they avoid extended family absences. Attendance is very good and improved further in 2003-4. Punctuality is satisfactory. In general, lateness does not disrupt lessons or learning but the school recognises that prompt starts help pupils, especially younger ones, settle to work better.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 6.4 | School data          | 0.4 |

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| National data | 7.2 |
|---------------|-----|

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| National data | 1.1 |
|---------------|-----|

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

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The overall quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good and assessment is satisfactory.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching is very good overall. It is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good at Key Stage 4
- Teachers have a high level of subject expertise which they use effectively to challenge and inspire pupils
- There are excellent relationships between teachers and pupils, which are contributing to the high levels of motivation of pupils
- Teachers know the levels and needs of pupils but there is not consistent use of this information to target work on individual pupils and groups
- Lessons are well structured, with a variety of activities which engage pupils' interest
- The support provided for pupils with SEN and EAL is of a high quality but class teachers need to match work more to their needs when support staff are not present

### **Commentary**

17. Nearly all pupils think they are taught well and their parents also think that teaching is very good. These views are an accurate judgement on the quality of teaching; teachers are committed, hard-working and strongly focused on raising standards. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection when too much was unsatisfactory. There is still a small minority of unsatisfactory lessons but there has been a significant number of new staff joining the school this year and the school's excellent professional development and support programmes, especially for the newly qualified teachers and graduate trainees, have yet to make an impact.
18. Teaching is stronger at Key Stage 4 and this is reflected in pupils' achievements which are higher at GCSE than at Key Stage 3. The most significant difference in teaching at both key stages is the proportion of lessons which are good or better. During the inspection 58% of lessons observed at Key Stage 3 were good or better, compared with 71% at Key Stage 4.
19. Teachers' relationships with pupils are a key strength and a significant contributory factor in explaining the excellent achievement at GCSE. There is an excellent rapport between teachers and pupils and this is achieved by skilful interventions, the use of praise and the interest taken in pupils' contributions. Subject expertise is another strength in nearly all subjects. Teachers speak with fluency and authority in lessons and research their lessons well. This is shown through the way they set lessons in context and make connections, and the knowledge they show of the National Curriculum and GCSE syllabuses.
20. Lessons are well-structured and nearly all teachers use well the three part structure of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy, starting with whole class teaching, moving into independent and group work and ending with a brief whole class session. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly; they use a good range of resources and provide a variety of activities which engage the pupils' interests. A good example of this is in the drama lessons observed where small group and paired activity was followed by pupils' evaluations of work presented and skilful teacher intervention. In a minority of lessons homework and teacher assistants could be used more effectively, particularly in English, science and DT.

21. Teaching is strongest in RE where it is very good at both key stages and is leading to some exceptional achievement, especially at GCSE. There is also very good teaching in science, ICT, business studies, French and art at Key Stage 4. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, and Spanish at both key stages. It is good in French, science, art and PE at Key Stage 3, and in history, geography and DT at Key Stage 4. In all other subject areas teaching is satisfactory. Compared with other subjects, DT teaching is the least effective and the use of time in DT is unsatisfactory overall. The teaching of Citizenship through PSHCE is only satisfactory; it is taught by form tutors using notes provided and some teachers do not sufficiently modify these notes for their classes. An example was a Year 7 lesson observed where pupils were moved, according to guidance provided for the teacher, into groups with virtually no teacher introduction to the tasks set. There was also insufficient time to complete them.
22. The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good overall. Individual support in lessons from teachers and assistants is of high quality. Support staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils and are able to work with teachers to support their learning by providing one-to-one guidance and by assisting with the preparation of different work. Detailed lesson planning to take account of all learning needs, however, is not fully developed across the curriculum. The use of tables and headings in English and art, however, are helping pupils to organise their work and to improve their writing.
23. Specialist teaching and learning of pupils at early stages of EAL is very good. EAL teachers, assistants and instructors have a clear understanding of the needs of the pupils and plan lessons to meet these needs. They use a good range of methods and resources, including computers, to develop language skills and access the content of the curriculum. For example in a Year 9 English lesson the English and EAL teacher planned a lively collaborative activity in which EAL learners were able, along with their peers, to identify and talk about the characteristics of persuasive writing. Overall, as with the teaching of pupils with SEN, teachers across the curriculum are not using assessment information sufficiently to plan for EAL learners and tend to describe what these pupils are going to do rather than what they are going to learn.
24. There is some good teaching of the more able pupils and work set is generally challenging. A minority of teachers is still not targeting the more able effectively with separate work. In one Year 11 Business Studies lesson where extension work was set for the most able they worked at a slow pace and none of them tackled it.
25. Assessment overall is satisfactory. Marking is regular and constructive. Teachers know the levels being attained by their pupils and set long term targets for them in their books. In the best teaching assessments are used well to plan work. The foundations for good assessment have been laid by providing teachers with lists of gifted and talented pupils and those with SEN and EAL, and also data on individual pupil's prior attainment. Not all teachers, however, are using assessments to target work on individuals and groups to take them to higher levels. This is true in Key Stage 3 and 4 lessons but it is particularly prevalent in Key Stage 3.
26. Pupils' learning is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4. Attitudes to learning and motivation are very good and pupils cooperate well in lessons. There is a strong work ethic: pupils concentrate hard and apply themselves to tasks set. In a small minority of lessons, there is some misbehaviour from boys but this is managed very well by teachers and has a minimal impact on learning. The value placed on learning by pupils, engendered by teachers, form tutors and heads of year is a key factor in the school's success.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 136 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 7(5%)     | 24 (18 %) | 55 (41%) | 43 (32%)     | 6 (4%)         | 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.*

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good: the breadth of the curriculum, opportunities for enriching pupils' learning, and the quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are all good. There is a broad range of courses, with effective provision in all subjects except DT at Key Stage 3. The expanding range of vocational options in Years 10 and 11 has supported a rise in standards at GCSE. There are good opportunities for enrichment, with a strong focus on raising achievement. Improvement in this aspect has been good.



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum enables pupils to achieve well, especially at Key Stage 4
- The curriculum successfully reflects the ethnic diversity of pupils and caters well for individual needs
- There are good opportunities for enrichment
- Provision for design technology does not comply with statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9

## **Commentary**

27. A special place is given to Bengali and Urdu to reflect the community the school serves. Pupils benefit by learning their native tongues more formally and seeing that their culture is recognised and valued by the school. Both languages are well integrated into the modern languages department. In addition, pupils of a wide range of nationalities can take the GCSE examination in their native language early. Multicultural elements in the curriculum are constantly being strengthened, for example, through the new unit on Islam in history.
28. Provision for subjects, namely ICT and RE, which did not meet statutory requirements in full or in part at the last inspection, is now much improved to ensure compliance. Indeed, RE is now strength of the school with almost all pupils achieving certification at GCSE. The school's attempts to provide a curriculum responsive to pupils' needs has led to a decrease in time for DT where elements of the statutory curriculum are not currently delivered in Years 7 to 9 and progression to GCSE is not fully effective.
29. The school acknowledges that the implementation and mapping of cross-curricular provision could be strengthened to build on new initiatives such as the Year 7 literacy lesson. Otherwise, the curriculum is broad and balanced, allowing pupils of all abilities to achieve well and to make very good progress in Years 10 and 11. In these years all pupils must take a vocational option which is strengthening the work-related learning curriculum – formerly an area of weakness. Within other subject combinations there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to gain entry level qualifications and for some, to follow courses at the local college to prepare for the world of work.
30. The school provides well for EAL pupils. The EAL team teach a daily extra English class for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils at early stages of learning English attend for one hour a day and study oral reading, comprehension and learning skills. Pupils at early stages of learning English in Years 10 and 11 join a key skills course and follow an accredited course for beginners in English. EAL staff also provide much support within different subjects.
31. The curriculum is subject to regular evaluation. Staff representation on committees overseeing transition arrangements, plus developing links with feeder schools at department level are promoting curriculum continuity from primary school, while the new vocational options are helping the school cement ties with Barnfield College. Irrespective of the success of its application for Sports College status, the current building programme will soon repair the weakness in facilities for physical education (PE).
32. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities to enrich, and especially to support, learning. The nature of the community the school serves results in more limited provision for drama and music, but there are many opportunities both within and outside school hours to engage pupils' interests and talents. Pupils of all abilities attend summer schools. Attendance at school clubs, for example ICT, is good and well monitored as further insurance that time is spent profitably. There is good participation in PE and sporting activities.
33. The school has, and is taking steps to provide, enhanced activities for gifted and talented pupils, by organising, for example, university and Sixth Form College visits and attendance at a Year 11 concert of Asian music. Although opportunities to cater for their needs are indicated in

departmental schemes of work, classroom practice is inconsistent in this respect. The increasing number of higher grades at GCSE indicates that the most able are not disadvantaged. Their achievement, however, does not quite match that of the least able.

34. The overall sufficiency of the staff is good. The school has specialist teachers in all subjects and the support assistants are suitably qualified and have experience to provide for specific learning needs of pupils with SEN and pupils who are new to English. Mentors are providing a good addition to SEN provision and having success in guiding pupils through exams and preventing permanent exclusion. Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and graduates training to become teachers are specialists and they receive very good support and guidance.
35. The school has good quality accommodation and it is sufficient. Most subjects are taught in suites of rooms which are clean and have good display facilities. There are good facilities for SEN and EAL. Currently the PE accommodation is limited due to the new building of a sports hall. The library provides a suitable learning environment. Although there are good resources in music, the accommodation is limited.
36. Resources are good. The ratio of computers to pupils is above the national average and most subjects have computers in classrooms. There is a good selection of resources, including computers, and teaching materials which are well organised and accessible. The school has been successful in obtaining a grant to install a 'hearing loop' into the hall and the larger classrooms as a means of helping pupils with hearing needs. A wide range of resources, reflecting the different cultures and ethnic backgrounds of the pupils, is available in lessons.

### **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are excellent overall. The school takes exceptional care of pupils so that they have every chance of learning effectively and achieving all they can. The school has excellent arrangements for advising and supporting pupils, based on impressive systems of checking on their individual needs and general progress. Pupils are involved very well in improvements to school life because their views are taken very seriously. The overall quality of care provided by the school has improved remarkably since the last inspection.

#### **Main strengths**

- Support for pupils is monitored, reviewed and tailored to individual need consistently and impressively
- The quality of care for pupils is outstanding and focused sharply on helping them to do well
- Excellent relationships and impartial guidance from very dedicated staff ensure that pupils feel supported with their work, personal development and future plans
- Pupils settle into school quickly and happily because of very good induction arrangements
- Pupils' views are taken very seriously within a culture where staff take time to listen

#### **Commentary**

37. The remarkable support network in the school, within which astute and careful guidance is based on excellent monitoring, is a significant factor in all that pupils achieve and the key to the extraordinary care offered. Access to well-informed help is exceptionally good. Each pupil benefits impressively from very high levels of guidance, understanding and encouragement from teachers, support staff and form tutors. The school cares for pupils exceptionally well, as it is always mindful of what needs to be done to assure the best personal and academic achievement.
38. The school gives a very high priority to ensuring that all pupils, whatever their different background circumstances, are happy, safe and ready to learn. All information about vulnerable pupils, including those in public care, is used very carefully to try to ensure that their needs are met and they have every chance of doing just as well as everyone else. The school's arrangements for child protection, including training for new and existing staff, are managed with great care. In general, health and safety issues are taken very seriously and are dealt with very well, including all regular checks required and careful scrutiny of procedures by governors.

39. Relationships are outstanding so pupils trust and respect their teachers and feel comfortable about asking for advice. Guidance on study and employment possibilities is impartial and very good. The drive for high aspirations and achievement is linked to sensitive individual help in setting and reaching personal goals, including entry to particular courses at 16 or 18. As a result, many pupils stay in touch with staff after leaving school and are inspired to keep aiming high, sometimes surprising themselves with entry to universities, including Cambridge. They value dedicated support and friendship from staff.

40. Induction arrangements work very well and Year 7 pupils are very clear that they were helped to settle in quickly and happily and that “wherever you look, there is a prefect to help”. Prefects said that the planned ‘buddy system’ for new pupils and late arrivals is not yet up and running but has scope for making induction first rate. The school does not always have access to detailed information about pupils who join the school at times other than Year 7 but does all it can to make them welcome and to help them get used to school routines and expectations swiftly.
41. The school involves pupils very well in their own learning and in its life by listening to them very carefully in formal and informal settings and acting constructively on what they say. School and year councils are actively involved in improvements such as resolving the problems of canteen queuing. The school knows that, as a pupil said, “we do not have all the voice we need” so is taking active steps to extend consultation using survey methods, for instance, to canvass opinion and suggestions.
42. As with other late arrivals, the school has very effective arrangements for inducting pupils with EAL who arrive mid term. Pupils are admitted fortnightly and are assessed by EAL staff. Information is passed to teachers about the pupil’s mother tongue, level of English language acquisition and background information. Pupils at early stages of learning English join the extra English class initially for a period of 6 weeks or until they are able to access the curriculum in class. This class provides a welcoming and secure environment for pupils who are new to the country, and in some cases new to schooling.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY**

The school has very good links with parents and the community. Links with parents and with other schools and colleges are very good. Links with the community are excellent. All these successful partnerships have a significant impact on how well pupils do. This represents outstanding improvement since the last inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school’s excellent relationship with its community ensures that those within it accept and share responsibility for raising aspirations and improving achievement
- Parents think very well of the school because of its huge efforts to work very constructively with them
- Links with key feeder schools and local colleges are first rate, ensuring a continuous focus on learning and achievement
- Although links with business are effective, the school recognises that it has scope to extend these

#### **Commentary**

43. Links with the community from which pupils come are exceptionally strong and make a significant difference to pupils’ ambitions, attendance, willingness to work and their achievement. This is because members of the community work together to make a positive difference to school life, for example with firm support for school dress codes, events organised by the Parents’ Association and the school’s bid to become a specialist sports college. They join together to celebrate academic and personal success. Staff are available who, between them, can speak a range of languages and are able to translate for parents and carers and keep in contact by means of letters and telephone calls.
44. Parents are very positive about the school, its expectations of hard work, the interesting curriculum, the way new pupils are helped to settle in and the fact that their children enjoy school. They believe that their children are making good progress because teaching is good. The reports that they receive are well written and give a very clear idea of how well their child is doing and exactly what steps the pupil should take for further progress. Comments on personal development are constructive, praising improvements in response, rather than just describing character, as often seen in other schools. “She is punctual and has made a great effort to be correctly equipped and shown a willingness to learn. This progress is reflected in the large number of positive reports she has received this year from almost all subjects”.

45. Parents are happy to approach the school with questions or concerns and think that the school is led and managed well. Partnerships with parents and with other schools and colleges are very good because the school has worked strenuously to foster productive relationships that will help pupils to be high achievers. It uses a lively, regular newsletter to keep everyone informed of events and successes, which reflects pupils' zest for school life admirably and how highly achievement is valued.
46. The school has some excellent links with particular schools and colleges that, in time, ensure pupils become committed to doing as well as they can and develop a love of learning. Key links with local, feeder primary schools and colleges that usually take pupils at 16 are particularly successful in ensuring a consistent and lasting focus on high achievement, whatever pupils' different abilities and backgrounds. Links with colleges enable the school to provide individual programmes with a work or vocational element for particular pupils who might otherwise make little progress. The school finds ways to ensure that personal achievement and success with learning are possible for everyone. Its existing links with local employers and the business world are effective and meet the needs of its pupils well. The school recognises the value of developing these further to continue to meet the challenge of raising aspirations and widening pupils' horizons through direct experience of the world of work.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the head teacher is outstanding. Governance is very good, governors are well informed and share the head teacher's vision. Leadership by other key staff is very effective. Very good management systems help support school improvement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The head teacher has totally changed the ethos of the school, so that all share her high expectations
- The governors know the school very well and this enables them to challenge and support the school effectively
- A key and very effective strategy for improvement is staff development, so that all can play a lead role in raising achievement
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and procedures link coherently with professional development and appraisal
- The contribution by other subjects to key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT has not been co-ordinated sufficiently

### **Commentary**

47. The head teacher is passionate in her belief that all pupils can succeed. Through her perseverance and astute leadership, she has gained the allegiance of staff, pupils, parents, and the local community, who all hold the school in high esteem. She is quick to seize opportunities in realising her well-articulated vision. She has striven to ensure that the school's mission statement of 'high achievement for all is our shared responsibility' permeates everything.
48. Governors share the same high expectations as the head teacher, and are not afraid to ask challenging questions. They receive regular reports from subject leaders, and probe areas of weakness. They contribute to the strategic plan through consultation, and influence the future direction of the school.
49. Strategic planning is relentlessly focused on raising achievement. The three year plan makes clear the beliefs and values that underpin the school's vision. It also includes an evaluation of the previous improvement plan. Priorities are relevant, but the school improvement plan contains little on under-performing subjects or the difference between attainment in Years 7 to

9, and Years 10 and 11. These priorities are incorporated into subject plan which identify appropriate priorities for improvement, and progress with these is monitored.

50. Monitoring and evaluation of every subject is regular and rigorous. Roles and responsibilities are clear. Highly effective links between monitoring, appraisal and professional development ensure that training is a powerful tool for improving teaching and learning. All teaching staff have regular 'in house' training sessions, targeted to their needs. The induction of new staff is excellent, as is the contribution to initial teacher training. The school is imaginative in its deployment of staff. The temporary extension of the senior management team has had a very positive impact, in taking forward several key developments, such as the sports college bid and improving teaching and learning.
51. Financial planning and management are very good. A reasonable surplus was carried over from last year's budget for contingency and spending is carefully monitored to ensure no overspends. Careful attention is given to ensuring Best Value. Governors and senior staff examine benchmarking data carefully to make comparisons with other schools. The educational priorities in the school improvement plan are carefully costed and subject to debate by governors.
52. The senior management team work very well together; roles and responsibilities are clear. They share the same high expectations of the head teacher, and work extremely hard in driving the school forwards. The pastoral team are highly effective. They have an excellent overview of standards, behaviour and attendance. They show energy and rigour in supporting and challenging pupils who experience difficulties or who are under-performing.
53. The leadership and management by subject leaders is good overall, with very good leadership in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art, ICT, PE and RE. The senior management of the school holds subject leaders to account, and maintains ongoing support and challenge to raise standards further. The variation in the quality of teaching is a constant focus. The key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are not sufficiently supported across the curriculum. Contributions made by other subjects are not mapped. Similarly, contributions to citizenship from other subjects are not mapped, and the overall programme lacks coherence.
54. The leadership and management of SEN is very good. The head teacher is passionate about inclusion and this is translated into a vision of achievement for the school. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is part of the leadership team and this gives SEN a high profile. The SENCO and the assistant SENCO have a constant desire to improve the provision for SEN. There is a strong culture of evaluation both internal (carried out by the SENCO) and through external consultants. The school uses the results of these to target resources. The development of the pupils' individual education plans (IEPs), training and development of learning support assistants (LSAs) and the development of the inclusion base are all good examples of the drive for improvement.
55. The management of support for EAL is also very good. An Assistant Head teacher manages support for the ethnic minority achievement service (EMAS) as part of the Integrated Support Service (ISS). A newly appointed coordinator is very well supported by the second in charge. The school has responded well to the changes in EAL population which have taken place over the last five years and there is very good provision within the EMAS department. Placing EMAS within the ISS has enabled more effective provision across the school and improved communication between the teams. The EAL team is a significant contributor to raising standards in the school as a whole.
56. The school is meeting all statutory requirements, except for the breadth of the DT curriculum at Key Stage 3.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Work Related Learning**

The provision for Work Related Learning (WRL) satisfies statutory requirements and its overall effectiveness is good.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils in Year 10 study a vocational course and these are preparing them well for the world of work
- Pupils are offered visits which highlight a wide range of careers and raise achievement by increasing pupil aspiration
- The provision for WRL is well led and managed
- The range of vocational courses offered to the pupils does not yet provide a breadth of opportunity

#### **Commentary**

##### **Pupils' achievement**

57. Pupils' achievement in those vocational lessons seen was good. Early indications from GNVQ ICT, which was the only GNVQ course examined in 2004, are that results are excellent. Pupils show understanding of the vocational subjects and can relate them to real life situations. Pupils in Year 11 partake of work experience and consider that vocational education and careers guidance has prepared them well for when they leave school.

##### **The quality of what is provided**

58. Formal preparation of the pupils for the world of work starts in Year 9 in preparation for their choice of optional subjects. In Year 10 a wide range of visits is organised to widen the pupils' knowledge of possible careers. These visits are raising achievement by increasing pupils' aspirations. They have highlighted opportunities in careers as diverse as veterinary work and the fire and rescue service. The pupils highly value these experiences and cite them as influencing their career choices. Pupil questionnaires are used to evaluate the effectiveness of each visit and results from these are used to inform future planning. The school has developed good links with local employers through the Education Business Partnership. In Year 11 all pupils partake in work experience in a placement of their choice. Preparation for work experience is good and pupils are aware of employer expectations such as arriving at work on time and dressing appropriately. Some subject areas, such as mathematics, RE and English, incorporate work related learning into their lessons. This practice is good and is valued by the pupils.
59. The school's provision for vocational courses is good on site and some valuable placements have been found for individual pupils. There are some restrictions placed on the school by the lack of developed partnerships locally but provision has expanded recently and plans are in place to broaden it further.

##### **Leadership, management and organisation**

60. The leadership management and organisation of WRL is good. The many threads of the area are well co-ordinated and developments for the provision are well planned. Form tutors take responsibility for the delivery of many of the work related topics and they are trained during year team meetings. WRL has a budget sufficient to allow flexibility and for the range of opportunities to be maintained.



## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

##### English

Provision for English is very good.

|                       | Years 7, 8 and 9 | Years 10 and 11 |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Standards             | Average          | Average         |
| Achievement           | Very Good        | Excellent       |
| Teaching and Learning | Good             | Very Good       |

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership                         | Very good |
| Management                         | Very good |
| Progress since the last inspection | Good      |

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils is very good at Key Stage 3 and excellent at Key Stage 4
- Teaching is very good
- The department is very well led and managed
- Assessment is not used sufficiently to raise pupils' awareness of their own learning and to inform teachers' planning and target setting for particular groups of pupils

##### Commentary

##### Examination results

61. Examination results should be seen within the context of low prior attainment. The results of many pupils on entry to school are well below average. In the 2003 National Tests for the end of Year 9 were well below the national average for all schools and were well above the average for similar schools. Unvalidated results for 2004 show a similar picture. The performance of girls was better than boys. Results have improved over the past five years at a higher rate than the national trend. There has been an increase in the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 and above.
62. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations in English and English Literature were in line with the national average. Unvalidated results for 2004 indicate that results have dipped slightly but the numbers of pupils gaining A\* and A grades has increased in English Literature in particular. Girls continue to perform better than boys but the gap in attainment is closing. The proportion of pupils entered for English and English Literature examinations is higher than the national average.

##### Standards and achievement

63. Standards of pupils' work are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 9 and 11. When pupils' prior attainment is taken into account, achievement from Year 7 to 11 is outstanding. This is due to very good teaching and also rigorous follow up of underachievement, including for pupils with EAL and SEN.
64. In all year groups there are high attaining pupils who are confident speakers and who contribute well to whole-class and group discussions. In a Year 9 lesson, for example such pupils were able to provide clear and full explanations of the persuasive techniques used in a pamphlet on Homelessness. Middle and lower attainers express themselves briefly and have difficulty in explaining themselves when further questioned. However, the majority of pupils are attentive and respectful of the views of others. Many pupils are passive learners and rely on the teacher to tell them what to do rather than taking the initiative for their own learning.
65. By the end of Year 9 pupils have read a range of literature that is appropriate for their age. High attainers read aloud with reasonable expression and are able to appreciate the author's use of

language. By the end of Year 11 pupils go on to read more demanding texts. High attainers develop a good understanding of techniques used by writers and are able to compare how these techniques are used, for example when comparing poems. Lower and middle attaining pupils are hesitant when reading aloud and tend not to read beyond the literal. Pupils with SEN and at early stages of learning English are reading some challenging texts, with extra support.

66. The recent focus on improving extended writing skills has had a positive impact on the standards of writing from Years 7 to 11. By the end of Year 9 pupils are able to write in a variety of styles, including narratives, descriptions, letters and reports. By the end of Year 11 pupils go on to extend their range and produce good, imaginative work that is well planned and redrafted. There is some inaccuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar from middle and low attainers.
67. The use of ICT has improved since the last inspection and pupils visit the ICT suite regularly to word process work or to carry out research.

### **Teaching and learning**

68. The National Key Stage 3 strategy is well embedded in Years 7 to 9 and all teachers identify specific objectives for learning. In some of the lessons seen, the end part (the “plenary”) is the weakest. All teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject. A number of features are in evidence in the most effective teaching. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers use good classroom management to create an orderly environment in which pupils feel secure and can concentrate on learning. Work is relevant to the pupils’ needs, yet is challenging. For example a Year 11 lesson to understand the development and imagery in Romeo’s final speech was conducted at a brisk pace and the teacher’s excellent questioning, well supported by an EAL teaching assistant, ensured all pupils were kept involved. Teachers themselves are very good models and are able to instil enthusiasm and interest for their subject. In a Year 8 lesson to develop interview skills, the pupils were visibly energised and effervescent, and inspired to rise to the challenge of the lesson. This generation of interest leads to considerable progress of all the pupils, including those with SEN and EAL needs.
69. When teaching is less effective, teachers’ planning does not take into account the pupils’ prior learning and does not fully utilise the skills of the teaching assistants who are present. Assessment is used insufficiently either to raise pupils’ awareness of their own learning or to inform teachers’ planning and target setting. The recent introduction of assessment stickers, however, to provide individualised assessment of a pupil’s strengths and suggestions for improvement is proving effective.

### **Leadership and management**

70. The teaching team has changed substantially since the last inspection and leadership is now characterised by an ambition and drive for improvement that is supported throughout the team. Evaluation is embedded in the team’s practice and very good management systems enable findings from self evaluation and analysis of performance data to be used for departmental planning. An example is the focus on improving extended writing, refining curriculum overviews and schemes of work, promoting wider reading and reading for pleasure, especially of boys, and sharing good classroom practice through the introduction of peer observations.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

71. The provision for pupils to develop their language and literacy skills in other subjects is satisfactory overall. However, difficulties in appointing a literacy coordinator have led to inconsistencies in approaches across subjects. There are some successful initiatives, including a bridging project with a local junior school, booster classes, a scheme of work for the Library, Year 7 literacy classes and a project to develop extended writing in science. Teachers from a range of subjects have some literacy awareness and in some classes key words are displayed in classrooms to support spelling and grasp of vocabulary. However, weaknesses remain in the extent to which teachers teach and correct literacy skills.
72. There is good provision for community languages, . Bengali and Urdu, occupy a strong position in the curriculum in all years.

## Modern languages

Provision in modern languages is good.

|                       | Years 7, 8 and 9 | Years 10 and 11 |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Standards             | Below average    | Average         |
| Achievement           | Good             | Very good       |
| Teaching and learning | Good             | Good            |

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership                     | Very good |
| Management                     | Good      |
| Progress since last inspection | Good      |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is very well led
- Very good relationships with, and support from teachers have boosted expectations and achievement in Years 10 and 11
- The wide variety of languages reflects the inclusive ethos of the school, as each individual member of the community is valued
- Assessment is underused in lesson planning, especially in Years 7 to 9

### Commentary

#### Examination results

73. The results of teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9 in 2003, were well below average in French, but above average in Spanish. In 2004, results were in line with national averages in both subjects. Results in the GCSE French examinations in 2003 were average and rose to above average in 2004 with an increasing proportion of grades at A/A\*. This represents a remarkable increase from 2002 figures. The smaller number of pupils who were entered for GCSE Spanish for the first time in 2004 achieved in line with national averages.

#### Standards and achievement

74. Pupils have a low level of literacy skills on entry to the school. They make good progress in Years 7 to 9, particularly in French. Teachers use a mixture of English and the foreign language to ensure clear understanding. By the end of Year 9, more able pupils are working at level 5, writing short accounts using the three tenses within a controlled range of contexts and vocabulary. Some opportunities are missed to develop oral skills in more depth. Pupils with EAL and SEN make similarly good progress due to the quality of relationships and the time given to them by teachers and their assistants. Work for gifted and talented pupils is adapted better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Pupils make very good progress in their GCSE courses, partly due to the wide range of monitoring and support systems which help them realise their potential. Increasing use is made of ICT to promote their independence and staff are deployed to their advantage.

#### Teaching and Learning

75. Pupils are good learners as teachers manage them well and there are high expectations and pace in lessons. Wall displays, place-mats and a focus on key words, combined with regular testing and target-setting are well used to establish basic concepts and to link these with prior learning. In all years, pupils respond to the attractive learning environment and regular praise and encouragement which cement the strong relationships with their teachers. Pupils work very readily either individually or in oral pair-work activities but often receive insufficient prior practice to make maximum use of these opportunities. The use of stimulating presentation

materials is inconsistent and an occasional over-reliance on textbook exercises inhibits deeper learning as skills are practised separately. There are some strengths in assessment and pupils have a clear idea of their progress and how they can improve. The system, however, lacks sufficient refinement both to guarantee maximum reliability in levels and to assist teachers in lesson planning.

## Leadership and management

76. Leadership has established a broad, inclusive curriculum which reflects the needs of the local community and helps the large numbers of new pupils settle into the school. High standards of organisation and aspirations, within a strong team ethos, have been set and completely reversed the heavy decline in results between 1998 and 2002. External and self-evaluation types of monitoring have been well-used in the early stages of this recent improvement. Peer-observation and 'hands-on' monitoring to ensure the quality of teaching and learning are more limited at present.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

|                       | Year 9        | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------|
| Standards             | Below average | Average |
| Achievement           | Good          | Good    |
| Teaching and learning | Good          | Good    |

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership                     | Very good |
| Management                     | Very good |
| Progress since last inspection | Very good |

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The relationship between teachers and pupils is good and results in most pupils working hard
- A minority of pupils are weak at basic arithmetic and this is restricting their understanding of more complex topics
- Pupils know what level they are working at but not what they need to do to get to the next level
- The department is very well led and constantly looking for ways to improve its provision
- Some lessons do not interest the pupils because they fail to offer a variety of approaches and learning styles

## Commentary

### Examination results

77. On entry to the school pupils' attainment in mathematics is well below average. Results at the end of Year 9 are well below national averages but in line with the average for those schools with a similar intake. There has been a steady improvement over the last 5 years. Results at the end of Year 11 in 2003 were below average but formed part of a trend of improvement. Indications suggest that the 2004 results show continued improvement at the ends of both Years 9 and 11.

### Standards and achievement

78. Pupils generally achieve well in lessons, particularly when studying space and shape. A minority of pupils have weak arithmetic skills which is limiting their understanding, confidence and achievement in more complex topics. Short arithmetic activities at the start of lessons are being used to sharpen pupils' mental mathematics but are not yet fully impacting on achievement. Teaching in all sets ensures that pupils do well, with no evidence of differences in the achievement of pupils with SEN needs, of pupils with EAL, or of boys and girls. In response to the supportive teaching, pupils behave very well, concentrate and work hard. In a Year 9 class pupils were able to calculate complex number sequences. In a Year 11 class the pupils successfully analysed a complex graph.

## Teaching and learning

79. Teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. The expertise and enthusiasm of the teachers are significant strengths that ensure rigour in the teaching and thorough preparation of pupils for examinations. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. The pupils have confidence in their teachers and there is mutual respect. This results in a pleasant ambience within the classrooms and pupils feeling confident to tackle difficult questions without fear of ridicule if they make mistakes.
80. The routine setting of homework successfully reinforces learning from lessons. Every pupil has a target level in the subject. The pupils do not know what the levels mean or what they have to do to move from one level to another. The system is not yet helping to raise standards.
81. In some lessons very good teaching was observed. In one, the teacher used a wide range of teaching strategies, including practical work, paired work, group work and a reinforcement of each individual pupil's literacy skills. Pupils were called upon to present their work using the interactive whiteboard. These different approaches were combined with very good classroom management skills. At the end of the lesson the pupils understood how to calculate the surface area of a many sided shape (a polygon).
82. In the less successful lessons the teaching was restricted to one particular approach and failed to provide appropriate challenge.

### **Leadership and management**

83. Standards are rising and the achievement of pupils in lessons is good. The subject leader for mathematics and the assistant subject leader work well as a team and provide very strong leadership. The subject leader leads a committed and mutually supportive team of teachers who constantly seek ways to improve their teaching and the opportunities offered to the pupils. Classrooms are attractive environments for learning and are located in suited accommodation that encourages close collaboration between teachers. Since the time of the last inspection results and the quality of teaching have risen; schemes of work have been developed, pupil self assessment has been introduced and some progress has been made in widening teaching styles. Progress overall since that time has been very good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

84. Mathematics across the curriculum overall is satisfactory. In several subject areas, pupils' numeracy skills are being developed well. Calculation of pulse rates appears in the PE curriculum. Pupils are asked to use measurement of weight and length in DT and bar charts in French. In Science in Year 11 pupils simulating radio-active decay were required to plot a decay curve and use it to work out the half life. There has not been, however, any audit of cross-curricular numeracy provision and a lack of drive to develop this area has led to opportunities for learning being missed.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is very good.

|                       | Year 9             | Year 11   |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Standards             | Well below average | Average   |
| Achievement           | Good               | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Good               | Very good |

|                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Leadership                         | Good         |
| Management                         | Satisfactory |
| Progress since the last inspection | Very good    |

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching results in pupils learning very well and achieving very well
- Leadership is good, with an emphasis upon raising standards
- Assessment practices are being improved but are not yet fully effective
- There is insufficient emphasis upon open, extended, investigative work

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

85. Results in the examinations at the end of Year 9 were very low compared with the national average in 2003, but were in line with those in similar schools. Girls performed better than boys. Results improved in 2004, when standards nationally fell. GCSE results in 2003 were lower than those in 2002, partly as a result of staffing difficulties that have now been resolved. Results were well below average, but were well above those in similar schools. Boys obtained better results than girls. Results in 2004 rose significantly. Girls again obtained better results than boys.

### **Standards and achievement**

86. Standards in Year 9 are well below average for example, in terms of pupils' understanding of the process of photosynthesis and of thermal conductivity. By Year 11 standards are average, for example, in terms of pupils' understanding of topics such as atomic structure, the Big Bang theory, red shifts in stars and genetic inheritance. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 7 to 9. Progress and achievement in Years 10 and 11 are very good. Pupils from different ethnic groups, those with EAL and SEN all make very good progress and achieve very well. The achievement of pupils who are gifted and talented is good.

### **Teaching and learning**

87. The great majority of lessons are well-planned and structured and involve a variety of activity to engage, and sustain, pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teaching is more effective in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and explanation is clear. Teachers have high expectations in terms of both the level and pace of work. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, usually with clear time-scales for activities. Questioning is used to check pupils' understanding, but at present, answers are mainly limited to short responses. There is a wide variety of teaching and learning activities in use, including demonstrations, practical work, investigations, research, presentations, use of ICT, comic strips, group work, modelling, and some writing for a purpose. In a Year 9 lesson for example, there was a brisk starter activity where pupils looked up the meaning of key words relating to photosynthesis. In a written follow up activity pupils answered questions on this topic. They then finished their practical investigations into how the rate of photosynthesis depends upon light intensity. The lesson was completed with some past examination questions. There is insufficient reinforcement of skills in scientific enquiry through regular practical work. Investigative work is generally too closed and does not give the pupils sufficient opportunities to choose the variable they will alter and select appropriate equipment. The use by pupils of ICT is increasing but is insufficient, as a result of a lack of resources. Too little use is made of extended, and creative writing. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully but at present this is not done in terms of sub-levels. Pupils know their general level of performance in science but not their current specific levels for scientific enquiry. Positive measures have been put in place to improve feedback to pupils on what they need to do to improve, but the systems are new and are not yet fully effective. Assessment information is not yet used to ensure that teaching is consistently challenging.

### **Leadership and management**

88. There is a clear focus on raising standards of achievement. Performance data is analysed and action taken. For example, data from Year 9 tests has been analysed to inform revision. Analysis of performance by GCSE groups has led to the introduction of a new General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) course. This course has only just started. The initial response from both teachers and pupils is positive but insufficient attention has been paid to monitoring the impact of the 'on-line' teaching approach. Management is satisfactory. The department runs smoothly from day to day. There is regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching but at present this does not ensure that all teaching is consistently of the highest quality. The National Strategy for science is having a positive impact upon teaching but is not yet fully, or consistently, in place. The improvement since the last inspection is very good and particularly strong in the past year where a rigorous approach to analysing and addressing weaknesses in pupils' attainment has led to significantly improved results in 2004.



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is good.

|                       | Year 9  | Year 11   |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------|
| Standards             | Average | Good      |
| Achievement           | Good    | Very good |
| Teaching and Learning | Good    | Good      |

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership                         | Very good |
| Management                         | Good      |
| Progress since the last inspection | Good      |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are continuing to rise because of very good leadership which results in well-planned lessons and a strong focus on examination requirements
- Pupils achieve very well because of consistent teaching from a team of specialist teachers who motivate pupils well and work with pupils out of school hours
- The expertise of teachers in the use of computers is increasing and helping to raise standards.
- The use of computers in other subjects is not monitored enough

### Commentary

#### Examination results

89. In 2003 70% of pupils taking the GNVQ intermediate course achieved a pass and in 2004 this increased to 93%.

#### Standards and achievement

90. In Years 7-9 pupils have discrete ICT lessons that follow the national recommended strategy. In Year 9 teacher assessments show standards to be around the national average and work seen during the inspection confirms this. By Year 9, pupils can use spreadsheets to plot graphs and use computers to design and control simulations of fun fair rides. They carry out the range of activities suggested by the National Strategy.
91. Currently most pupils in Years 10 and 11 gain their ICT provision through GNVQ ICT, but pupils who opt for other vocational subjects do not have their ICT skills assessed or certificated. It is not possible to judge the standards of these pupils, but evidence from lesson observations suggests that standards are good. In GNVQ ICT standards have risen over the last three years and this has been particularly noteworthy amongst boys where achievement is now in line with that of girls.

#### Teaching and learning

92. Pupils learn well because a team of well qualified subject specialists delivers lessons where pupils make good progress. Teaching seen was never less than sound, was often good and sometimes very good. In the most successful lessons, good routines are followed so that screens are turned off and pupils turn to the front to receive whole class teaching without distraction. Teachers give good one-to-one support, which maintains pupils' interest and motivation. Teachers use digital projection equipment to feed the pupils bite size chunks of information to get them swiftly onto each task. Relationships are very good. The clear focus on examination requirements throughout the department contributes to the good teaching and learning. Pupils receive valuable written and verbal feedback and they are very clear about what they need to do next. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are able to work independently with support from the class teacher. Pupils can progress at their own pace through a series of activities. The needs of EAL pupils or for whom reading is difficult are catered for by the choice

of an e-learning system where the instructions may be listened to on headphones while following the text.

## Leadership and management

93. Teachers are well led and less experienced members of the department are well supported. Staff are deployed very well and mentoring of newly qualified teachers is effective and has resulted in teaching that is at least good. There is a very clear vision for ICT led by senior management and this has led to the very good improvement in provision since the last inspection. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 receive the recommended one lesson a week of discrete ICT teaching. Staffing is good, with specialist teachers of ICT delivering clear teaching. As a result of recent promotions the department has a significant proportion of teachers with limited experience and these are supported well. Resources are very good. The Key Stage 3 strategy is being implemented very well and sufficient curriculum time has been allocated. Standards have risen since the previous inspection largely due to the increased computer resources throughout the school and teachers' improved confidence in using them. Vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 offer pupils a lot of ICT experience, but only those opting for the GNVQ in ICT gain an ICT qualification.

### ICT across the curriculum

94. The management of ICT across the school is unsatisfactory. A large amount of staff training has taken place leading to confident use amongst the staff. However, monitoring of pupils' actual ICT competence and of the coverage of the Years 10 and 11 curriculum is not rigorous enough. The number of computers is above the national average for secondary schools. ICT is used widely across the curriculum. For example, in music pupils are able to use the ICT facilities offered by the local authority to compose and play. In PE, video is used effectively to analyse body movements. Pupils are able to word process and create imaginative and very informative presentations. Pupils are very confident in using search engines to locate relevant information on the internet. However there are significant gaps in the acquisition of skills such as the lack of computer aided design in technology.
95. All teachers have access to laptop computers which is having a significant, positive impact on learning. Interactive white-boards are becoming more widespread. There is a lot of ICT used across the curriculum but it is not monitored to ensure coverage of the programmes of study.

## HUMANITIES

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is excellent.

|                       | Years 7, 8 & 9 | Short course  | Years 10 & 11 Full course |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Standards             | Average        | Above average | Above average             |
| Achievement           | Very good      | Excellent     | Excellent                 |
| Teaching and learning | Very good      | Very good     | Very good                 |

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership                         | Very good |
| Management                         | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

### Main strengths

- The very good teaching stimulates pupils' interest and is leading to excellent achievement
- Pupils discuss freely and are able to express balanced views on topics
- Very good leadership and management are moving the subject forward and ensuring consistency in all areas

### Commentary

### Examination results

96. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 in both the full and short course were in line with the national average and pupils did better in RE than in their other subjects. In 2004 the full course results were at a similar level and the short course results improved significantly.

### **Standards and achievement**

97. Standards at the end of Year 9 of work seen are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils have a secure knowledge of various world religions and use their knowledge to discuss ideas and empathise with various situations. Pupils enter the school with standards of literacy well below expectations and with a variable knowledge of RE topics and so this represents very good achievement. By the end of Year 11 pupils have a wide and in depth knowledge of the subject, a strength being how they use this knowledge to compare and discuss the issues raised. The work seen in the inspection shows that pupils are working at levels above the national average in both the short and full courses. This means that they are achieving levels far in excess of that predicted by their previous results and so achievement is excellent.

### **Teaching and learning**

98. The consistent very good teaching is resulting in very good learning. Two key contributory factors to the excellent achievement are the high expectations of pupils by all teachers and the way they engage and inspire pupils. Lessons are lively using a variety of methods and make very good use of current world affairs and use the experience and expertise of the pupils to complement the teaching. There is an emphasis on the pupils' participation. The very good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves encourage a positive environment in which learning can take place and in which the pupils feel confident in discussing their views. Staff know the pupils well and offer suitable support, but in some lessons tasks are not set that are suitable to the varying ability levels of the pupils.

### **Leadership and management**

99. The department is very well led with a constant drive for improvement. There is a large team of staff that is managed very well. It is moulded into a coherent team leading to the consistent very high standards within the department. Areas identified in the last report have been addressed, standards of attainment have risen and teaching has improved. This represents very good improvement.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is satisfactory.

|                       | Year 9        | Year 11       |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Standards             | Below average | Below average |
| Achievement           | Satisfactory  | Good          |
| Teaching and learning | Satisfactory  | Good          |

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Leadership                             | Good         |
| Management                             | Good         |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Satisfactory |

### **Main strengths**

- Results at GCSE and in Year 9 are improving
- There is a good use of interactive whiteboards and computers to support learning
- Subject leadership is good
- There is a range of investigative and fieldwork opportunities
- Pupil performance data is used to monitor progress and raise standards

- The close links with support teachers raise the achievement of EAL and SEN pupils

## Commentary

### Examination results

100. The results of National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are below those reported nationally but are higher in 2004. GCSE Results in 2003 are below national averages, with relatively few pupils achieving the higher grades A\* and A. Unvalidated results for 2004 show an improvement in the number of A\*-C passes and also grades A\* and A. There is an improving trend.

### Standards and achievement

101. Standards in Year 9 are below average but pupils enter the school with geographical skills which are well below average. This means that pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry. Good progress is then made at GCSE. Younger pupils develop their understanding of geographic terms and improve their knowledge of place. By the end of Year 9 pupils are able to explain the causes of natural disasters such as volcanoes and to understand their impact upon human activity. Pupils with EAL have greater difficulty accessing the curriculum. They, are, however, well supported by teachers who work closely with the department and by the end of Year 9 achievement has improved greatly. Pupils with SEN also achieve well.

### Teaching and learning

102. Lesson planning is well structured and results in a good pace of learning. Pupils respond well to the teaching, are generally attentive and have good attitudes towards learning. Teachers are able to exploit the various experiences of pupils within school. For example a Year 9 pupil provided a graphic description of his experiences of a hurricane. Very good teaching was observed in Year 11 where the teacher captivated and enthused pupils who conducted a debate on the rights and wrongs of a major development on a green site. Pupils gained a good understanding of the complex issues and the contrasting perspectives of different groups of people. Very good use is made of ICT to support learning, with one room equipped with an interactive whiteboard and a number of networked laptop computers. Marking and assessment is good and pupils know the level they are working at and what they need to do to improve.

### Leadership and management

103. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has a clear focus on raising attainment and has introduced good monitoring systems. He is rigorous in his review of the department and has a good grasp of the areas which need further development. There is currently insufficient specialist accommodation for geography. The department provides a good range of fieldwork, including a residential trip to Dorset for Year 7 pupils. Since the last inspection results at GCSE have improved and a greater focus has been placed upon improving enquiry and ICT skills.

### History

Provision in history is satisfactory.

|                       | Year 9             | Year 11       |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Standards             | Well below average | Below average |
| Achievement           | Satisfactory       | Good          |
| Teaching and learning | Satisfactory       | Good          |

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Leadership                             | Satisfactory |
| Management                             | Satisfactory |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Satisfactory |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at GCSE and the National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Yr 9 are well below national standards
- The use of assessment folders enables the department to effectively monitor pupils' progress

- Very good planning with support teachers enables EAL and SEN pupils to achieve well
- Marking is inconsistent and does not always support learning
- The number of pupils opting for History in Year 10 is low

## Commentary

### Examination results

104. The results of National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are well below those reported nationally and although there is an improvement in 2004 they are still below national averages. In 2003 the number of pupils achieving grades A\*-C at GCSE were below the national average but the percentage achieving a grade A\* or A was higher than in other subjects in the school. The unvalidated GCSE results for 2004 indicate that the number of pupils achieving a grade A\*-C is now well below national standards.

### Standards and achievement

105. Pupils enter the school with limited historical skills and little knowledge of British history. By the end of Year 9 standards have improved and pupils have acquired a good knowledge of both European and Islamic history. Girls generally achieve better than boys in Year 9. Achievement is higher by the end of Year 11. Pupils with EAL and SEN have greater difficulty accessing the curriculum but they are very well supported both by specialist teachers and by other members of the history department. As a result achievement by the end of Year 9 is good.

### Teaching and learning

106. Pupils are well behaved and have good attitudes to learning which result partly from the clear and high expectation made upon them by teachers. Lessons are well planned, which ensures appropriate pace. As a result pupils respond well to the teaching, are attentive and have good attitudes towards learning. All pupils in Year 7-9 have targets levels in the back of their exercise books and therefore know what is expected of them. Each pupil has an assessment folder, which is used to store the end of unit assignments. These are marked well and properly graded. These folders provide an effective strategy for monitoring progress over time. Marking of exercise books is generally inconsistent.

### Leadership and management

107. The long-term absence of a key member of staff restricted progress last year and resulted in lower standards being attained. The head of department has some good structures in place to monitor pupils' progress but the self-review programme lacks sufficient rigour. Action planning in the department also lacks a clear focus on developing strategies to raise standards and to increase the number of pupils choosing History in Year 10. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory though the use of ICT and access for pupils to trips or visits are still limited.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

|  | Year 9             | Year 11       |
|--|--------------------|---------------|
| Standards                              | Well below average | Below average |
| Achievement                            | Unsatisfactory     | Good          |
| Teaching and Learning                  | Satisfactory       | Good          |
| Leadership                             | Unsatisfactory     |               |
| Management                             | Satisfactory       |               |
| Progress since the previous inspection | Satisfactory       |               |

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective teaching in Years 10 and 11 has led to rising standards at GCSE
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 lacks breadth and is not meeting the statutory requirements
- The amount of curriculum time in Years 7 to 9 restricts achievement and the consolidation of learning
- Leadership is not active enough in order to respond to challenges the subject face
- The pupils' practical work is a strength, but graphical skills limit pupils' ability to communicate design ideas effectively

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

108. The results of teacher assessment in Year 9, in 2003, were well below those reported nationally with few at the higher levels. Girls' achievement was significantly higher than that of boys. In 2003, GCSE results at A\* to C grades were significantly below national expectation with a significant number of pupils failing to complete the course they started. The proportion of pupils achieving a pass was also below the national average. GCSE results in 2004, which have yet to be validated, have risen significantly, particularly in graphics, resistant materials and textiles.

### **Standards and achievement**

109. Standards on entry to the school are well below average and they remain so at the end of Year 9. The standard of work seen is well below average and achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. Pupils' achievement in making is better than in designing where underdeveloped graphical skills limits pupil progress in communicating ideas through drawing. The amount of curriculum time allocated in Years 7 to 9 further limits pupils' achievement and consolidation of learning. The standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are below average but have risen significantly over the last year and are now close to the national average. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is good and pupils develop a competence in using a narrow range of materials because of the strong support they receive from their teachers. This often results in well-made final products. There is no discernable difference in the achievement of children from different ethnic backgrounds and for those with SEN.

### **Teaching and learning**

110. In Years 7 to 9 some weak teaching was observed but overall teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject and lessons are delivered with pace and clarity. Pupils experience a narrow range of designing and making and there is no coverage of electronics, structures, mechanism and control. As such the statutory curriculum requirements are not being met and achievement at Key Stage 3 is adversely affected. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning are good and pupils have the benefit of very knowledgeable teachers. Pupils are cooperative and show interest in the tasks set. They show good levels of concentration, particularly when involved in practical work. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is under-developed though, and they lack the skills required for effective independent learning to take place. As such pupils have an over dependency upon teacher instruction and guidance. The lack of continuity across the key stages contributes significantly to this. In a Year 10 Food class, for instance, only three of the 18 pupils studied the subject in Year 9. ICT is used effectively in graphics in Years 10 and 11 but the use of computer-aided design and manufacture is limited to engraving and embroidery.

### **Leadership and management**

111. The management of the department is satisfactory and schemes of work and essential policies are in place. Working areas are appropriately equipped and resourced but some hand tools are in need of further attention. The staff work in close co-operation as a team and there is a clear focus upon raising achievement particularly in Years 10 and 11, with a strong emphasis



upon self evaluation. The school's assessment policy is consistently implemented and this is used to good effect to inform pupils as to how they can improve their work. Improved stability in the staffing has addressed many of the issues raised in the last inspection. Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory. The department lacks a clear vision for its future development and has no strategy in place for ensuring the National Curriculum is delivered fully at Key Stage 3. There is also a lack of breadth in the DT curriculum for Years 10 and 11. Insufficient guidance is provided to weaker teachers, resulting in potential health and safety issues and extra teaching support is not directed to the areas of greatest need.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and Design**

Provision in art is very good.

|                       | Year 9  | Year 11   |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------|
| Standards             | Average | Average   |
| Achievement           | Good    | Very good |
| Teaching and Learning | Good    | Very good |

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership                         | Very good |
| Management                         | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results have risen and are now in line with the national average
- In Year 11 achievement is very good because pupils' learning is broken into steps
- Very good teaching and learning is focused on raising achievement through creating a 'can do' ethos
- Pupils, by the end of Year 9 and 11 have a below average knowledge and understanding of art history and artists
- Pupils do not use computers enough in developing their art work

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

112. Results in art have improved over the last three years from well below the national average to being in line. The 2003 GCSE examination results were in line with the national average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Girls achieved better than boys.

#### **Standards and achievement**

113. Pupils develop above average drawing skills by the end of Year 11. They use subtle gradations of tone in their flower drawings, which are accurately observed. This is very good achievement. Pupils are improving their ability to develop their ideas, which is average at present. The difference between boys and girls is small, though boys' presentation is less detailed. Pupils with SEN achieve as well as other pupils, because teachers know them well and provide good support. Pupils with EAL, achieve as well as other pupils, because of the explicit visual and oral instructions given by teachers. In Year 9, pupils have average drawing skills. Their observation is fairly accurate, and they use tone to show form.
114. Pupils in Years 9 and 11 have below average understanding of art history. Pupils in Year 9 can only name one or two artists they have studied. In Year 11, pupils cannot name major art movements. They do not understand the interplay between the meaning of an artist's work, and their life and time.

## Teaching and learning

115. Pupils' attention is quickly engaged by well planned starter activities, which link well to the main lesson activity. Teachers break pupils' learning into manageable steps, which they make clear to pupils. Pupils learn very quickly, when teachers use effective lesson displays and model tasks. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher used pupils to try out different layouts for a research page. This engendered confidence, and pupils quickly grasped how to draw and develop their backgrounds. Teachers learn about the work of artists during practical work. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils successfully used Picasso's idea of using multiple viewpoints in their own observations of a range of objects. The recent introduction of key words is helping pupils to use art vocabulary with increasing accuracy. When teaching is not so effective, learning is not broken into small enough steps and these are not made explicit to pupils. Pupils enjoy art and concentrate well during lessons. A small number of boys in Years 7 to 9, show rather immature attitudes. By Year 11, all pupils show mature attitudes. They take great pride in their work, and are excited by their recent success with drawing.

## Leadership and management

116. Art has been effectively led, ensuring that results at GCSE rose over the last three years. Recent outstanding leadership and management have had an immediate impact on standards and achievement. Very effective strategies have been put in place for raising achievement in all aspects of art. The two well qualified teachers are effectively supported by a technician who has expertise in art. Resources are good, except there are not sufficient computers. The new schemes of work have a good balance across the different aspects of art. Art makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. All the weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed, except the use of computers.

## Music

Overall, the quality of provision in music is satisfactory.

|                       | Year 9       | Year 11       |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Standards             | Average      | Below Average |
| Achievement           | Good         | Satisfactory  |
| Teaching and Learning | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  |

|                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Leadership                         | Satisfactory |
| Management                         | Good         |
| Progress since previous inspection | Satisfactory |

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is staffed by two enthusiastic and committed teachers who are well supported by instrumental teachers
- The assessment of pupils' work is thorough, giving clear guidance on how to improve
- The department takes full advantage of the Luton E-learning Centre which provides music technology facilities for GCSE and Gifted and talented pupils
- A range of activities is provided for pupils in Year 7-9 which provide suitable challenges for all learners
- There is currently very little provision for vocal work within the curriculum and a lack of composing opportunities at Key Stage 3
- There is a limited range of extra curricular activities with low participation rates

## Commentary

## Examination Results

117. The GCSE results for music in 2003 are well below the national average, with only 25% of pupils achieving a pass. The unvalidated results for 2004 show an improvement with 44% of pupils passing. However, the number of pupils opting to study music is low. There are currently only 15 pupils studying music at GCSE level. Attainment in Years 7 and 8 is in line with national expectations, but is slightly lower at year 9. This is partly due to staffing problems of the past.

## Standards and Achievement

118. Standards of work by the end of Year 9 seen during lessons and on recordings of pupils' work demonstrate that pupils' achievements are good. In Year 7, pupils learn to sing an African chant and realise the melody on the keyboard, while in Year 9 they further develop their keyboard skills to perform movie themes as part of the Music and Media project. In the summer term, Year 9 pupils explore Asian music providing an opportunity for many to celebrate their own musical tradition.
119. By the end of Year 11 standards are slightly below the national average. Year 11, pupils visit the Luton E-learning Centre where they use music software to layer sounds and the recording studio to produce CDs of the finished product. They demonstrate a good awareness of melody and texture but use a limited palette of harmonies. Their instrumental and performing skills are mostly satisfactory.

## Teaching and Learning

120. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching for pupils in Years 7-11. Where teaching is most effective there is an appropriate balance between whole class teaching and independent learning activities and teachers provide activities matched to their pupils' levels of attainment. Good examples of graphic scores were used to support the learning of EAL pupils. Where teaching is less successful, pupils are given long periods of time to work independently with little guidance and are insufficiently prepared for tasks such as composing.
121. The scheme of work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, although there is limited provision for singing and composing for pupils in Years 7-9.
122. The leadership of the department is satisfactory. The recently appointed head of department has made significant progress in a very short space and is developing a vision for the future. She manages the work of the second in department and the team of instrumental teachers well. The department offers a limited range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, including a steel band and choir but the uptake is small and only 60 pupils currently receive instrumental tuition in school. The music department enriches the cultural life of the school, with music featuring in the Expressive Arts Evenings.

## Drama

123. Drama lessons were sampled during the inspection. Standards are very high and achievement is very good. In the three lessons observed teaching was very good. The teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are very well-organised. There could more targeting of work at the more able pupils in lessons. The management of the department is very good, with strong forward planning and self-evaluation.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is good.

|           | Years 7, 8 & 9 | Core Years 10 & 11 | GCSE          |
|-----------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Standards | Average        | Average            | Above average |

|                       |      |      |           |
|-----------------------|------|------|-----------|
| Achievement           | Good | Good | Very Good |
| Teaching and learning | Good | Good | Good      |

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership                         | Very Good |
| Management                         | Very Good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Good      |

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are improving
- Good teaching by a stable staff is leading to improving standards
- The very good attitude of pupils is contributing to good learning
- Peer evaluation is rarely used in lessons

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

124. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were below the national average but the 2004 provisional results show a significant improvement.

## **Standards and achievement**

125. Standards at the end of Year 9 of work seen are broadly in line with the national average, with some variation from activity to activity and girls being below average. Girls have been particularly affected by staff instability and have weaker hand-eye co-ordination skills and less flexibility in body movements. However the current Year 8 show greater potential in that their level of work is already at a level similar to the current Year 9. Pupils enter the school with standards below expectations and so this represents good achievement. Standards in the core course at the end of Year 11 are average compared to the standards expected at this level, covering a wider range of activities, although there is no national data to compare standards. The GCSE results rose in 2004, pupils achieving grades in excess of those predicted by their previous results which represents very good achievement. Current standards have been affected by the facilities available. The staff are making the best use of them and work have already started on improvements.

## **Teaching and learning**

126. In all lessons seen, pupils worked well in pairs and in groups and the very good attitudes of the pupils contributes to the good learning. The best lessons have a high degree of challenge pace and range of activities. The good provision of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum for pupils. All groups of pupils are catered for in lessons. Learning in some lessons is less successful when there is a lack of focus on specific skills and pupils practise errors rather than skill improvement. The use of peer evaluation in lessons is underdeveloped and so opportunities to develop analytical and coaching skills are missed.

## **Leadership and management**

127. The department is very well led with a clear vision for improvement. The enthusiastic staff provide good role models and new staff are supported well. This constant striving for improvement can be seen in the recent Sportsmark award and the Sports College bid currently in preparation. The department has been managed very well, following a period of decline and through a period of staff shortages. A simple comparison to the last report cannot be made due to changes in the National Curriculum but key areas have been addressed, the curriculum is under review and the department is in a position for rapid further development. This is good improvement.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

128. The focus of the inspection was on Applied GCSE Leisure and Tourism, but Applied GCSE Health and Social Care, GCSE Business and the ASDAN key skills course were also sampled. In each of these subjects there was insufficient evidence to make judgement on standards. GNVQ Science is reported under Science and GNVQ ICT under Information and Communications Technology. The vocational element of the curriculum has been introduced since the last inspection and the range of courses is increasing annually. This represents a broadening of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils and shows good improvement since the last inspection.
129. In Health and Social Care a lesson was observed where pupils from a wide range of abilities achieved well. They were able to understand the implications of labelling of products in order to make healthy choices. Planning for assessment played an important role in the lesson and there was well focussed questioning and answering leading to productive feedback.
130. In the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) lesson observed, a class with a large proportion of pupils with English as an additional language or other SEN achieved well. Computers were used by pupils to write about themselves and to search the internet for pictures.

131. In Business Studies the lesson observed was well structured with clear objectives and varied activities leading to the class making sound progress. The course builds on aspects of business covered in the ICT GNVQ and is offered to a limited number of pupils. In the sampled lesson pupils focused on the impact of pricing strategies on marketing.

## Leisure and tourism

Provision in Applied GCSE leisure and tourism is very good.

|                                    |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|                                    | Year 11                               |
| Standards                          | Good                                  |
| Achievement                        | Very good                             |
| Teaching and Learning              | Very good                             |
| Leadership                         | Good                                  |
| Management                         | Good                                  |
| Progress since the last inspection | The subject has been newly introduced |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The course has been introduced successfully
- Very good teaching and learning from a team of enthusiastic teachers leads to very good achievement
- There is a need to increase links with the local leisure and tourism industry

### Commentary

#### Standards and achievement

132. In Year 11 pupils have a good grasp of business concepts such as the importance of promotion to leisure and tourism businesses. Year 10 pupils in their first month of the course are able to classify leisure activities into their appropriate components and make interesting presentations to the class on which activities might or might not be attractive to different groups of potential customers. They can use the internet to research leisure organisations and use their findings to produce revision guides for the rest of the class. There were no noticeable differences in the achievement of boys and girls or different ethnic groups.

#### Teaching and learning

133. In lessons stimulating and confident teaching leads to very good progress from pupils. Lessons are well planned and there is good use of resources. In the most effective and outstanding lessons the needs of different learners are catered for. Some pupils are assisted in their written work through writing frames, while more able pupils are engaged in extension activities requiring them to analyse web sites. Computers are used effectively to support and extend pupils' learning. Teaching is skilful and there is a brisk pace to pupils' learning. Relationships are very good and pupils are very well motivated, showing a willingness to stay after school following a two hour lessons in order to complete an activity. Assessment is embedded in pupils' activities and pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

#### Leadership and management

134. The subject leader has developed a scheme of work that enables new teachers to become effective very quickly. Communication between the team takes place outside the normal department structure and although it is somewhat ad hoc it is effective. The course has been introduced successfully and resources and accommodation are good. Staffing is good with the teachers holding relevant degrees. The popularity of the subject in local schools and colleges provides a challenge for building relevant business links and the vocational context needs further development through increasing the embryonic links with the local leisure industry.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is good.

|                       | Year 9       | Year 11       |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Standards             | Average      | Above average |
| Achievement           | Good         | Very good     |
| Teaching and Learning | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  |

  

|            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| Leadership | Satisfactory |
| Management | Satisfactory |

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils know what it means to be a responsible member of a community because the school is committed to reflecting, as well as being, at the heart of the local community
- Pupils make good use of the wide range of opportunities to participate in community activities
- Teachers are not sufficiently adapting tasks in lessons to match the ability range and needs of pupils
- Year 11 pupils have above average skills of communication, and can express their opinions and feelings in an articulate and sensitive way

### Commentary

#### Standards and achievement

135. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the law, economics, and different forms of government, is in line with national expectations, in Years 9 and 11. Pupils in Year 9 and 11 can put forward their own or others views, justifying their opinions. In Year 11, pupils' own written accounts of moments of stress are startlingly honest and articulate. Pupils throughout the school take part in many of the opportunities to participate, and this leads to very good achievement. They have a strong sense of community, and can explain their responsibilities towards others and themselves. They understand the need for respect, and relationships are harmonious. Pupils with SEN and pupils with EAL achieve well.

#### Teaching and learning

136. Pupils learn about citizenship in lessons and in numerous other activities. In the PSHCE lessons the quality of teaching varies but is satisfactory overall. Pupils are making significant gains in other activities, such as the school council, the prefect system, and assemblies. Citizenship was taught directly through assemblies during the week of the inspection and these were of very high quality. The basic principles of citizenship were taught and all pupils were engaged by the excellent use of contemporary images on a data projector. Pupils gain understanding of democracy through the school council. Members are directly involved in school developments, such as improving punctuality and the design of the new sports hall. Where teaching is good, lessons are carefully planned and learning is well structured. Learning is active with a variety of activities. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils were learning about effective groupwork, the teacher included opportunities for pupils to feedback findings and express their views. This led to good achievement, further supported by an effective worksheet to help pupils reflect on their own skills. Where teaching is less successful, planning is not sufficiently detailed and teachers do not always match work to pupils of different abilities.

#### Leadership and management

137. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The action plan identifies appropriate priorities. There are recently written schemes of work which provide good coverage of



knowledge and understanding of citizenship, but some topics lack sufficient time to ensure pupils gain depth of understanding. Good assessment and reporting procedures are in place, so that pupils learning can be recorded and shared with parents. At the moment the pupils' assessment sheets do not allow pupils to contribute reflections on their own learning. The citizenship programme lacks coherence because there is no map of how other subjects contribute. Monitoring is not regular enough to ensure more consistency in the quality of teaching, and the sharing of good practice.

#### **Personal, social and health education**

138. The school has incorporated citizenship into personal, social and health education (PSHCE). Significant contributions are made to PSHCE by the huge range of extra curricular activities offered. Good use is made of visitors and visits to further enrich the programme, such as a visiting theatre group who gave a performance about drugs. Currently the contributions to PSHCE, from other subjects are not mapped. Appropriate schemes of work are in place covering all aspects, including drugs and sex education. Both religious education and science contribute to sex and relationship education, and drugs education. In a Year 10 science lesson, pupils prepared a presentation on drugs. They explained the physical effects of drugs on the body, such as cirrhosis of the liver as a consequence of alcohol. They explained the differences between their learning about drugs in PSHCE and in science. They could explain that PSHCE included strategies to resist peer pressure, while in science they learnt about the effects of different body organs.
139. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is well-structured, with an emphasis of pupil reflection and discussion but there were too many activities crammed into some lessons.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i>  | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>2</b>     |
| How inclusive the school is  | 1            |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 1            |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 2            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                    | <b>2</b>     |
| Pupils' achievement  | 2            |
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>        | <b>2</b>     |
| Attendance   | 2            |
| Attitudes  | 2            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                        | 2            |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development            | 1            |
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>               | <b>2</b>     |
| The quality of teaching  | 2            |
| How well pupils learn  | 2            |
| The quality of assessment  | 4            |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs                           | 3            |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities     | 3            |
| Accommodation and resources  | 3            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                             | 1            |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                              | 1            |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views                  | 2            |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents                 | 2            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 1            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 2            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>2</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 2            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 1            |
| The leadership of other key staff                                    | 2            |
| The effectiveness of management                                      | 2            |

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