

# INSPECTION REPORT

## THE NOTTINGHAM EMMANUEL SCHOOL

Nottingham

LEA area: Nottingham

Unique reference number: 133353

Acting headteacher: Mr D Hermitt

Lead inspector: Mr R Palmer

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 269521

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: Voluntary aided  
Age range of pupils: 11 to 16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 538

School address: Coronation Avenue  
Wilford  
Nottingham

Postcode: NG11 7AD

Telephone number: 0115 9144111  
Fax number: 0115 9144110

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of Mr K Charter  
governors:

Date of previous N/A  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This voluntary aided, Church of England school is in its third year of development as a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years. It is part of the local Excellence in Cities initiative. Currently, because it has students only in Years 7, 8 and 9, it is much smaller than most other secondary schools. Students' attainment on entry to the school varies among subjects and is broadly average in Year 7, but it was below average for the current Year 9 students. Boys and girls come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds that are broadly average overall. About one in three students is from one of a wide range of ethnic minorities. Three students are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with special educational needs, about one in five, is average. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is average. Most of these students have autistic or emotional or behavioural difficulties.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
31198	R Palmer	Lead inspector	
13762	N Shelley	Lay inspector	
4697	R Black	Team inspector	Music
31981	E Forster	Team inspector	Art and design
23188	J Maunder	Team inspector	Science
19214	G Price	Team inspector	English Citizenship
31879	D Rhodes	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology
20395	C Rowe	Team inspector	Physical education
19404	L Schubeler	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
4381	R Sharif	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Drama
21806	P Swinnerton	Team inspector	Design and technology
20497	V Williams	Team inspector	Geography History

The inspection contractor was:

ISIS

3 Harrowby road

West Park

Leeds

LS16 5HN

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a satisfactory and developing school that provides satisfactory value for money.** It has several good features. The good ethos helps to ensure very good racial harmony among students of all ethnic backgrounds. Standards are broadly average and show that students are achieving as well as could reasonably be expected. The quality of education, including teaching, is satisfactory. Senior leadership is good. Management is improving and is satisfactory.

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

- Good pastoral care and a strong Christian ethos promote good relationships and racial harmony.
- Procedures for self-evaluation, including the monitoring and evaluation of classroom work, have been unsatisfactory and result in an inconsistent quality of teaching.
- Students with special educational needs underachieve in classes in which they receive no additional support.
- Standards are high and achievement is very good in information and communication technology (ICT) and drama.
- Standards are well below average in design and technology and below average in geography and history.
- Inadequate time or resources in a few subjects restricts the breadth and depth of learning.
- The very effective student council helps students to play a full and active part in school life.

The school is in its third year of existence and has not had a previous inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The school has not yet had any public examination results to report since it only opened just over two years ago. **Achievement in Year 9 is satisfactory overall for boys and girls of all ethnic backgrounds**, when compared with their standards on entry in Year 7. Standards in Year 9 are average overall and in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science. They are well above average in ICT and drama and above average in music. Standards are below average in geography and history, because of shortage of curricular time, and well below average in design and technology. Boys and girls, of all ethnic backgrounds, are achieving very well in ICT and drama, and well in English, mathematics, music, physical education and Spanish. Achievement is satisfactory in science and all other subjects, apart from design and technology in which, despite satisfactory progress in current classes, it is unsatisfactory. The lowest attaining students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress when they are taught in small classes and benefit from a considerable amount of good support from teaching assistants. However, students of low attainment, who have learning or behavioural difficulties, do not all receive this additional support and, as a result, underachieve. Students of high attainment, including those identified as gifted or talented, make

satisfactory progress overall. Students at an early stage of learning English achieve satisfactorily.

**Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.** Students' behaviour and attitudes are good. Attendance is above average and good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.**

**Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall throughout Years 7 to 9.** Teaching is of inconsistent quality. It is very good in drama and good in English, mathematics, geography, history and ICT. It is good in most other subjects, but is satisfactory in science, art and design and design and technology. The teaching of students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Those students identified as gifted or talented receive work matched to their capabilities. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Marking is satisfactory, although it lacks consistency within subjects. Good planning of lessons ensures that students work productively and at speed in most lessons. Good teaching of literacy assists students' progress across the curriculum. Teachers use their subject expertise well to give clear explanations and to conduct lively and informative discussions. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, the teachers' expectations were low and skills in class management were ineffective.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Students enrich their learning and personal development through very good out-of-class activities. The quality of care, support and guidance is good, overall. Partnerships with parents and other schools are good. Links with the community are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall.** Governance is good, although the school does not meet statutory requirements for teaching design and technology. The leadership of the acting headteacher is **good**. Leadership of other key staff is satisfactory overall. Management has improved and is **satisfactory**. It recognises the need to develop systems of self-evaluation and performance management. The management of the provision for special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and have a clear vision for improvement.

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

Parents and students express positive views about the school. Parents are correct to say that their children settle in very well. A few parents and students have concerns about unsatisfactory behaviour by a small number of students. Although a few students behave poorly at times and the rate of exclusions was very high in the previous year, the vast majority of students behave well. Behaviour has improved considerably, recently, and was good during the inspection.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- develop effective systems of performance management and self-evaluation;
- improve curricular provision and raise standards in design and technology, geography and history;
- ensure that all students with special educational needs receive appropriate assistance to achieve their potential;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that provision in design and technology meets the National Curriculum requirements.



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

## **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are average by Year 9. The achievement of boys and girls of all ethnic backgrounds is satisfactory overall, but a few students with special educational needs underachieve.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are high and achievement is very good in drama and ICT.
- Standards in Year 9 are below average in geography and history and well below average in design and technology.
- Students with a statement of special educational needs achieve well.
- Low attaining students, who have learning or behavioural difficulties, underachieve in classes in which they do not receive additional support.
- Lack of curricular time or resources holds back students' achievement in a few subjects.

### **Commentary**

1. The school has no external examination results to report. Its oldest students have recently begun Year 9 and are due to sit the National Curriculum tests at the end of this academic year. Standards and achievement in religious education are the subject of a separate report produced by a concurrent section 23 inspection.
2. Students in the current Year 7 entered the school with average standards, overall, in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. Their standards on entry were below average in most other subjects, but were average in music and well below average in design and technology. Students in Year 9 had slightly below average standards on entry to the school. Their current standards of work are average overall, but vary across subjects from well above average to well below average. Standards are average in literacy and numeracy. Students develop very competent skills in ICT.
3. In Year 9, standards are currently average in English, mathematics and science. They are well above average in drama and ICT and above average in music. Standards are below average in geography and history, well below average in design and technology and are average in all other subjects. Compared with their standards in the subject when they joined the school in Year 7, students' achievement by Year 9 is very good in drama and ICT and good in English, mathematics, music, physical education and Spanish. It is satisfactory in science and all other subjects, apart from design and technology, in which, despite improved and satisfactory progress in current classes, it is unsatisfactory.
4. Boys and girls make similar rates of progress so that improvements in their work by Year 9 are broadly the same. There are no significant differences in the standards or achievements of students of the many different ethnic backgrounds. Very good racial harmony contributes to a climate of good learning. Students of all ethnic and social

backgrounds co-operate well with one another in class and, as a result, speak openly in discussions, knowing that their views are listened to and respected. The few students who are an early stage of learning English achieve satisfactorily. Students whose mother tongue is other than English and who are fluent in English, make the same rates of progress across subjects as other students.

5. Students with a statement of special educational need make good progress and achieve higher standards than expected, because much of their teaching is in small groups, with a specialist teacher and one or more teaching assistants. Other students with learning or behavioural difficulties, who are in these small classes, benefit from this good provision and also make good progress. However, other students with special educational needs, who are in low attaining or mixed ability classes, sometimes underachieve, because they receive inadequate additional support. In a few instances, students with behavioural difficulties disrupt the learning of other students in the larger classes. The individual education plans for students with special educational needs are not as effective as they should be in raising standards, because subject teachers make little contribution to them and rely too much on the general advice provided by the special educational needs department.
6. Students of average and high attainment, including those identified as gifted or talented, are achieving satisfactorily. In a few subjects, their achievement is good or better. For example, around 50 students in Year 9 are well on track to attain grades A\*-C in the GCSE examination in ICT to be taken at the end of this academic year.
7. The main reasons that achievement is very good in ICT and drama are that, in addition to effective teaching, the curricular time available is higher than in many other schools, students reinforce their learning through a good range of out-of-class activities, resources are of good quality and the expectations of teachers and students are very high. In subjects in which students achieve well, such as English and mathematics, good teaching and a strong focus on developing basic skills increase students' confidence and competence.
8. A number of factors hinder students' better achievement in a few subjects. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, as in science, results in students' making inadequate progress in a few lessons. The limited access to ICT facilities restricts students' learning in a few subjects, including art and design and design and technology. The current lack of a specialist teacher for food technology holds back students' knowledge and skills in this part of the curriculum. The time available for teaching geography and history is much less than that found in most schools, and, despite good teaching, students' achievement is satisfactory rather than good.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Students' behaviour and their attitudes are good. Attendance is good. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Behaviour has improved considerably and the high rate of exclusions has declined recently.
- Students' spiritual development is very good.
- Good relationships amongst students and with staff promote very good racial harmony.
- Students accept responsibility very well and the work of the student council is very effective.

### **Commentary**

9. Students of all the different ethnic backgrounds like school and enjoy most of their lessons. The vast majority work conscientiously and respect and co-operate with their teachers. They have positive attitudes to work and want to do well. They participate actively and in large numbers in the wide range of activities available to them. Students' attendance is above the average for secondary schools and almost all arrive on time for the start of school and lessons. The promotion, recording and checking of attendance are good, despite a few technological difficulties with the computerised system for lesson registrations.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.5	School data:	1.3
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.*

10. Behaviour is good, overall, in and out of lessons. When unacceptable behaviour occurs it is usually because teaching and activities are insufficiently stimulating or because the amount of in-class support is insufficient for students who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. When unsatisfactory behaviour occurs other than in lessons, it is usually because of a small number of students who have immature attitudes or who act thoughtlessly. Bullying occurs, mainly verbal, but racial harmony is very good. The statutory policy for race equality is in place and supports the school's strong promotion of inclusion. Relationships among students and between staff and students are good. Boys and girls of all backgrounds get on well socially. They work together tolerantly and supportively and show interest, for example, in each other's beliefs. The number of exclusions last year was very high, as a result of the previous 'zero tolerance' approach to the management of behaviour. The school has applied successfully a range of strategies that has reduced exclusions considerably this year. Students and staff confirm that discipline is now much better. The following table shows that some racial groups, particularly black students, were more likely to be excluded than others in the previous school year. Current records show no significant differences in the rate of exclusions among different ethnic groups. Students are pleased with the way the school has involved them in deciding how to deal with bullying. A very effective system records and tracks students' behaviour. Learning mentors, funded through the Excellence in Cities scheme, support teachers very well by playing a constructive and sensitive role in encouraging students to behave well and maturely.

## **Exclusions**

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	350	82	2
White – Irish	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	25	12	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	18	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	19	0	0

Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	30	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	7	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	22	4	0
Black or Black British – African	9	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	16	12	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	19	12	1

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

11. Students' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies and registration periods consistently promote reflection on various aspects of life. Lessons often include a prayer. A student prayer group meets frequently and a large number of students voluntarily attend a communion service. The local churches support the school very well, through a range of community links and through counselling and chaplaincy. The strong Christian ethos, evident in the school's daily life, helps students of all backgrounds and faiths to appreciate each other's customs, beliefs and values.
  
12. Moral development is good, because the teaching about right and wrong and moral issues, within the programme for personal, social and health education, is very effective. Students react positively and purposefully to very good opportunities to be involved actively in the determination of school rules. Participation in the management of such things as bullying provides many students with valuable 'hands on' experiences that help them to acquire mature attitudes and tolerance of different viewpoints. Consistent and constant reinforcement of moral values is effective through discussions of good quality, sensitive correction of inappropriate behaviour, recognition of students' all-round achievements and personal successes, and through the good example set by the staff.
  
13. Social development is good. The student council has a strong voice in school affairs and policy making and provides students of all backgrounds and capabilities with an excellent opportunity to exercise social responsibility. Students relish their involvement in the work of the student council and are proud of its accomplishments. They take a close interest in the appointment of staff and, for example, representatives play an important part in the interviewing processes. The student council helps to decide which charities to support. The wide range of extra-curricular activities provides interactive experiences that promote teamwork and competitiveness. The programme for citizenship develops students' understanding of social rights and political structures. Cultural development is good. Studies in all subjects promote students' cultural education and have worldwide relevance. Students' experiences include residential visits in this country and abroad and visits to places of interest and worship. Students value learning from visitors to the school, who talk about their own lifestyles and expertise. Members of the student council organise assemblies to include presentations by students about their individual faiths and practices, which extend and enrich the cultural awareness of all students.

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

The quality of education is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Links with parents, the community and other schools are good overall.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Assessment is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and marking are inconsistent, as systems for sharing good practice are undeveloped.
- The lack of additional support results in the underachievement of a few students with learning or behavioural difficulties, who are not in the lowest attaining classes.
- Good relationships among staff and students support good learning.
- Most teachers use their good subject knowledge and effective planning of lessons to encourage students to complete the work as quickly and accurately as possible.
- Occasionally, teaching makes insufficient demands on students and class management is inadequate.

### **Commentary**

14. The quality of teaching is good in English and mathematics and helps students to learn effectively and make good progress in lessons. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in science. They are good in most other subjects, but are satisfactory in art and design and design and technology.
15. Even in the subjects in which it is good overall, teaching lacks consistency. This confirms the views expressed by a few students that teaching varies from very good to unsatisfactory. Students' views about the quality of teaching are perceptive. They are right to say that teachers are helpful and committed and that many provide interesting, challenging and practical activities that motivate them to work hard. They are also correct in saying that, occasionally, lessons provide few activities to interest them.
16. The lack of consistency in the quality of teaching within subjects is partly a consequence of the difference between the teaching of the experienced and senior teachers, who were appointed in the school's first year, and the newer, and much less experienced teachers appointed more recently. Several Year 9 students say that they find it difficult to adjust to the methods of the teachers who have replaced the subject teachers who taught them during Years 7 and 8. Nevertheless, some of the teaching by the newly appointed teachers is of high quality and not all of that by heads of department is uniformly good. The absence, until the start of this term, of a system for performance management and the lack of suitable procedures to assess the classroom work of students and teachers have restricted the sharing of good practice and resulted in the varied quality of teaching.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 88 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	17 (19%)	38 (43%)	29 (33%)	4 (5%)	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.*

17. The teaching of literacy is good across subjects. Teachers provide good prompts to help students to develop their writing. In a few lessons, as seen in science, students with difficulties in spelling or writing have ready access to a computer. This enables these students to improve the presentation and technical accuracy of their writing and ensures that they keep up with the rest of the class. In many lessons, students extend their speaking and listening skills through activities in pairs and groups, and through whole-class discussions. As a result, many students are competent and confident in debating issues and giving logical, creative and extended answers to the teachers' probing questions. The very good teaching in drama encourages students to participate actively in practical work. They use the skills learned in drama to enhance work in other subjects, as observed in a Year 7 lesson in which students used role-play to very good effect in determining the causes and consequences of bullying.
18. The satisfactory development and use of the Key Stage 3 National Strategies help students to make good progress in many lessons. Teachers provide many learning activities of suitable challenge that stimulate students to think and to improve their skills of independent study. The teaching of numeracy across subjects is satisfactory. The use of ICT to assist teaching and learning is also satisfactory. The limited access to computing facilities restricts achievement in a few subjects, such as art and design and design and technology.
19. Good relationships between staff and students of all ethnic backgrounds help to provide a good climate for learning to take place. In the best lessons, teachers use their expertise in the specialist subject to enthuse students, to give competent and clear explanations and to provide a range of activities matched suitably to students' individual capabilities. As a result, students complete the work enthusiastically and as quickly and accurately as they can.
20. In a few lessons, the work does not always meet the needs of all students because it is too easy for some and too difficult for others. Occasionally, as seen in design and technology and science, the teacher's frequent stopping and starting of activities, and tolerance of too high a level of noise, hinder the pace and continuity of learning. The main features of the few unsatisfactory lessons are the teacher's low expectations and inadequate skills in class management.
21. Students with learning or behavioural difficulties, including those with a statement of educational need, receive good teaching and much individual help from teaching assistants and make good progress, when taught in the lowest attaining classes. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to students' learning, particularly for the few who have autistic or behavioural difficulties. The teaching of other students with special educational needs takes place in mixed ability classes, or in classes containing students of below average attainment, which generally do not have the

benefit of support from teaching assistants. Subject teachers usually provide work that matches the capability of these students, but struggle to provide them with the individual support and guidance needed. This often results in these students making slower progress than they should. Subject teachers are inconsistent in making effective use of the targets and strategies in students' individual learning plans for lesson preparation. This is partly because they have not contributed to these plans. Teachers in the special educational needs department complete all the individual education plans and do not consult sufficiently with the subject teachers and teaching assistants, who carry out most of the teaching and support for these students.

22. The teaching of the few students who are at an early stage of learning English is satisfactory overall, although, occasionally, they receive work that underestimates their potential achievement. The teaching of the students identified as gifted or talented is satisfactory. Teachers have identified the needs of these students and are preparing good extension tasks and activities to help them to aim for the highest standards.
23. Procedures for assessment have improved and are satisfactory. Systems to track students' academic progress are thorough, as seen in ICT and mathematics. In Spanish, teachers' very good assessment provides short-term and long-term targets for students, along with very good guidance to individuals about how they should improve different parts of their work in the foreign language. Senior staff track the academic progress of students of all ethnic groups closely and effectively to check for any significant differences in the performance of different ethnic groups. Most students in Year 9 have a clear awareness of their current levels of attainment. A few students, as seen in science lessons, describe accurately the reasons for their current standards. They evaluate the work of other students sensitively and accurately, and point out what they need to do to reach the next level. However, in several subjects, although students know their targets, many do not know what they need to do to improve. The lack of exemplar work in art and design means that students do not have a clear idea about how to progress to higher levels.
24. Teachers' marking of work is satisfactory. It often informs students well about their current standards and provides encouraging comments. However, in many subjects, it does not provide enough guidance to students about how best to improve their work. The quality of marking varies considerably within subjects. Teachers do not always insist that incomplete work is finished or that students correct their mistakes. This is a consequence of the school's previously inadequate arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, which are currently being tackled. The use of homework to support learning is satisfactory.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

The curriculum is satisfactory. Extra-curricular provision is very good. The quality and amount of staffing, accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school does not meet National Curriculum requirements for design and technology.



- Students benefit from a generous time allocation in ICT and drama.
- There is insufficient time for teaching the planned curriculum for geography and history.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities enriches the experiences of many students.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is inconsistent.
- The library makes an impressive contribution to students' learning.

## Commentary

25. The school provides a broad range of worthwhile curricular opportunities in Years 7 to 9 that meets students' needs and aspirations adequately. Satisfactory planning within subjects leads to progression in students' learning. However, at this early point in the school's development, the curriculum does not meet the National Curriculum requirement for the teaching of computer-aided design and manufacture in design and technology and provides insufficient time to teach all the topics in sufficient depth in geography and history. The time for religious education is, appropriately in a faith school, higher than that found in most other schools. Time provided for the separate teaching of ICT and drama is higher than that found in most schools and contributes to students' very good achievement and high standards in these subjects. Good enrichment occurs through weekly lessons in drama for all students.
26. The good programme for personal, social and health education helps students to develop their basic study skills, as well as their awareness and understanding of a wide range of moral, social and contemporary issues. It meets statutory requirements for provision for sex education and makes suitable arrangements for drugs education. Teachers make good use of the services of external agencies, such as the police and a drugs advisory organisation, to enhance and reinforce learning. Careers education and guidance are appropriate for the ages of the students. A careers advisory agency supplements the school's provision. Suitable plans are in preparation to meet the needs of the students when they reach Years 10 and 11.
27. Overall, the provision for students with special educational needs is satisfactory, but it has shortcomings and its management is unsatisfactory. These students receive good support in small groups to improve their basic skills in literacy and numeracy. They have full access to the National Curriculum, apart from those students in Years 8 and 9, who do not study a modern foreign language and follow an alternative, vocationally based curriculum, known as Youth Challenge. Part of this alternative programme takes place off site and offers a wide range of practical activities that motivates them and helps to develop their personal, social and practical skills. A flexible timetable, small class sizes, and development of the learning support unit enhance the curriculum for students with learning and behavioural difficulties. The deployment of teaching assistants is inconsistent across the school, leaving a few teachers and students without the much-needed additional support in mixed ability and lower attaining classes.
28. Commitment to inclusion is generally good. The school co-operates very well with outside agencies and provides equality of opportunity for all students. Good pastoral care and the very effective work of the learning mentors promote the academic and personal development of students of all social and ethnic backgrounds. Provision for the few students for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. However,

these students are, occasionally, assessed as having special educational needs, when it is their literacy and higher language skills that need attention. The school recognises this shortcoming and has made a recent specialist appointment to remedy the situation.

29. Very good extra-curricular opportunities are a particular strength and enrich students' learning. Active participation of students in sport and a wide variety of lunchtime and after-school activities promote academic and personal development. Students value highly the interesting and challenging activities offered. Several subjects provide 'drop-in' clubs. These offer study support and extension activities, including help in preparing for the national test and assessments taken at the end of Year 9, which enable students to consolidate and extend their work. Many students develop their social and cultural awareness through a range of subject-related educational visits, as well as involvement in visits abroad and foreign exchanges.
30. The match of teachers to the curriculum is generally good. However, the current lack of a specialist teacher for food technology restricts standards in design and technology. The team of teaching assistants is sufficient, but is not deployed to maximum efficiency across the curriculum. This accounts for the lack of support in several classes.
31. Accommodation is satisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum and the current numbers on roll. It is very good in mathematics and good in English, geography, history and ICT. The design and technology area is unsatisfactory, needs refurbishment and lacks a suitable area for design work. Very good displays of work in classrooms and around the school provide good encouragement and aids for learning and celebrate the multicultural diversity of the school.
32. Resources are satisfactory overall and provide adequate support for learning. However, the limited resources in design and technology mean that the coverage of a few topics is superficial. The very good library/learning resource centre plays a substantial role in supporting the work of many subjects, who make frequent use of its very good facilities. The library encourages students to work hard and with interest and has a very positive effect on students' achievement. It takes particular care to provide books and magazines to motivate boys to read widely. The 'Book Buzz' initiative helps students to improve their reading skills. The library often hosts visits from local and national writers and poets and theatre groups, which help to develop students' interest in the arts.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The quality of students' care, welfare and health and safety is good. Students receive good support, advice and guidance. Systems for seeking and acting upon students' views are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students are happy that the school seeks, respects and acts upon their views.

- Learning mentors make a very positive contribution to many students' personal development.
- A few students with learning or behavioural difficulties receive insufficient additional support.

### **Commentary**

33. Students make a confident, well-informed and smooth start to their life in secondary school, because of the good transfer arrangements made with primary schools and the effective process for induction. The pastoral team of managers and tutors provides good care and support and guidance for students' all-round development. Students of all ethnic backgrounds feel comfortable about approaching staff. They respond positively to the encouragement to speak their minds and to take responsibility for their own community. The student council is empowered to initiate change, which it does in an impressive manner. Governors and senior staff take full account of students' views when drawing up school policies and when making appointments of staff.
34. Learning mentors are part of the Excellence in Cities initiative and play an important role in the school, providing sensitive and effective support and guidance for many students, particularly those who have behavioural and learning difficulties. They have a positive influence on students' attitudes to school, their behaviour and their academic achievement.
35. Students develop their self-esteem through such other forms of support as a chaplaincy group. They improve their competence and confidence in academic work through attending a homework club. Students who are excluded for a fixed period receive work to do at home and, on their return, receive good assistance and counselling to catch up on the work missed in lessons.
36. Procedures regarding child protection and children in care are implemented well. Arrangements for health and safety are adequate. Nevertheless, a few issues relating to health and safety and the implementation of procedures were brought to the school's attention during the inspection and appropriate remedial action was instigated.
37. Through assessment, marking and individual discussions with their teachers, students know the standards at which they are working and the National Curriculum levels targeted for them. Their understanding about how to improve varies among subjects but is satisfactory overall. The school provides the range of careers guidance that is expected and generally seen in Year 9 and works closely with the visiting Connexions careers advisory service. The few students, for whom the traditional curriculum is unattractive, visit a local college of further education to find out about work-related, alternative curriculum opportunities. This helps to build the self-esteem of these students and is a suitable initiative to try to avoid feelings of disaffection later on in their school careers.

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

The partnership between school and parents is good. Links with the community are very good and with other schools are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents express confidence in the school and feel that their views are taken into account.
- Parental involvement in the life of the school is good and supports students' learning.
- The school works very well with the community to enhance students' all-round development.
- Good links with feeder schools and parents help students to settle into secondary school well.

## **Commentary**

38. Since opening, just over two years ago, the school has successfully won the confidence of the local community and parents and is now oversubscribed. Parents are pleased with the quality of education and the care that is provided. They say that teaching and students' achievement are good, although the inspection judges these to be satisfactory. A few parents have concerns about behaviour and bullying. They have some justification, because poor behaviour causes disruption to learning in a small number of lessons. The school now has improved and good systems in place to deal with unsatisfactory behaviour by students. A degree of bullying persists and exclusions were high last year, but are much fewer this year. Students say that the school deals firmly and fairly with cases of bullying brought to the attention of staff. Parents are well informed overall. Annual school reports provide information of very good quality about students' progress, although a few parents would like to have more frequent updates.
39. The school has very good systems for seeking parents' views and is careful to act upon them. The parents' council is an unusual and good feature. It is a well-attended forum for the discussion of parents' views and makes effective contributions to the formulation of the school's policies. Many parents participate well in students' learning and in the life and activities of the school, although attendance at progress review meetings is not always high.
40. The school's participation in and use of the wider community are very good. Community links contribute well to learning in several subjects, particularly music, and to students' personal and cultural development, for example through involvement in the residential visit to Barcelona. The local churches contribute much to the school's ethos and spiritual development. Local organisations such as a radio station, a local newspaper, a local theatre and a regional operatic society provide a very good range of very enriching experiences for students. Employers provide mentoring and work-related opportunities for many students.
41. Close liaison with primary schools results in students transferring in a well-informed and confident manner. Some curricular work has commenced with two of the main primary schools. Joint ventures take place with partner secondary schools that help to share good practice in assessment, teaching and learning. Taster visits to a college of further education help students to raise their aspirations. The school has good arrangements to support the development of trainee teachers.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The leadership of the acting headteacher is good. Leadership provided by other key staff is satisfactory. Management has improved and is satisfactory. Governance is good, although the school does not meet statutory requirements for design and technology.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Systems of performance management and self-evaluation are underdeveloped.
- Governors and senior staff, with the very good help of the temporary associate headteacher, are implementing good plans for making management at all levels more effective.
- Clear and visionary leadership sets a clear direction for improvement and helps to ensure a positive ethos and very good racial harmony.
- Inadequate management of the curriculum has resulted in shortcomings in provision for the teaching of design and technology, geography and history.
- The management of behaviour has improved considerably and exclusions are declining.
- The management of special educational needs is unsatisfactory across the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

42. One of the deputy heads was appointed as acting headteacher with effect from September 2004. Since the summer term of 2004, the school has received the regular support, for four days every week, of an associate headteacher, who works closely and effectively with the acting headteacher. They are introducing many positive initiatives that need more time to become fully effective. A positive feature of this partnership is the successful tackling of the problem of much poor behaviour by students that was reflected in the previously very high rate of exclusions. The school now has good systems, followed consistently by staff, which result in overall good behaviour.
43. Governors have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what should be improved. They have good procedures for calling the school to account and provide active and good support, as seen in the meeting of the curriculum committee, which was discussing curricular developments with heads of department and senior staff. Governors carry out their responsibilities well, apart from ensuring that statutory requirements for the teaching of design and technology are met. They have a strong commitment to the school's success. They listen carefully to the views of staff and parents, and, particularly, to those of students. For example, when making staff appointments, they take duly into account the views of members of the student council, who have held discussions with candidates.
44. The school sets out a clear mission. Although it occupies the site of a school that closed because of falling numbers, this faith school is now oversubscribed and enjoys the confidence of parents. This is because parents appreciate the Christian ethos and the very good racial harmony evident in the school's day-to-day life. The admissions policy reinforces the school's strong focus on the inclusion of students of all ethnic and social backgrounds and capabilities. The focus of leadership is now firmly on sustaining the improvements in behaviour and introducing more effective systems for improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising students' achievement. The interim senior leadership team, in place since the start of term, work well together and, with their new line management roles, motivate staff at all levels to share a commitment to raising standards.
45. Until very recently, the school had no system of performance management and no clear systems of line management and accountability. Systems for staff development were not linked clearly enough to improvements in teaching and learning or to the school's educational priorities. Development planning was inadequate. Many staff

were not aware of their roles and responsibilities. As a result, the school had no effective procedures to determine how well it was doing and how to improve. Very little monitoring of classroom work meant that little sharing of good practice took place and has resulted in the current lack of consistency in the quality of teaching within subjects.

46. As a result of much hard and effective work by the acting headteacher and the sensitive and very good support of the associate headteacher, management at all levels has improved and is now satisfactory. All staff now know what is expected of them. Performance management is being implemented, with the acting headteacher having received clear indications from the governing body about targets for improvement. Evaluations of the work of subject departments have been introduced. These are carried out thoroughly by senior staff and heads of department, so that subject departments are increasingly aware of their strengths and weaknesses and what they should do to improve. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are making staff think more carefully about the ways they teach, but are not yet successful in sharing good or better practice more widely and identifying how teaching could be improved and standards raised. The recently developed school improvement plan has sensible priorities for improving the quality of teaching and learning. These include further implementation of the Key Stage 3 National Strategies, which is already having a positive effect on teachers' planning of lessons and is particularly effective in promoting the teaching of literacy across the curriculum. In-service training for staff now relates more closely to the school's plans for improvement. Senior managers are developing plans to deal with the current curricular shortcomings in design and technology, geography and history. The management of initiatives undertaken through the school's participation in the Excellence in Cities scheme, such as the work of learning mentors and the provision for gifted and talented students, is satisfactory.
47. Financial management and planning are satisfactory. The finance officer ensures that systems for day-to-day management of finances work well. Governors and school staff have good procedures to achieve best value in their spending decisions. The budgetary deficit is set to double this year. This large deficit is due to the school having to provide items for its future development before it has reached its full complement of students and staff. For example, most of the early appointments of teachers are at a senior or middle level and, consequently, take a higher than usual proportion of the budget. The need to have suitable staff in place to plan for the 14 to 19 curriculum is a further expense. The necessary adaptations to the buildings, until the replacement of the existing buildings with a new school in 2007, will incur the expenditure of large sums of money. The current school buildings are designed to house 720 students, compared with the school's projected eventual number of 1150 students. The governors have agreed an appropriate budget recovery plan with the local education authority to remove the deficit by 2007.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	1 740 027	Balance from previous year	-50 716
Total expenditure	1 822 127	Balance carried forward to the next	-132 816
Expenditure per pupil	6349		

48. Leadership and management in subject departments are satisfactory, overall. They are very good in ICT, music and Spanish and good in a few other subjects, including English and mathematics. Management is not always as effective as leadership, because the school has only improved its systems of management very recently. Good pastoral leadership and management ensure that students receive a good quality of care, support and guidance.
49. Leadership of special educational needs is good and has a strong commitment to help students with learning or behavioural difficulties to improve their academic standards and all-round development. However, management, despite some good features, is unsatisfactory, because of inconsistencies in the co-ordination of the work of subject teachers and in the deployment of teaching assistants. The monitoring of teachers' use of students' individual education plans to prepare their work is inadequate. The Code of Practice is fully in place and supports the school's positive approach to the inclusion of all students. Students with a statement of special educational need receive good help because teachers and teaching assistants know their needs very well.
50. The main aids to students' achievement are much good or better teaching; well above average skills in ICT; students' improved and good behaviour; good attendance and positive attitudes to work; very good enrichment opportunities for students of all capabilities; and good support for students with a statement of educational need.
51. The main barriers to raising achievement are: inconsistent teaching, including a small amount that is unsatisfactory; insufficient support for a few students with learning and behavioural difficulties; limited access to ICT facilities in a few subjects; and a few curricular shortcomings.
52. Taking into account the funding received by the school, the social and economic backgrounds of students and the current quality of education and achievement, the school provides satisfactory value for money.



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

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

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- By Year 9, students make good improvement from when they joined the school.
- Good teaching ensures that students enjoy lessons and learn readily.
- Good leadership and management are helping to raise standards of work.
- Marking does not help students enough to improve their writing, which is often below average.
- A few students with learning or behavioural difficulties make slower progress than others, when they do not have support.

##### **Commentary**

53. When students enter the school, in Year 7, their work is below average in English. By Year 9, their work is close to average. This indicates good achievement for students of all ethnic backgrounds, including the few at an early stage of learning English. Students display a good range of speaking and listening skills. Boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds and of all capabilities are consistently above average in their oral work. Group discussions are well conducted and often intense. They make a positive contribution to students' spiritual and social development. Many students talk confidently to the whole class, using appropriate vocabulary and good expression. They read aloud expressively and convey meaning clearly. Increasing numbers of students make good use of the library's good facilities to develop their reading. Standards of reading are generally average. Most students do not write as well as they speak. Written pieces are often short and undeveloped. Writing is generally below average. Spelling and punctuation are below average, but presentation is usually good. Students with learning or behavioural difficulties make the same good progress as other students in the lowest attaining classes, in which they receive help from teaching assistants. However, as seen in a middle attaining Year 8 class, these students make slower, albeit satisfactory, progress in classes in which such additional support is not available.
54. Learning and teaching are good. Lessons move along at a brisk pace. Students learn well because they are involved actively most of the time. In a very good Year 7 lesson, students moved quickly from exploring similes to planning autobiographical writing. They were encouraged to talk about their work and the teacher showed them

how to plan effectively. In challenging lessons, such as this, students enjoy English and make very good progress. Teachers work hard to improve the language and literacy skills of students. These skills are improving and are now broadly average. Students do not make the same good progress in developing their writing. In homework and in lessons, students too seldom write at sufficient length to develop confidence and fluency in written work. Marking does not consistently show students in detail how they can improve their writing.

55. Good leadership of the department is innovative and energetic in pursuit of raising standards. Teachers work well as a team and share the same enthusiastic approach. As a result, students enjoy English lessons and achieve well. New teachers have very good support. Good leadership spreads beyond the classroom to the many additional activities aimed at improving learning. Work with the library and ICT department for the development of reading throughout the school is particularly impressive. Management is good. Programmes of lessons are well devised to appeal to students and to give full coverage of the National Curriculum. The curriculum in Year 8 promotes students' multicultural development through studies of the narrative writing of black authors.

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

56. Students make satisfactory use of their average skills in literacy to develop their work across the curriculum. Support for improving literacy is good in most subjects. Students have good opportunities to develop their oral work in many lessons and often reach above average standards. A school-wide focus on the National Literacy Strategy provides effective support for students' writing, as evident in most lessons. The library is a focal point for much literacy-based work, involving teachers from different subjects. The mathematical raps on display there typify such work. English teachers work hard to build up students' literacy through regular language-based activities and by providing remedial work as required. Many subjects help students to organise their writing, through the use of suggested frames and outlines. Particularly noteworthy is the very good collaborative work by English and ICT teachers on the library-based reading initiative. Many students use the library well to develop their reading interests.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Students in Years 7 to 9 study Spanish as the first modern foreign language. A few students in Years 8 and 9 study French as a second modern foreign language.

Provision in Spanish is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching enables students to achieve well in Spanish.
- Very good leadership of the department ensures a commitment to improving standards further.
- There is insufficient sharing of the very good practice of teaching and learning.
- Provision for teaching a second foreign language is unsatisfactory.

- Very good assessment contributes to good learning.
- When students with special educational needs do not have support they do less well.

### Commentary

57. In Year 9, standards of work in Spanish match the national average. As a result of good teaching that links lesson activities successfully to the needs of individuals, boys and girls from the variety of ethnic backgrounds, including the few for whom English is an additional language, achieve well, taking into account their slightly below average language and literacy skills when they joined the school in Year 7. Students understand Spanish quite well and develop a good knowledge of grammatical structures. Higher attaining students use a variety of tenses and write Spanish accurately. Students with special educational needs achieve well in the classes in which they receive extra help from teaching assistants. They make satisfactory progress in lessons in which no additional support is present.
58. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Very good use of ICT by teachers fosters good attitudes, because it captures and sustains students' interest. Teachers plan their lessons well and enable students to develop their language skills, through a wide range of appropriate activities. A lively pace, in most lessons, keeps students on their toes. Good relationships and good control ensure that students concentrate on their work, co-operate well with one another and understand how to behave well. Teachers make an important contribution to students' good achievement by emphasising language patterns and showing how language works. However, they do not provide enough opportunities for students to use Spanish for everyday communication. Consequently, students' speaking skills, though adequate, are not as good as their reading and writing skills.
59. Very good departmental leadership fosters a strong commitment to higher standards and is creating an effective and cohesive team of teachers. The effectiveness of management is generally good. Teachers use very good assessment procedures to track the progress of individual students. They set students individual targets and show them how to improve their performance. Schemes of work are detailed and set a clear path for the progression of students' learning. Opportunities for the formal observation of lessons are limited and so the sharing of the very good practice that takes place is restricted. The arrangements for a few students to have only one lesson per fortnight to study French as a second foreign language are unsatisfactory and do not allow good continuity and pace of learning. Since the school opened, the work of the department has developed well, and the capacity for further improvement is good.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Average attainment indicates good achievement throughout Years 7 to 9.

- Good leadership and management ensure good teaching and learning overall.
- A few students with learning difficulties underachieve because they receive too little support.
- Students and teachers use ICT effectively to enhance learning.
- Good use of assessment helps students to make good progress.
- Very good use of the library extends students' learning.

### **Commentary**

60. In Year 9, standards across all aspects of the work match the national average. They indicate good achievement for boys and girls of all the ethnic groups, compared with these students' slightly below average standards in mathematics on entry in Year 7. High attaining students achieve very well, as do most students with special educational needs. However, a sizable minority of low attaining students with learning or behavioural difficulties do not receive sufficient support in lessons and consequently underachieve.
61. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and benefit from the effective implementation and use of the Key Stage 3 Numeracy Strategy. Good planning of lessons means that teachers capture all students' attention quickly and provide them with tasks and activities of good challenge and suitable difficulty. Brisk starter activities, in all lessons, engage the interest of students, reinforce previous work well, and ensure that students consolidate and develop their basic mathematical skills. Teachers use ICT, especially interactive whiteboards, very effectively to motivate students and to provide clear explanations.
62. Assessment is good. Teachers assess and track students' work and progress thoroughly. They use the information gathered to monitor students' progress carefully, so that they spot potential underachievement early and take remedial action quickly. Enrichment sessions for high attainers take place out of school hours and stimulate these students to work hard and to reach high standards. Students use ICT well, where appropriate. Through planned access to the resources, boys and girls develop, practise and apply their well above average computing skills to extend their knowledge and understanding of various mathematical topics.
63. Good leadership and management have built up a cohesive team of good teachers and place a firm emphasis on high standards. The collaborative approach to curricular development has produced an imaginative and stimulating scheme of work that matches closely students' needs. The recently refurbished suite of mathematics rooms ensures an effective learning environment, which is equipped well with interactive whiteboards and data projectors in each room. Other teaching resources are plentiful and used well to encourage students' active participation in lessons.
64. Mathematics teachers make very good use of the library/learning resource centre to develop students' technical vocabulary and language. Students have produced some creative and fascinating poetry on the subject of algebra.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. Students use their average mathematical skills satisfactorily to support their work across the curriculum. They have sufficient computational, interpretational and measuring skills to cope with the demands made by different subjects. In design and technology, they measure and mark out work using appropriate units. In physical education, they measure pulse rates. However, in geography, their skills in graphical presentation and statistical analysis are under developed. Teachers are developing a whole-school numeracy policy with the appropriate objective of establishing a common approach to the teaching of mathematical skills. Holding several out-of-class events, for example the numbers game from *Countdown*, has raised the profile of numeracy among students and staff.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' positive attitudes and good relationships with their teachers assist their learning.
- Teaching assistants support students with special educational needs well.
- When students with special educational needs do not have extra support they do less well.
- Monitoring is not rigorous enough to ensure consistency of teaching, marking and assessment.
- Students' practical and individual investigative skills are not as good as their work in the knowledge-based areas of science.

### Commentary

66. Students arrive in Year 7 with broadly average standards in science. Standards are average across all areas of the work in Year 9 and indicate that achievement is satisfactory overall, for boys and girls of all ethnic backgrounds and the few for whom English is an additional language. Students' practical and individual investigative skills are adequate, but not as strong as their work in the knowledge-based areas of science. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, overall. When teaching assistants are present, they make a very positive contribution to the support of students. They also ensure that the atmosphere for learning is appropriate, so that all students can make quick progress. In lessons without this support, work is not modified well enough to meet the needs of each individual student. Higher attaining students, including those identified as gifted, make satisfactory progress. Although most write a lot, it is mainly copied notes or short answers. There are few examples of different writing styles or extended answers for higher attainers to develop a deeper understanding of science.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but inconsistent. Teaching varies from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers generally plan lessons well and make good use of the Key Stage 3 National Science Strategy. Lessons have a clear three-part structure, with effective starter activities that settle students and engage their interest. In the best lessons, students know what they are going to learn and

understand why they need to learn it. They show interest and develop a curiosity for learning because they see the links between science and everyday life and the world around. Teachers provide interesting, stimulating and challenging activities that engross students in their work and motivate them to work hard and learn well. Such activities ensure very good progress, as in a Year 9 lesson in which students were observing the reactivity of metals with acids and comparing these with their reactivity with water. Students responded well, asking as well as answering questions. In the satisfactory and occasionally unsatisfactory lessons, the range of learning is too narrow, and uninspiring teaching does not encourage students to think for themselves. Students find these lessons dull and, although they complete the work, they do not appear to like the subject. Students have a good attitude to work and generally behave well. Most work at pace and productively. In a few lessons, teachers' management of behaviour is weak and hinders good progress.

68. Marking and assessment are satisfactory overall, but are inconsistent among staff. Teachers mark regularly and frequently. Most write comments to help students to improve. However, many of these comments are not acted upon and so there are gaps in students' knowledge.
69. Satisfactory leadership and management have created a team that works closely together. As a result, all staff share a commitment to raising students' standards in science. The need remains to develop further students' investigative skills. Departmental monitoring is not rigorous enough to ensure that teaching is more consistently good and to promote the sharing of the very good practice that exists within the department. Although assessment is improving and is adequate, monitoring of students' work is not rigorous enough to ensure that all students know exactly how to improve their work or to ensure that the work set is of appropriate difficulty to meet the individual needs of the highest and lowest attainers.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Well above average standards indicate very good achievement overall by Year 9.
- Very good leadership and management provide students with a challenging and exciting curriculum.
- Good teaching and learning, very good resources and generous curricular time help students to achieve very well.
- High attaining students achieve outstandingly and reach very high standards.
- A few low attaining students do not receive adequate support for their behavioural difficulties and make slower progress than other students.

### **Commentary**

70. Students enter the school in Year 7 with standards below average in ICT. They are made aware immediately of the requirements for responsible use of the computer systems, including the Internet. By Year 9, they attain standards that are well above the national average and represent very good achievement for boys and girls of all capabilities and different ethnic backgrounds. Standards reached by the highest attainers, including the gifted students, are very high and indicate outstanding achievement. There are many more high achieving girls than boys. The school is successful in encouraging girls to enjoy working with computers, for example through running a weekly lunchtime computer club for girls only.
71. Students with special educational needs receive good support in lessons, which enables them to access all elements of the curriculum. However, a small group of low attaining students with behavioural difficulties do not receive extra support in lessons and make satisfactory progress, rather than the better progress made by other students. In one lesson observed in Year 9, the lack of support for the extreme behavioural difficulties of just one student caused a sizable minority of other students to make insufficient progress.
72. All students in Years 7 to 9 follow a challenging and exciting scheme of work. In Year 8, a large proportion of the students begin a GCSE course in applied ICT. The first group of students sits this examination in 2005 at the end of Year 9. Assessments of work indicate that many of these students are on track to reach well above average grades.
73. Students in all years use spreadsheets for modelling. They are proficient in the use of word-processing and presentational software to enhance their written work. They use the Internet to very good effect in searching for information. They send their completed work to teachers by e-mail for assessment. Students following the GCSE course in Year 9 produce accurate analyses of real situations, which they then use to produce sophisticated database solutions.
74. Teaching is good and leads to good learning. Students' achievement in ICT is very good, because the curriculum provides more time for teaching than that found in most schools and the provision of computing resources is very good. The specialist teachers have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the subject that help to build students' confidence and competence. Lesson planning is good. Lesson aims are stated and displayed clearly so that students know exactly what is expected of them and the targets for completion of tasks. Students receive support material of good quality that helps them to work independently. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour and work succeed in encouraging students to be well motivated and keen to learn. The extensive use of the computer systems out of school hours helps many boys and girls to develop their ICT work considerably.
75. Very good leadership and management ensure very effective teamwork. The consistently good teaching features energy and enthusiasm, giving students the clear message that their work in ICT is well worth the effort. Good use of homework reinforces and extends students' learning. Standards are high because the department makes very effective use of the ICT rooms, all of which are equipped very well with a suite of networked computers, printing facilities and a data projector and interactive

whiteboard, and appropriate computer hardware and software. A very good team of technicians maintains the high performance network very well and helps the continuity and progression of students' work.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

76. Students make satisfactory use of their well above average computing skills to develop their work across the curriculum. In a few subjects, such as mathematics, there are examples of outstanding practice of the integration of ICT into teaching and learning. In English, the ICT link with a business firm and the use of the 'Book Buzz' system are extremely effective in raising students' appreciation and enjoyment of reading. In Spanish, students produce well-researched presentations on holidays. In gymnastics, students use video clips to analyse performance. Teachers in all departments have good competence in the use of ICT and many use ICT extensively in their teaching. However, the limited access to facilities for students in a few subjects restricts their application of ICT skills, for example in art and design. Provision for ICT is unsatisfactory in design and technology, because students have no opportunity to use computer-aided design and manufacture.



## HUMANITIES

### GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient teaching time to cover all topics in enough depth and limited access to ICT restrict higher standards.
- Good teaching helps students to make good progress in lessons.
- The department makes a very good contribution to students' spiritual development.
- Tasks do not always meet adequately the learning needs of the full range of students.
- When support is not consistently provided for students with special educational needs, they underachieve.

#### Commentary

77. Standards on entry in Year 7 are below average in geography. By Year 9, standards are higher but still below average. They indicate that achievement is satisfactory overall for boys and girls of all ethnic backgrounds. Although teaching is good, achievement is just satisfactory, because the time available is well below that required to cover all aspects of the National Curriculum in suitable depth. Standards in Year 8, particularly of the higher attainers, are higher and broadly average overall.
78. By Year 9, students have an adequate grounding in geographical skills. Most use and interpret Ordnance Survey maps satisfactorily, but lack enough practice in the graphical presentation and analyses of statistical data. Students' knowledge of location and understanding of spatial patterns are weak. Higher attainers and gifted students learn well in class because they enjoy the open-ended nature and challenging tasks set. Average and low attainers achieve satisfactorily. Students with special educational needs often progress well, particularly when provided with the good support from teaching assistants. However, in a few classes, in which such support is not available and tasks are not adapted enough to meet their precise needs, their progress is too slow. Oral work is good and better than written work, which is barely satisfactory. Students develop their literacy skills adequately, through good opportunities for reading aloud in lessons and through using technical terms accurately.
79. Teaching and learning are good, overall, but range from satisfactory to very good. Very well planned and interesting lessons, teachers' good knowledge of topics taught and good class management, built on very good relationships, account for the good teaching. Teachers are committed, caring and supportive of students. When teaching is very good, it is challenging, has brisk pace and results in students working hard and productively. Skilful questioning develops students' thinking skills very well. Teachers make very effective use of resources and different teaching methods, and use modern technology to make very good visual presentations, which stimulate learning. In the

few satisfactory lessons, the work does not always take sufficient account of students' previous learning or meet the needs of all students, particularly the lower attainers. Learning is not always as good as teaching because, in a few classes, students, mainly boys, are reluctant writers. Progress is limited, as students make too little use of local Ordnance Survey maps and atlases.

80. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Competent staff work well together. Curricular planning is good and makes best use of the short time available. Marking of students' work is thorough, but teachers' assessments of levels of work are over generous. Difficulty of access to computer facilities has prevented the full implementation of the planned work in ICT. A good programme of local fieldwork enhances students' skills of enquiry. The curriculum makes a positive contribution to students' all-round development. Their spiritual development in lessons is very good, particularly when reflecting on the wonders of the natural world.

## HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Time for history is insufficient to cover all topics in enough depth and restricts standards.
- Good teaching and students' positive attitudes to learning lead to their good progress in class.
- Good leadership and management provide a well-designed curriculum.
- Students do not have enough access to ICT to enrich and extend their work.
- Students who have special educational needs achieve well but only when they receive support from learning assistants

### Commentary

81. On entry in Year 7, students' standards are below average. By Year 9, standards are below average and indicate satisfactory achievement, overall, for boys and girls of all ethnic backgrounds. Although teaching is good, students' achievement is only satisfactory because the time provided for teaching the subject each year is well below that found in most schools. Standards in Year 8 are slightly higher than in other years as students have had more specialist subject teaching. By Year 9, students have a satisfactory background in historical skills. Most students have an adequate understanding of events and the main people studied, but do not appreciate enough their importance in a wider historical setting. Knowledge of chronology is below average. Students have too few opportunities to use and evaluate documentation and pictorial sources. They develop their literacy skills satisfactorily. Higher and average attainers are now working at levels appropriate to their capabilities. Lower attainers and students with special educational needs often have difficulty in carrying out the tasks set, but make satisfactory progress in lessons. When provided with the support of teaching assistants in class, these students make good progress.

82. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers manage and control their classes very well. Good relationships between teachers and students result in a relaxed, yet purposeful air in lessons that is conducive to good learning. Skilful questioning, often aided with materials of good quality, extends students' knowledge of issues and events. The strong emphasis on developing investigatory skills enables students to carry out good enquiry work. Learning benefits from the very good attitudes and behaviour of students. Best teaching is lively, has high expectations, involves fully students of all capabilities, and uses a range of stimulating materials. Occasionally, learning slows because the work is not placed fully in the context of previous study and the chronological framework. In a few lessons, there is not enough regular reinforcement of teaching points visually on the board or use of visual aids to consolidate learning.
83. Good leadership and management have established effective teamwork. Planning for improvements is well structured and has identified suitable priorities. Curricular planning is generally good, but does not focus enough on students' individual learning needs. The subject makes a good contribution to citizenship and the school's programme for promoting students' personal development, particularly through the Afro-heritage project on black heroes. The limited access to computers restricts the planned programme of ICT work. Students rarely make fieldwork visits to add to the relevant local history covered in lessons.

## TECHNOLOGY

### DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have underachieved, mainly as a result of insufficient specialist teaching.
- Good class management results in students having good attitudes and behaving well.
- Shortage of resources, including ICT, means students do not receive their full National Curriculum entitlement.
- Making skills are better than design skills. Students' weak presentation and drawing, and poorly organised work, hinder higher standards.
- Students who have special educational needs achieve well, but only when they receive support from learning assistants.

#### Commentary

84. Students enter the school with standards that are well below average in design and technology. The work seen in Year 9 is well below average and indicates that students of all ethnic backgrounds have underachieved. However, since the start of this term, they are making satisfactory progress in class work. Students who have special educational needs achieve well, when they receive support from learning assistants. Otherwise, they make the same satisfactory progress as that of most other students.

Students are good at generating ideas to solve design problems. They use their speaking skills well to explain design ideas. Students write detailed specifications for their products. Designing skills are weak and students have no experience of using ICT as a tool for designing and making. Presentation and drawing skills are weak. Although students carry out research connected to a design brief, they do not use it to move the work forward. Making skills are higher than designing, because they have been the focus of the work until recently.

85. Several factors contribute to standards being too low. Staffing difficulties in the past resulted in students receiving an unbalanced curriculum. The current lack of a specialist teacher for food technology restricts standards. Much of the accommodation is cramped and due for refurbishment. There is no clean area for design work. This is unsatisfactory and leads to work that is presented poorly and disorganised. A shortage of resources for certain aspects of the National Curriculum, particularly computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture, restricts higher standards, except for the few high attaining students who attend a course at the local college. Access to computers is not sufficient to meet the needs of current courses or predicted expansion.
86. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The team of recently appointed teachers has planned work that is rapidly improving students' understanding of the design process. Good class management is helping to improve students' attitudes and behaviour and is raising their interest and expectations. Teachers use all the available resources effectively, but the lack of ICT provision restricts students' progress in lessons and their overall achievement. There is little use of homework to help students to develop skills of independent research and study.
87. The new leadership and management are satisfactory and have a clear vision for raising students' achievement across all aspects of the subject. Teamwork is good. Staff have identified and prioritised correctly what needs to improve and have devised a realistic development plan. It is too early to judge the full effectiveness of these recent developments on raising standards, but the department shows the capacity and commitment to make the necessary improvements.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **ART AND DESIGN**

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

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

- Purposeful teaching helps students to acquire adequate basic skills in the subject.
- The homework programme supports learning very well.
- Students do not use computers sufficiently to enrich and extend work in art and design.
- Students with special educational needs make good progress.

## Commentary

88. Students arrive in Year 7 with varied experience and slightly below average standards in art and design. Standards are broadly average by Year 9 and indicate that achievement for boys and girls of all ethnic backgrounds is satisfactory. Students follow a well-considered programme of two-dimensional and three-dimensional art and craft activities. Students of all capabilities, including those who are talented, make adequate progress in acquiring essential skills in the use of line, tone, colour, shape, texture and form. Students with special educational needs, including those who attend from a nearby school, make good progress as a result of teachers' close attention to their individual needs and the effective help from the classroom teaching assistants.
89. Students are developing an appropriate art vocabulary and use technical terms accurately. They make notes about art and describe what they see, but do not express sufficiently well their own personal opinions. Homework booklets are very effective in supporting personal research. Students' knowledge of historical art is limited because of lack of opportunities to visit an art gallery. They increase their knowledge of contemporary art and the art of other cultures through working with a local artist on a graffiti topic.
90. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure continuity and progression. They motivate students through effective use of a range of useful learning aids, developed by teachers and the librarian. Students know the purpose of the lesson and understand clearly what they have to do. Teachers demonstrate effectively to the class how to draw or paint and follow this through with much help to individuals in their practical work. As a result, students acquire satisfactory skills and understanding in craftwork and a strong sense of colour. Students have too few opportunities to use computers to research or create art. They use mathematical skills competently, as when making accurate measurements and understanding shape and form, when creating their paper sculptures.
91. In this growing school, the leadership and management of the subject, though satisfactory, are currently not yet fully established. Nevertheless, the subject has appropriate plans for improvement. Lessons run smoothly and there is a consistency of approach across the team. Clear assessment systems are in place and keep adequate records of students' standards and progress. The frequent and regular marking of students' work provides encouragement and information about the quality of their work. However, the lack of a display of exemplar artwork prevents students from getting a clear understanding of how to improve their work further.

## MUSIC

Provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned and good teaching results in students responding with considerable enthusiasm and commitment and learning well.
- Good assessment enables students to know how well they are making progress.
- Instrumental resources are good and many students learn to play and perform.
- A lack of soundproofing means that intrusive noise from practice rooms impedes learning.

### Commentary

92. Students enter the school with broadly average standards in music. They make good progress so that their standards by Year 9 are, overall, above average. The achievement of boys and girls of all ethnic backgrounds is good. In their project work on the use of the 12-bar blues, students show a very good knowledge of the use of chords and a good sense of the style used. Their well-developed keyboard skills enhance learning. Standards of whole-class music making are above average. Students with special educational needs receive good care and support that help them to achieve very well. A number of students, identified as talented, make very positive individual contributions to the general success of the whole-class performances.
93. Good teaching, including some that is very good, results in good learning. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge well to motivate students and to plan the work. Very effective classroom control ensures a good pace for learning. Teachers provide good opportunities for students to develop their language skills, enabling students to talk very well about their work and to comment very purposefully about the work of their peers. Enthusiastic teaching engages students in music making and encourages them to enjoy the subject. Students are good at organising themselves to work both independently and collaboratively in groups.
94. Students are well aware of the standards at which they are working and of what to do to progress further. Good assessment enables students to speak competently about what they have achieved and to evaluate critically and sensitively the performance of other students, showing real respect for their peers' achievements.
95. The instrumental resources support teaching and learning very well. The one-to-one availability of keyboards makes a very positive contribution to students' above average keyboard skills. The use of computers as an aid to composition is underdeveloped. Present accommodation is used very effectively for many activities in music. However, the lack of soundproofing in the adjoining practice rooms means that the persistent intrusion of sound from the instrumental lessons hinders learning in main music lessons.

96. Students have very good opportunities to develop their skills as instrumentalists and a very high proportion of students do so. A large number of students develop these skills within a band and respond with enthusiasm to the skilful and committed direction of the visiting teachers for instrumental music.
97. The very good and committed leadership has a clear vision of what students should achieve and is very effective in promoting a real and informed enthusiasm for music among students of all capabilities. Good management results in good teamwork and effective schemes of work and assessment.

## Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good and enthusiastic teaching helps students to achieve very well.
- Students value drama highly because they find it fun and enriching.

### Commentary

98. Students' work in drama is of high standard and well above that seen in many schools. All students receive weekly lessons in drama throughout Years 7 to 9. They gain an understanding of the technical and practical aspects of stagecraft, such as movement, mime, gesture and expression. The work on *The Tempest* by Shakespeare gives a good setting for students to perform character sketches, which they rehearse well and portray sensitively. They interpret character and theme and evaluate their own performances with insight. Students show good insight and gains in knowledge and understanding of character portrayal and in the practical skills integral to drama. Boys and girls of all social and ethnic backgrounds, and particularly those with special educational needs, do equally well
99. The very good teaching enables students to learn and achieve very well. Teachers' very good planning and subject knowledge enhance students' learning through the use of exciting teaching methods and skilful use of literature. Students remain fully engaged and work with thought and response. They assess each other's work sensitively and critically, giving alternative possibilities to aid further improvement. Lessons balance practical activity with whole-class teaching. Students work productively and enthusiastically because the practical activities take place in short and effective bursts, which help students to develop skills such as concentration, expression and working collaboratively. Their skills in voice control and projection are average. A few students are not very confident about performing in a theatrical manner. Students work enthusiastically and conscientiously to improve their dramatic skills. Positive and supportive assessment from the teacher, during lessons, identifies key learning points for improvement, particularly in students' self-evaluation.
100. Very good leadership and management of drama make a very positive contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of all students. The work in Years 7 to 9 is a good preparation and groundwork for the GCSE course to be made

available in Years 10 and 11. The current lack of a well-equipped drama studio, with sound and lighting systems and blackout facilities, limits the type of work the larger classes can undertake.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching promotes good learning, and students achieve well by Year 9.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are good because of teachers' high expectations.
- The curriculum over-emphasises games at the expense of other aspects.



## Commentary

101. Students have below average standards in physical education when they enter the school. In Year 9, standards are average overall, representing good achievement for students of all ethnic groups. Boys and girls reach similar standards in games lessons. Girls in Year 8 extend and refine gymnastic sequences well. Boys, in the top class in Year 9, explain competently and confidently the different types of football passes. In all years, lower attaining students find the written aspects of the subject difficult. In a few activities, students' performance is below average because of limited experience. For example, in an introductory orienteering lesson, the very basic level of mapwork of Year 7 boys slows their progress. In Year 9 girls' badminton, the range of shots and grasp of scoring were below the standard expected. Students' skills in extra-curricular hockey sessions are above average. School teams are successful in a variety of sports at district level. One girl competes as a national gymnast.
102. Teaching and learning are good. Students know what teachers expect regarding good behaviour, participation and uniform kit and respond positively. In all lessons, the teachers' calm discipline creates a good atmosphere for learning. The clear instructions and relevant demonstrations from the teacher help students to improve their skills. Most classes practise sensibly in response to good coaching and encouragement. Pertinent questioning helps teachers to check what students know and understand in games and fitness work. The best lessons place equal focus on students' learning how to warm up and to cool down. Learning is very good in gymnastics because the teacher sets explicit National Curriculum targets alongside video examples. As result, girls quickly improve the quality of their balances. Lack of additional in-class support constrains the progress of students with special educational needs, so that it is satisfactory rather than good.
103. Good leadership ensures that the small team of teachers works well together to develop school sport. The department demonstrates a clear vision and effective planning for the subject, as numbers rise and staffing increases. The current over-emphasis on games in Years 7 to 9 is set to improve following a subject review. Liaison with expressive arts teachers has resulted in good plans for the introduction of dance on the school curriculum in 2005. Good curricular leadership is planning well ahead for future GCSE examination and vocational courses. Management is satisfactory in terms of monitoring and evaluating, and making use of the available accommodation. The condition of the gymnasium floor is poor and restricts the range of possible activities. Links with partner primary schools are developing well through the School Sports Co-ordinator programme. Students enhance their social development through good participation in a wide range of sporting activities at lunchtime and after school.

## BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

This area was not a focus of the inspection. A few students in Years 7 to 9 study a few vocational courses off site, as part of an alternative curriculum.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The focus was on citizenship, within the personal, social and health education programme. The good programme for personal, social and health education provides students with a good foundation for their personal development. It makes appropriate provision for sex education and drugs education. Careers education and guidance meet the needs of current students. Suitable plans are being developed to make appropriate provision for students when they proceed to Years 10 and 11.

### CITIZENSHIP

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that students are well grounded in citizenship.
- Strong emphasis on the school as a community teaches students to be good citizens.
- Good leadership helps teachers to provide a stimulating course for all students.
- Assessment of students' work does not indicate progress clearly.

#### Commentary

104. Standards by Year 9 are broadly average in citizenship. The achievement of students of all backgrounds and capabilities is satisfactory by Year 9. It is not yet as good as the teaching and learning observed, because the course has only been running for a few months. The work of students in Years 7 to 9 shows evidence of skills and understanding that are better than might be expected. Most students have a reasonable awareness of how democratic institutions work and the various constraints imposed when decisions are reached through systems of majority voting. Students of all capabilities are particularly good in discussions and debates in pairs, groups and in class. Many speak articulately, logically and at suitable length to express a point of view or to explain causes and effects. Students express ideas confidently and clearly in group discussions or when reporting back to the class. They listen carefully to others and respect one another's views. Written work is less good, though satisfactory, because students have limited opportunities for writing. They write clear short answers and notes but seldom develop these into substantial pieces of continuous writing. Most writing by students is in the form of short answers on worksheets. Occasionally, they produce more developed responses, such as writing the text for a speech, but these often lack attention to detail.
105. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons well to involve students actively, through frequent discussions and work in small groups. As a result, students learn well and at pace. Good command of the subject enables teachers to present the course in ways that students find interesting. Good teaching has a positive effect on students' personal development. Boys and girls reflect maturely upon important issues such as the role of laws in society and consider the principles that underlie good law.

Lessons place particular emphasis upon oral work that encourages students to respond eagerly. Outside the classroom, students participate enthusiastically in such worthwhile activities as the student council and running the library. Through participation in these activities, they learn important lessons about citizenship and the responsibilities attached to decision making. The strong Christian ethos of caring for others, so evident in much of the school's work, ensures that all students move closer to becoming good citizens of the future.

106. Leadership of the department is good. Much has been done in the two months since the inception of the department. Teachers work together well and share a common vision for citizenship to be relevant and dynamic in the lives of students. Management is satisfactory. Good programmes of lessons are in place for all students. However, procedures for assessing work and tracking the progress of students are in place but need further development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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