

INSPECTION REPORT

Corpus Christi Catholic College

Halton, Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108096

Headteacher: Mr Michael J Woods

Reporting inspector: Mr Graeme Clarke
1547

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th January 2002

Inspection number: 199110

Full 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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Neville Road Leeds
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Dowling
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1547	Graeme Clarke	<i>Registered inspector</i>		What sort of school is it? Equal opportunities; How high are the standards? – The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14032	Gillian Hoggard	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How high are the standards? – Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27411	Heather Butensky	<i>Team inspector</i>	English.	Literacy.
12183	Paul Ingram	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.	Numeracy.
22360	Barry Wright	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.	
15940	Norman Godfrey	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art.	
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11300	Barry Smith	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography.	
19152	Richard Merryfield	<i>Team inspector</i>	History.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31096	John Thornhill	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communications technology.	
31649	Richard Marsden	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages.	
29510	Nick Mayfield	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music.	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Corpus Christi Catholic College is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16 years in the Halton area of East Leeds. Most pupils come from Roman Catholic primary schools in the locality. The attainments in the national tests for 11 year olds of the great majority of pupils who join the school are well below national averages. The number of pupils has been rising year-on-year and there are now 790 on roll. Nearly all pupils, 94 per cent, come from a white UK heritage. Two pupils, which is well below average, do not have English as their first language. A quarter of pupils have special educational needs and nearly 5 per cent have statements of special need, which is well above the national average. Some of these pupils have complex learning difficulties and they divide their time between the base unit that supports their needs, and lessons in the main school. The local area has many social disadvantages, and this is reflected in the above average proportion of pupils, 28 per cent, who have free school meals. The school works hard to forge strong links with parents and the community to encourage good attendance. The school has recently been awarded Technology College Status in recognition of the quality of relationships between the school and business community and the school's determination to build upon its strengths to improve. There has been long-term absence, particularly in English and science, and recruitment difficulties in mathematics.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Corpus Christi is a good school that has made good improvement since the last inspection. All the teaching is satisfactory or better and most is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The governors and senior management have a shared commitment to improvement, set challenging targets and have a high capacity to succeed. Although standards in national tests for Year 9 pupils and in GCSE for Year 11 are well below average, the standards that the school achieves in pupils' personal development and relationships are excellent. The school provides well for the high proportion of its pupils with special needs. Taking this into account, and the low standards of many pupils on entry, the school is providing good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Key staff give very good leadership and make very good strategic use of resources and specific funding.
- Provides teaching that is all satisfactory or better throughout the school.
- Promotes excellent personal development for pupils, and very good behaviour with an absence of bullying and racism.
- Offers all pupils full equality of access and opportunity.
- Makes excellent use of the contribution of the community and develops constructive relationships with parents and with partner institutions.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Attainment, in core subjects especially.
- Use of assessment to inform curriculum and lesson planning.
- Continuing development of pupils' ICT capability, and use of ICT to support their learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Attendance.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997. The headteacher was appointed shortly afterwards and since then good improvement overall has been made on the key issues for action. The proportion of pupils in Year 9 attaining Level 5 has increased, especially in mathematics and science, but is still well below national averages. A new science curriculum has led to improved GCSE results, and there are improvements in art, design and technology, modern languages and music. Results at higher grades are still well below average but the school has set challenging targets for the next two years. Boys' results are improving in mathematics and science, but not in English, in Year 9, and they are improving overall in GCSE. A specialist teacher has returned for art, and more physical education is taught by specialists. There is better provision to improve literacy skills throughout the curriculum. A powerful computerised system for tracking pupils' attainments and endeavour aids target setting and the mentoring of pupils identified for help. However, the majority of teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan the curriculum and lessons and this is weakest part of the assessment process. Governors have a new committee structure and are working effectively with senior management. Attendance reached the 90 per cent target two years ago after much hard work, liaison with home and the support of the education welfare service. The target is now 95per cent.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2001	2000	1999	2001	
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

In 2001, the results of the national tests for Year 9 pupils were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science, and did not improve on the previous year. They were in line with the results in similar schools this year. The pattern of improvement is below the national trend since 1998, particularly for girls. However, the improvement trend in GCSE has been better than the national pattern since 1998, particularly for girls. With 24 per cent of pupils achieving five or more GCSE A* to C grades, the school fell short of its 2001 target of 30 per cent, and its average points score of 27.1 was below the target of 30. The targets set for 2002 are challenging, and higher targets for 2003 are very challenging given pupils' attainments in the 2001 Year 9 tests. Standards in English mathematics and science are improving over pupils' attainment on entry. They are now close to national expectations

at the end of Year 9, but they are below expectations in Year 11 at present. Pupils are achieving well in Years 7 to 9 in other subjects, and are attaining standards close to national expectation. However, their achievement in Years 10 and 11 is still not sufficient except in information and communications technology (ICT) and physical education (PE) to secure higher grades at GCSE Level. Standards in literacy, particularly speaking and listening are good overall by the end of Years 9 and 11. However, writing and reading skills are satisfactory by the end of Year 9, writing remains satisfactory but reading improves in Years 10 and 11 where most pupils read well. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress in all areas of the curriculum. Those taught in the base make good progress in subjects provided there. Pupils withdrawn for literacy support make good progress and achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to participate and enthusiastic, lively and responsive. They often have a sense of purpose and concentrate well. Pupils with considerable learning difficulties show a good level of interest in activities and an awareness of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in the classroom and around the school. Sometimes pupils fidget and a minority lack the self-control to settle to work, most often in Year 7. Pupils treat school and personal property with respect. There is almost no evidence of bullying or harassment. An alternative curriculum and work-related programme for disaffected pupils in Years 10 and 11 has significantly reduced exclusion this year.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships at all levels are characteristic of this friendly and inclusive school. Pupils show tolerance and respect to each other and adults. Pupils very willingly take and carry out responsibilities well.
Attendance	Below average despite sterling efforts by the school which most parents support. Attendance has improved and is significantly better than the rate in other schools in the area. Pupils are mostly punctual to school and to lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

All lessons seen were satisfactory or better and the majority were good. Pupils made good or very good progress in nearly two thirds of their lessons in Years 7 to 9 and in over three quarters of lessons in Years 10 and 11. The strongest teaching supports pupils' learning in very clear ways. Very good class management maintains good order, fosters relationships and creates a good working atmosphere. Lessons use time effectively. Lively, skilful questioning and good use of subject specific knowledge focus pupils' attention. However, information about pupils' performance is not sufficiently used to match work to pupils' abilities, to set appropriate targets or present demanding activities that extend thinking. There are missed opportunities to inform pupils of how to raise their standard of work or develop

more self-reliance. Most homework is well selected to support learning but greater use could be made of it to help pupils develop independent work habits and research skills. The quality of teaching in English is mostly satisfactory with some excellent and very good lessons. It is good overall in mathematics and science. Both literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed in most subjects. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are helped successfully to develop a range of ICT skills but they and older pupils have only limited opportunities to apply them in other subjects. Specialist teaching for pupils with SEN in the base is good, and they make good progress but it is mostly satisfactory for other pupils with SEN in main-stream classes and in turn they make satisfactory progress. Recent initiatives to identify gifted and talented pupils and enrich their work are well under way but it is too early to measure their effectiveness.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Years 7 to 9 follow a common curriculum, except for modern foreign languages. Breadth and balance are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 but statutory obligations are not met for ICT for pupils other than those on the examination course. Arrangements for careers education and work related experiences are good, building on excellent links with its business community. Extra-curricular activities are sound but not unusually extensive.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with a very wide range of special needs, including those in the base who have complex and severe needs. The base offers a very effective and supportive climate for learning. Learning support staff effectively help pupils temporarily withdrawn from lessons, and support base and other pupils well in mainstream classes. A variety of effective approaches for pupils with SEN enhances their learning in all areas of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' personal development, spiritual, moral and social education are very good. A daily act of worship assembly themes are considered and developed extending spiritual development. Opportunities for retreats are now more extensive. Pupils show very high levels of respect for others' feelings and values, distinguish right from wrong and show good self-control. A wide range of opportunities promotes social development. Cultural development is satisfactory although the range of opportunities is not extensive.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is safe, caring and well supervised. Due attention is given to health and safety. The buildings are clean and adequately maintained. Child protection procedures are good. The assessment process is well developed. Its best aspect is in the way it is used to support pupils' personal development. The primary weakness is that its use to inform curriculum and lesson planning is unsatisfactory in the majority of subject areas. Review procedures for pupils with statements of special need are regular and satisfactorily meet requirements.

The school puts great effort into making effective links with parents and provides a very wide range of good quality information. Commendations sent home for good work or behaviour are very much appreciated but annual pupils' progress reports do not sufficiently explain what pupils actually know and can do, and how to improve. Parents of children with SEN are appropriately involved in statutory review procedures.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very effective. The headteacher's commitment and clear sense of purpose are significant factors in school development. The senior management team and middle managers in academic and pastoral roles have a good team spirit and carry out their responsibilities efficiently and effectively. There is a very clear commitment to and capacity for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a high level of commitment to promoting the interests of the school, contributing to its Catholic ethos, and helping all young people become well-rounded individuals. They actively monitor its work through receiving and considering reports. They understand that the school is not fulfilling its statutory obligations for ICT for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Test and examination results are rigorously analysed and evaluated. Information is shared with senior staff and governors so all have a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses. Governors recognise they have to develop a more strategic and evaluative role, including first hand involvements.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial control procedures and monitoring of spending are good. Earmarked funds are used well. All staff are well deployed, and accommodation and learning resources are well used. Best value principles are being effectively applied in relation to academic success and spending. The next step, to extend consultation, is well recognised.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child likes school. • Their child is making good progress. • Behaviour is good. • The teaching is good. • They would feel comfortable approaching the school. • Their child is expected to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps their child become responsible. • There is an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right amount of homework given. • How well they are informed about how their child is getting on. • How closely the school works with parents.

There was no evidence at all to support the view that the school does not work closely with parents.

Inspectors' findings partly support the concern about information on progress because there are shortcomings in annual written reports, but helpful parents' meetings are arranged. Inspectors also support the concern that homework does not make sufficient demands.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When pupils join the school in Year 7, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is well below the averages for 11-year-old pupils nationwide. The proportion of 14 year old pupils attaining the national expectation of Level 5 or higher in the English statutory tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 fell compared to 2000 to well below the national average. Similarly, pupils' attainment was also well below the national average in mathematics and science, and did not improve on the previous year. The proportions of more able pupils reaching Levels 6 and 7 were below the national average in English and science, and well below in mathematics. English, mathematics and science results at Level 5 or better were in line with the results in similar schools this year. Overall, the school's English results were a little better than for mathematics and science compared to both the national picture, and that of schools in similar contexts (based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals). Since 1998, the pattern of improvement in English, mathematics and science has been below the national trend, particularly for English. Boys' performance shows a rising trend in mathematics and science, but the girls' trend is declining in all three subjects.

2. The results in GCSE in 2001 declined from the previous year. However, an analysis of the candidates' abilities when they joined the school shows that their results actually reflect better progress than that made by the preceding year group. The proportions of pupils that gained five or more A* to C grades fell from 28 per cent to 24 per cent. This is well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. This year, 78.5 per cent gained five or more A* to G grades, which is a small improvement on 2000 but still well below national averages, and below those of similar schools. Each grade is allocated a points score: A* is highest. The average points score of the candidates was 27.1 this year, which is 0.4 points lower than last year. This is well below the national average of 39, well below similar schools and very low compared to schools with similar prior attainments. The improvement trend has been better than the national pattern since 1998. Girls' results have improved much faster than those of boys over the same period.

3. Pupils' results in English language and English literature were below national averages in GCSE 2001. The results at the highest level of A* for both subjects were also below national averages. Since 1998 the proportion of pupils obtaining all grades in mathematics has been close to the national average, but standards in mathematics are below those for English and slightly above those for science. In the GCSE double award science examination, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in 2001 was well below the national average, whilst the proportion achieving A*-G was close to the national average. The performances of boys and girls were not significantly different. There has been an improvement in mathematics and science results since 1998, but standards are still low. One factor that bears upon comparisons with national and other school averages is that the school has an above average number of pupils with SEN on roll. They are counted into the calculations of results and significantly lower the proportion gaining higher grades compared with schools where the proportion of pupils with SEN is close to or below average. This is particularly so for English, mathematics and science examinations which are taken by nearly all pupils.

4. This table below shows the GCSE targets for the years 2001 - 2003.

	2001		2002	2003
	Target	Achieved	Target	Target
5+ A*-C %	30	24.3	32	33
1+ A*-G %	92	90	90	-
Average points score	30	27.1	30	31

5. The school fell short of its target for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades in 2001. Maintaining the target for 2002 of an average points score of 30 represents a clear challenge, as does raising the target to 32 per cent candidates achieving five or more A* to C grades. The higher targets for 2003 form part of the school's successful bid for Technology College Status and are more challenging as they relate to the pupils who took Year 9 tests in 2001. The challenges are backed up by an analysis of pupils' attainments, and developments in support, resources and curriculum to ensure that they do lead to higher standards. The proportion of more able pupils achieving grade A* is highest in ICT followed by Spanish. However, attainment at this level is below the national averages in all subjects. There were differences in the average results obtained in some subjects compared to the national picture. Girls attained more highly than boys in most subjects, except in history. Year on year improvements are evident in several subjects, for example in geography, ICT, modern foreign languages, and in music. All pupils gained at least a pass grade in art, business studies, geography, history, French, Spanish, music and physical education.

Standards of work seen

6. Standards in speaking and listening are good overall by the end of Years 9. Most pupils listen well and have the confidence to take part in oral work. Speaking and listening skills are also good at the end of Year 11. They are very good for higher attaining pupils, for example in a Year 10 media studies lesson they could accurately describe and use their findings in discussion after analysing the use of the camera in the film *Thelma and Louise*. Writing skills are satisfactory overall at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. All pupils redraft their work frequently to improve its quality. By the end of Year 9 higher attaining pupils write fluently to express feelings or emotions, and adapt their style appropriately for purposes such as letter writing, reporting or recording. Middle and lower attaining pupils have satisfactory spelling skills but make mistakes in grammar and do not use punctuation well. Lower attaining pupils use literacy strategies to help them with their structured writing. Year 11 attainment in writing is satisfactory overall, and good for the higher attainers. Reading standards are satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils read fluently, and show understanding by referring to evidence in the text, but others lack confidence and often read hesitantly. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 read well from a wide variety of texts, but many read too quickly and without expression.

7. Mathematics standards are below national averages in general but a much higher proportion of it is in line with expectations than in previous years. By Year 9 pupils' understanding of the relationships of perimeter and area is as expected. For example, they can form equations to find unknown values in perimeters of rectangles and triangles. They can work out the area of rectangles and parallelograms successfully on paper but have difficulty in working out decimal quantities mentally. Higher attaining pupils know how to use trigonometry in work on right-angled triangles but have difficulty in deciding on the correct ratio to use. In Years 10 and 11 pupils successfully revise the rules of manipulating positive and negative numbers that had caused difficulty earlier, and of handling decimal numbers and

ratios such as percentages. Higher attaining pupils can successfully solve quadratic equations of increasing difficulty.

8. Standards in science work are approaching expectations at the end of Year 9, which indicates an improvement over attainment on entry and is better than the attainment demonstrated in the national tests. Pupils have some important investigation skills. They can plan successfully if given a structure but they lack the knowledge and understanding to devise their own experiments. As a result, their attainments are higher when the teacher leads the enquiry. For example, middle and lower attaining Year 9 pupils investigated and gave good theoretical explanations of the importance and usefulness of thermal conductors and insulators in a lesson closely directed by the teacher. Most could identify factors that affect the results, though lower attaining pupils were not confident of how to ensure a fair test. Pupils are developing their knowledge of science satisfactorily, for example about the movement of planets around the sun in Year 8, and about the relationship between form and function in the human skeleton in Year 7. Pupils build on their knowledge from Years 7 to 9 and, in particular, develop their practical skills in Years 10 and 11 to work safely and competently with apparatus. All pupils showed appropriate levels of attainment. Higher attaining Year 11 pupils have a good understanding of chemical formulae and pupils generally make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. However, their recall of information remains at a lower than expected level which is reflected in examination performance.

9. In the majority of other subjects, pupils are achieving well in Years 7 to 9 and are attaining standards close to national expectation. However, for a variety of reasons, achievement is less clear in Years 10 and 11 and attainment is too often below expectations to obtain higher grades at GCSE Level. There are two important factors which affect test and examination results. Teachers are making only limited use of assessment information at present to guide their lesson planning and teaching. There are staffing shortages in English, mathematics and science caused by long term illness and recruitment difficulties that have caused clear discontinuities in the education of pupils in these subjects. In turn, too few pupils have the advanced skills and deeper understanding needed for good coursework marks, or secure recall of factual information for examinations.

10. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils confidently draw and paint with an appreciation for the use of colour, line and tone, for example in work related to the style of Salvador Dali. By Year 11 the majority of pupils handle media competently in drawing, painting and three-dimensional work but their research skills are too often the result of copying rather than analysing information. In design technology attainment is close to expectations by the end of Year 9, but pupils work better on practical tasks than on written and graphic activities, which in turn lack quality. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 11 is below average because most do not have the independent learning skills necessary to produce work at a sufficiently high level. However, some do make extensive use of ICT to produce high quality graphic products and use effective modelling techniques to support their design work. Pupils develop basic geography skills in Years 7 to 9 to use coordinates in map work and construct and interpret graphs, and to improve their technical vocabulary. In Years 10 and 11, they use enquiry skills to produce some very well presented coursework, for example a study of the Grand Canyon, and develop a good understanding of more complex concepts such as economic growth. Whereas attainment that is in line with the national average by the end of Year 9, it is slightly below average by Year 11, brought down mainly by boys' poorer standards of coursework. The attainment of current Year 7 to 9 pupils in history is much closer to national standards. Nearly all pupils can distinguish between sources of information and can select from a range of materials to draw conclusions, which are supported by evidence. However, their factual knowledge is less developed than it might be. By Year 11, pupils continue to develop their use of source materials but lack sound evaluation

skills. For example, they find it difficult to assess the extent to which the nature of a source affects its reliability. They advance lines of argument in their written work, but they do not sufficiently substantiate them with facts and reference to chronology. Pupils' achievements in modern foreign languages are in line with national expectations in Years 7 to 9. In a Year 9 Spanish lesson for example, pupils responded readily to Spanish spoken at normal speed showing very good pronunciation. However, attainment is often below national standards in Years 10 and 11. Although some pupils show high achievement in their understanding of extended passages in French and Spanish, a majority speak hesitantly, and have yet to move on from writing short pieces and substituting single words or phrases. In music, pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve a level which is just below average, but have strengths in performing. A high proportion of pupils take advantage of instrumental lessons and in turn are able to achieve results in class that are average or better. In general pupils are making satisfactory progress by Year 11 to achieve standards that are approaching national averages in performing and composing. However, pupils are less confident in their knowledge of the elements of music throughout the school which lowers their attainment overall.

11. Pupils maintain satisfactory levels of achievement in Years 10 and 11 in two subject areas. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are attaining ICT standards in line with expectation. Pupils demonstrate competent ability to manipulate, format and edit both text and graphics in their work using desktop publishing and word processing. They have a wide range of skills and are also able to assess the use of ICT in their work. In Years 10 and 11 they implement designs they have written for various tasks, demonstrate a range of suitable skills and techniques, and explain how ICT is part of modern society. A significant proportion of pupils are achieving in line with national expectations at the end of Year 9 in physical education (PE). Most pupils have a good understanding of health-related fitness and know how and why to warm up before exercise. Boys develop spatial awareness and learn to apply skills well so that, for example, they move into space to receive accurate passes in football. In dance girls worked hard to compose movements which effectively conveyed the theme. All successfully transfer these skills into Years 10 and 11.

12. Literacy skills overall are satisfactory. Listening skills are successfully developed in English, geography, and history. Pupils talk clearly about their work, for example in mathematics, and ICT where they can explain the use of facilities in software. Reading skills are more limited, particularly in Years 7 to 9. For example they are satisfactory in mathematics except for lower attaining pupils who require considerable support. Reading and speaking sometimes lacks fluency, for example in geography where pupils are hesitant and their use of technical vocabulary is just acceptable. Pupils competently read and use information they acquire from the Internet, to produce their own newspaper pages for example. Written work is generally satisfactory with good examples of extended writing and competent note making in mathematics, science and geography. Standards are also satisfactory in spelling, grammar and punctuation. In ICT they write cogently and use the *spellchecker*, but they are not always aware that it does not cover all errors.

13. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory overall. They are rising in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 where the teaching takes the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy into account. Graphical work is sound in science and geography from Years 7 to 11. Pupils successfully handle data about the growth of population and climate and apply algebra skills to manipulate formulae in science. They also use formulae competently in work on spreadsheets in ICT. In history, the sequence of events and chronology are emphasised. Pupils make measurements in athletics and record health and fitness data in physical education. However, pupils lack some numeracy skills necessary in business studies and for graphics work in design technology.

14. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress in all areas of the curriculum. Those taught in the base make good progress in subjects provided there. They develop appropriate numeracy skills and good speaking skills relative to their ability. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 withdrawn for literacy support make good progress and achieve well, for example in the development of spelling rules and their ability to interpret meaning in poetry. Pupils in Years 10 to 11 following a Youth Awards course are achieving well in relation to their ability but find difficulty with parts of speech in their literacy work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils show keen and enthusiastic attitudes to work and school life. The school has maintained the high standards found at the last inspection. Parents appreciate the emphasis the school places on personal development and almost all say their children enjoy coming to school. Extra-curricular activities such as dance and football are limited by space and staffing, but are enthusiastically attended. Pupils are also keen on involvement in charitable events. For example, Year 11 pupils take over the complete organisation of the Christmas party for senior citizens, with great goodwill.

16. Pupils' behaviour in the classroom is very good. Their attitudes are good and pupils are keen to participate. There are numerous examples. In a Year 10 science lesson on crude oil, girls were especially keen and interested. Year 9 pupils in a geography lesson on demography were lively and responsive in making a good oral contribution. Year 11 pupils, working on their final design technology projects for GCSE, showed a sense of purpose and interest and concentrated well. Pupils with considerable learning difficulties in a literacy and numeracy session showed a good level of interest in the activities and an awareness of others. Sometimes pupils fidget or take time to settle to a task. For example, in a Year 7 music lesson using keyboards, a minority of pupils lacked the self-control to settle to work and caused some low-level disruption. Where there is poorer behaviour it is often in Year 7: behaviour, confidence and articulacy improve greatly as pupils move through the school.

17. Around the school behaviour is usually very good. For example, large numbers of pupils move sensibly in and out of assembly, holding doors open for others and giving way on the stairs. Despite overcrowding and narrow corridors, there is little pushing or jostling, even at lunchtimes. Pupils treat school and personal property with respect. For example, most pupils feel they can leave their bags at break times in the newly designated areas labelled *bag parks*. There is no evidence of graffiti though there is some litter in the playground.

18. There is almost no evidence of bullying or harassment. A few pupils report low-level name-calling but this is quickly picked up by pastoral staff and dealt with effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and the few who speak English as an additional language or come from ethnic minorities are fully integrated into the life of the school. Ethnic minority visitors to the school, such as bus drivers, report no racist comments. This, they say, is in stark contrast to their experiences elsewhere.

19. Relationships at all levels are excellent; this is a friendly and inclusive school. For example, in a business studies lesson, Year 10 pupils were able both to describe why good manners are important in the workplace and to demonstrate them in the polite way in which they listened to each other's contributions. Pupils are well used to working in groups and pairs, which helps their learning. A small group learning Spanish demonstrated an excellent response to the teacher and co-operated enthusiastically with each other. Year 7 pupils in a

science lesson, looking at the variety of life, worked attentively and co-operatively. Relationships between pupils with SEN and support staff are good and they work productively together. Relationships with local employers and businesses are strong reflecting and contributing to pupils' growing maturity.

20. Pupils respond exceedingly well to the many opportunities to reflect on their learning and the impact of their actions on others. For example, in a Year 7 form tutor period, pupils were very positive about their personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and fully understood the purpose of the *pupils' planner*. Girls who had misbehaved in a previous lesson were beginning to show some insight into how this could affect people who wanted to learn. Throughout the school, pupils listen very well to each other and to teachers and other adults. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson looking at the causes of the Civil War, pupils listened to a lengthy explanation of the task virtually in silence. They show tolerance and respect, and this is reinforced through the programme for personal, social and health education. For example, in the whole-school assembly, pupils listened in attentive silence to their peers who gave a *high tech* presentation about the benefits of technology that was superbly introduced by two Year 7 pupils acting as anchor together. Annual reports to parents, unusually, include pupils' own thoughtful evaluations of their year's work in each subject. These reflect the school's strong moral focus.

21. Pupils are very willing to accept responsibilities they are offered, and they undertake them very well. For example, pupils in Year 8 act as receptionists and meet members of the public, or they raise money for charity, and in Year 11, pupils take on the role of prefects and help with the day to day management of pupils moving around the school. The school council represents all year groups and pupils have made some sensible suggestions which the school has taken up, for example providing seating areas in the playground and improving toilet facilities. However, pupils have limited opportunities for independent work in lessons, such as projects or Internet research. A tendency to spoon-feed pupils renders them passive rather than active learners. For example, in a Year 11 business studies lesson *all* pupils were presented with a large amount of material from the Internet that they could have found for themselves.

22. Attendance is now 90.3 per cent, with 1.2 per cent unauthorised absence. Both are below the national average, despite sterling efforts by the school. However, this rate has improved since the last inspection and is significantly better than the rate in other schools in the area. Many pupils have high average attendance of more than 95 percent and 102 pupils have 100 per cent attendance. However, attendance figures are distorted by a small number of long-term absentees. Pupils are mostly punctual to school and to lessons.

23. There were 41 fixed-term exclusions last year, involving 31 boys and 4 girls. One boy was permanently excluded. The alternative curriculum and work-related programme for disaffected pupils in Years 10 and 11 has significantly reduced the need for exclusion over the last 12 months.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. Teaching is now better in the school than at the time of the previous inspection. One hundred and thirty six lessons were seen and all were satisfactory or better. This is a clear improvement because 13 per cent were unsatisfactory at the last inspection. In comparison to the last inspection, 9 per cent of lessons seen throughout the school were of a very good or excellent quality, which is a fall, but 60 per cent were good, which is a rise. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 made good or very good progress in 62 per cent of their lessons where the

teaching was good, very good or excellent. In Years 10 and 11, pupils made good or very good progress in 78 per cent of lessons where 76 per cent teaching was good or very good. Pupils made satisfactory progress in 22 per cent of lessons in Years 10 and 11, and in 38 per cent of lessons in Years 7 to 9.

25. The school has worked effectively to improve teaching and learning since the last inspection, which reported concerns that undermined lessons, for example about non-specialist teaching in some subjects, poor planning, and inconsistencies with homework. These improvements are noticeable in art, English, and physical education for example. The staffing shortages in English, mathematics and science, caused by long-term illness and recruitment difficulties, led to discontinuities in the education of pupils reflected in test and examination results in these subjects. The school has reduced these effects with some success, contributing to improved teaching and learning seen now.

26. The strongest teaching seen during the inspection supported pupils' learning in very clear ways, and often leads to them making good progress in relation to their prior attainments. There are many features of the better lessons that contribute to good teaching. Very good class management improves learning. Teachers maintain good order in the classroom and in most cases handle incidents of minor misbehaviour calmly and tactfully. Relationships fostered between teachers and pupils are good and these contribute to a good working atmosphere in many lessons. For example, in modern foreign languages teachers adopt a warm and encouraging manner, which leads to a co-operative response from pupils and a liking for language work. In art pupils willingly share ideas and materials. Thorough lesson planning matches work to the abilities of pupils and time and resources are effectively used to contribute to the pace of learning. For example, in design technology, good organisation, brisk manner and support for pupils with difficulties together with extended work for higher attaining pupils, helps pupils of differing attainments to learn. In a Year 11 science lesson, the good use of resources and effective use of video sustained lower attaining pupils' interest. The inclusion of opportunities to develop speaking and listening in English leads to improvement in key skills in literacy. Lively, skilful questioning focuses pupils' attention, for example in geography and history, where teachers encourage pupils to respond to questions that challenge them and consolidate their learning. Teachers also make good use of subject specific knowledge. In ICT for example, pupils are led towards the use of relevant software in a thoughtful and appropriate manner, and in modern foreign languages, teachers' good command of languages is used to good effect.

27. Some inconsistent aspects of teaching require further attention. In particular, information that is gathered about pupils' performance is recorded carefully, but is not used rigorously enough to plan and provide appropriately demanding activities in lessons and set appropriate targets. Tasks sometimes do not give pupils enough challenge to extend their thinking, to learn from each other, and to become less reliant on the teacher. Pupils have too few opportunities, for example to think for themselves in science and take initiative in devising their own investigations, or to develop research skills of analysis and evaluation in art and design technology in Years 7 to 9 especially. In modern foreign languages, pupils need to be more involved in using the language rather than watching and listening to the teacher. There are missed opportunities to inform pupils of how to raise their standard of work. For example, in science and PE the aims of lessons are not always clearly conveyed to pupils, resulting in slower learning. Nevertheless, there are many examples of successful teaching that deserve to be shared to foster improvements throughout the school.

28. Teachers regularly set homework that is well selected to promote interest and support learning. Pupils make the best progress when homework is given which challenges them appropriately, and which relates directly to class work. For example, in mathematics and science it is used well to support class work. However, greater use could be made of homework to help pupils develop independent work habits and research skills.

29. The facilities for information and communication technology have been improved since the previous inspection, but at this time teachers make good use of them in only a few subjects to improve pupils' learning. Particularly effective use is made of the *Successmaker* programme to support pupils' literacy and numeracy development in a timetabled series of lessons in Years 7 to 9. Pupils of this age are helped successfully to develop a range of ICT skills but they have only limited opportunities to apply them in other subjects. For example, good use is made of new interactive whiteboard technology in mathematics and pupils learn about spreadsheets and databases using ICT. Pupils in Year 9 make good use of information from the Internet and word processing in their historical enquiries about Turner's opinions of industry in his painting, *The Fighting Temeraire*. A new computer assisted language laboratory is clearly helping shy pupils develop confidence in using spoken language, but further training is needed to exploit its potential and little use of other ICT is made elsewhere in modern foreign languages work. In several subject areas, however, limited access to computers is a significant factor that restricts the use of ICT. Plans were made over a year ago to develop pupils' ICT skills and to use ICT to foster learning throughout the curriculum, but they have not become reality. Much more work is needed to expand these opportunities throughout the curriculum

30. Specialist teaching for pupils with SEN is good and some is very good. Teaching in the base for pupils with the more severe learning difficulties provides a very effective and supportive climate for to pupils learn well in all areas of the curriculum. They gain self-esteem and confidence as well as developing relevant skills. Teaching and support staff are very effective in sustaining and developing the ethos created and they display a very good knowledge of individual pupils and their needs. For example, pupils in Years 7 and 8 were successfully helped to use a number square to complete number sequences and all were encouraged to give accounts of their *personal news* from weekend activities. In turn, their learning in literacy and numeracy was very good.

31. Support staff are effectively used to help pupils temporarily withdrawn from lessons. In one Year 7 lesson their deployment to support small groups enabled pupils to make good progress in their learning of spelling rules. Support staff are also effective when supporting base pupils in mainstream classes. In one example, a pupil worked closely with a support assistant and achieved well by completing a comprehension exercise set to the whole class as part of an examination course. Support staff have a positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the curriculum.

32. There are successful approaches in mainstream lessons for other pupils with SEN which enhance their learning. For example, a high level of challenging discussion in a Year 11 English poetry study ensured learning was at the level required by the examination syllabus. In a Year 10 youth awards lesson, all pupils were fully engaged in individual assignments allowing the teacher to support individuals. However, there are times when teaching does not take sufficient account of the targets in individual education plans. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson resources were inappropriately limited to a textbook which pupils on the special needs register could not understand, and which therefore restricted their learning. Overall, pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

33. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory, and overall they help pupils achieve. The school has made a number of changes since the last inspection, including the introduction of a new timetable with 5 hour-long lessons daily that has clearly improved the balance of time available to subjects and reduced time lost through movement between lessons. In accordance with the school's philosophy, religious education accounts for about 10 per cent of all curriculum time although there are variations in individual years. Another notable and successful feature is timetabled access for Years 7 to 9 to the school's ICT based integrated learning system for 10 per cent of curriculum time to develop literacy and numeracy, although this does reduce the time available for English, mathematics, history and geography. Pupils in Year 7 are taught in mixed ability tutor groups for the majority of their lessons and follow a common curriculum, with the exception of modern foreign languages. One half-year group does French and the other Spanish which affects choice of the other language for study in years 10 and 11. However, the school is still considering moving to a system whereby the entire year group studies the same foreign language. Setting by ability is introduced in English for Year 8 pupils and in science for Year 9. The school has increased the time allocated to physical education in Years 7 and 8 since the last inspection.

34. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements, as there is no discrete provision for ICT for all pupils in both years. Over three-quarters of pupils do not opt for ICT examination courses, and the school has no arrangements for monitoring the extent to which the obligatory provision is met through other subject choices. Otherwise, the school achieves satisfactory breadth and balance in the curriculum at this level. In addition to the compulsory subjects, pupils choose two options from amongst a range of GCSE subjects continued from Years 7 to 9, GCSE and GNVQ business studies and GNVQ leisure and tourism. The school is concerned to ensure that it makes suitable provision for the whole ability range of its pupils: there are Youth Awards courses and a well-planned and co-ordinated work-related learning programme for lower attaining and potentially disaffected pupils in Years 10 and 11. There have been improvements in the curricular provision since the last inspection. For example, in physical education a GCSE course has been introduced and changes in staff have contributed to a wider range of options, including recreationally focused ones. In science, the change to a double award modular course has enabled lower attaining pupils to have greater flexibility in validation in Year 11. The deputy head responsible for the curriculum monitors arrangements closely and consults widely. Currently the school is investigating teaching ICT in Years 10 and 11 and the introduction of new vocational GCSEs in a range of subjects.

35. There is a policy for the development of literacy but it is not consistently implemented throughout the school. The school's policy for numeracy is in place but it is confined to the contributions that mathematics, science, design and technology, and geography can make to number work. The school development plan includes a review of contributions from all departments and the training necessary to carry out the plan.

36. The school's provision for the students' personal, social and health education overall is very good. It is taught through a weekly lesson, assembly, and through the form tutor time when there is no assembly. The weekly lesson for all pupils, which immediately follows whole-school assembly, loses some effectiveness when assembly is longer than scheduled. The scheme of work is sound with themes about health, drugs and sex education that are clearly coherent with the Leeds diocesan statement on personal relationships. Citizenship is also appropriately included in the Youth Awards programme in years 10 and 11. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

37. The overall arrangements for pupils' careers education and work-related experiences are good. A coherent programme of careers education is provided through Years 7 to 11, with good support from a committed co-ordinator. It is part of the self-awareness aspect of the personal, social and health education programme in Years 7 and 8 and assumes a greater prominence in Years 9 to 11. In Year 9 support is given to pupils when choosing options. All Year 9 pupils are introduced by an enthusiastic librarian to the use of a wide, varied and relevant careers library, which includes careers aided computer programmes. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good use of this resource. Year 10 and 11 pupils also receive valued assistance and additional advice from the school's careers adviser. A series of well-planned work-related events are held throughout Years 10 and 11, including a two-week work-experience placement in July of Year 10. The pupils are thoroughly prepared for their placement; monitored whilst on placement, and fully debriefed afterwards. The very good careers advice and guidance, combined with the excellent work-related initiatives, help pupils make sensible career and further education choices.

38. The school has forged excellent links with its business community. Year 8 pupils benefit from a business-mentoring project. Year 10 pupils take part in a business awareness workshop, when they experience a mock interview and learn about curriculum vitae and completing job application forms. The school takes part in a pilot study with Connexions, and in the Edge Education Business Project and the Proof of Age Scheme for Year 11 pupils. All these initiatives link pupils with employers in ways which enhance the pupils' awareness of the key skills and social attributes required when entering employment. The pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes, and the school's excellent understanding of education business links, substantially enhance the partnerships between school and the business community. This is a strength of the school that has been of vital importance in gaining the Technology College status which will further strengthen community links.

39. The school has taken advantage of new flexibility in the curriculum to introduce more work-related learning for pupils who are less motivated by traditional academic subjects. The work-related programme, which is supported by an enthusiastic and experienced co-ordinator, is for sixteen Year 10 and sixteen Year 11 pupils who are identified in Year 9. They follow personal learning programmes that include extended work-experience placements, and days in further education colleges underpinning knowledge related to accreditation. Excellent links with further education colleges support the work-related provision within the school. The scheme raises the self-esteem and self-confidence of the pupils involved. Many of them re-engage in their academic studies and achieve GCSE passes at the end of both Years 10 and 11. Parents welcome the wide range of opportunities.

40. Links with partner institutions are excellent. The school has very good pastoral and curricular links with its feeder primary schools. This ensures that pupils enjoy a smooth transition from primary to secondary education. Very good inter-changes with local sixth form and further education colleges allow pupils to make considered choices for their post-16 education. Excellent links are in place with higher education through the training of student teachers.

41. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils and has developed policies to cater for the needs of this group. The school now has access to external funding through the Excellence in Cities initiative to support additional activities, some of which are usefully arranged in conjunction with local schools. All staff have undergone training in identifying and meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Approximately 10 per cent of pupils in each year group have been identified as gifted or talented. They have the chance to take part in out-of-school activities such as at residential study centres, theatre visits, foreign language days and extra mathematics lessons.

However, the provision of more demanding work for these pupils on a regular basis, both in lessons and as homework activities, is underdeveloped and varies greatly from subject to subject.

42. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities extends the taught curriculum. The opportunities are sound but not unusually extensive. There are theatre visits, concert productions, team games, residential experiences, trips and adventure holidays abroad. The range of extra-curricular music activities is good and greatly appreciated by parents. After school revision and reinforcement classes for Years 10 and 11 pupils are an improvement since the last inspection.

43. Provision for pupils with special needs is good. It is characterised by effective in-class support together with a good range of additional opportunities. Good provision is made for a very wide range of special needs, including complex and severe needs. The base provides a high quality learning environment for pupils with severe and complex needs. Base pupils have a very good range of opportunities both in the base and in mainstream classes. The deployment of support staff is a key feature of the school's good provision; base pupils appropriately receive priority followed by other pupils with statements. ICT is well used in Year 7 to develop literacy and numeracy skills, and in Years 8 and 9 to target pupils with the greatest need. Further opportunities at Key Stage 3 include a withdrawal programme for reading and spelling. Good use is made of members of the local community to support pupils in developing their reading skills. The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides a good range of courses, including those offering alternative accreditation and work-related and college opportunities.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

44. The school's provision for the spiritual education of its pupils is very good. A daily act of worship is provided through a programme of assemblies and through opportunities for prayer and reflection in tutor groups each morning. Assembly themes include *New Year*, *Life* and *People in Need*, and are considerably developed in the religious and personal education programmes, where pupils can examine their own personal qualities and explore issues such as bullying and racial equality. The school has recently extended its programme of retreats for pupils. In addition every pupil has an opportunity to express their spirituality through organising tutor group masses that are open to all pupils. The Chaplaincy offers pupils the opportunity to contribute to the spiritual life of the school through supporting a wide range of charities such as Cafod and the St Anne's charity for the homeless.

45. The pupils at the school have the advantage of very good provision for moral education. There is a strongly Christian foundation for the school's moral teaching that is enacted in and out of the classrooms. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respect these values. As a result, pupils clearly distinguish right from wrong and show good self-control. They have very high levels of respect for the feelings and values of others. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good. For example, in science pupils discuss the moral implications of scientific discovery. In history pupils learn about the holocaust, and in music they show respect for each other's performances.

46. The provision for the social education of pupils is very good. The examples set by teachers, the school's reward system, prefects and the school council provide strong role models. There is a wide range of social opportunities through language trips abroad, skiing and visits to Belgium, geography field trips, theatre trips, team games and music rehearsals. Year 11 pupils organise a Christmas party for senior citizens for which they provide refreshments, wait at table and organise entertainment by the School Band and Choir. In

class, pupils enjoy working in different social groupings and this was particularly noted in history and science lessons.

47. The provision for the cultural education of pupils is satisfactory. The various visits and activities above contribute to cultural development. There is good cultural provision through some subjects. Pupils study Islam, Hinduism and Judaism in religious education, and learn about the art of Egypt and the Australian aborigines. They study the cultural implications in design and technology, and in history they consider societies of the past. However, the range of opportunities for broadening pupils' cultural development is not extensive. Nor does the school sufficiently challenge in lessons the cultural assumptions of its pupils or celebrate sufficient aspects of cultures of the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school is a safe, caring environment in which pupils' safety and well-being are high priorities. Parents fully recognise this. The comprehensive pupil database, especially the conduct log, gives pastoral staff instant information about any individual. Staff know their pupils well and supervise them carefully. The school has maintained and improved the standards found at the last inspection.

49. The school undertakes a variety of academic assessment, but the value of all the work is variable. The best developed aspect of the assessment process is the way it is used to support pupils, especially in their personal development. In the majority of subjects the assessment of pupils' achievement and endeavour is good, both in the information held on pupils and in that which is given to them. Pupils' academic records are stored on a database and maintained by a senior member of staff. Underachieving pupils are identified and given guidance by mentors to help them improve. Children with special educational needs are sometimes well supported, for example in the base, but sometimes teachers do not fully understand what these pupils need to make better progress.

50. The primary weakness in assessment practice is the use of assessment to inform curriculum and lesson planning, and this is unsatisfactory in the majority of subject areas because it is not used to raise achievement. There is some good practice. For example, in modern foreign languages teachers plan lessons after marking pupils' work, and in mathematics information about pupils' abilities is used to create classes entered at different Levels in GCSE, and to offer extra classes for those attempting the higher Level GCSE examination. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified but are not yet consistently given work that stretches them. In general, there is little evidence to show that there is universal understanding of the role of assessment in influencing curriculum and lesson planning. The pastoral system is very strong but links with subject teachers are not yet focused enough to produce better academic standards. Senior management and heads of department need to ensure that best use is made of information about pupils' attainments so that curriculum arrangements and, more particularly, teaching methods challenge and extend pupils to reach higher levels of knowledge and understanding.

51. The management of behaviour is uniformly excellent. Staff work consistently to monitor and promote good behaviour using a comprehensive range of positive strategies and rewards such as house points, certificates and special 'Merit days'. There is also a clear and escalating series of sanctions, which are fully understood by all, such as temporary internal exclusion. There is a larger than average proportion of children on the special needs register, some with behaviour difficulties. The patient and dedicated staff in the learning support unit and the opportunity to learn through the alternative work-related curriculum have kept several disaffected young people within education. Good links with a variety of outside agencies,

such as Catholic Care, The Halton *One Stop* Centre and the East Leeds Learning Centre make an important contribution.

52. The programme for personal, social and health education and arrangements for pastoral support contribute to good behaviour. A few pupils report some very minor verbal harassment, such as name-calling, and isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour. These are swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff in a way that has long-term effects through deepening understanding. In interviews, pupils were confident they could talk to someone if they felt troubled. Pupils in Year 7 especially reported very positively on their thorough induction to the school.

53. There is an excellent range of methods and systems that is used to monitor attendance extremely carefully. Registers are filled in according to statutory guidelines using a computerised system, and registration time is often used effectively to reinforce the school's values. The educational welfare officer, who has a high profile in the school, monitors registers on a regular basis. The dedicated attendance officers immediately telephone the pupil's home when absence is unexplained. Latecomers are channelled through the attendance office and details recorded. The computerised attendance system allows sophisticated analysis of results and trends, as well helping to reinforce communications with parents. Individuals and form groups are targeted and encouraged through both sanctions (such as attendance report cards) and rewards (such as raffles and prizes for those with high attendance). Each pupil has a termly attendance target set by the form tutor and successes are celebrated, for example by publicising names in the school's regular newsletter. These measures have caused the attendance figures to improve slowly but steadily over the last few years. The persistent underlying problem lies largely with a small number of parents who continue to condone frequent and sporadic absence and truancy. This adversely affects raising attainment.

54. Child protection procedures are good. Form tutors and staff are kept up-to-date through frequent pastoral meetings. However, nothing in the staff handbook for those new to the school, or in the information pack for temporary teachers coming in at short notice, provides clear guidance on the procedures to follow. Welfare arrangements are good. Medical records and accident books are maintained and updated as appropriate. However, the use of the medical room for storage leaves nowhere for really sick children to wait in comfort. Safe working practices are observed in practical subjects; break times are well supervised, and due attention is given to health and safety matters.

55. The buildings are clean and adequately maintained. However, the playground area is uninspiring and overcrowded in the winter, and there is some litter about the grounds. Toilets are clean and recently refurbished. Eating areas are clean and modern but suffer from long queues as the lunchtime break is so short. Pupils enthusiastically seek the mid-morning snacks. These are welcome, considering the long morning session, but their popularity leads to overcrowding at the points of availability. Arrangements for serving them should be improved as the short morning break denies access to some pupils.

56. Information from feeder schools is well used to assist in identifying the needs of pupils on entry to the school. Good use is made of testing on entry to identify specific literacy needs. Review procedures for pupils with statements of special need are regular and satisfactorily meet requirements. The quality of individual education plans is variable. For example, there is a lack of numeracy targets that would be appropriate for some pupils. Monitoring and assessment procedures for pupils with more severe learning difficulties in the base are well developed. There is good use of procedures that show levels of achievement in detail so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified. Records of progress made by other pupils with special needs are being developed and are now in use in Year 7.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. Parents and carers have a very positive view of the school overall, though there are also a few concerns. A relatively small number returned questionnaires (about a quarter). Of these, nearly all say that their children like school and that they are making good progress. The majority also recognise the good teaching, citing in particular the high expectations teachers have and the strong support for personal development. They also praise the leadership and management. Parents were very positive about behaviour both in responses to the questionnaire and in the pre-inspection meeting. Several took the trouble to write to say how impressed they were with the support and help given to their children.

58. The school provides a very good range of information for its parents. The school prospectus is professionally produced and very attractive, but it lacks some requirements. For example, it lacks information on provisions for children with special education needs, although a significant number of the pupils are in this category. There is also an informative governors' annual report to parents but it too lacks some required material such as information on pupils with disabilities, the professional development of teaching staff and school security. Much useful and valued written information provided for parents, such as a welcome pack for those coming into Year 7, an annual information pack for all, information about choices at the end of Year 9, a booklet for parents of Year 10 pupils going on work experience, and one for supporting children through GCSE. The regular parents' evenings are well attended, and parents have frequent opportunities for informal contact with the pastoral staff on matters of attendance, work or behaviour. Most parents agree that the teachers are very friendly and approachable.

59. Annual reports to parents about pupils' progress are unusual in that they contain detailed comments written by pupils evaluating their own performance in each subject. However the information from teachers is inconsistent. Few comments explain what pupils actually know, understand and can do in each subject, and too few suggest as to how they can improve their performance.

60. The school puts great effort into its links with parents, and has improved this aspect since the last inspection. The home-school agreement is unusually thoughtful and detailed. Most parents value that attendance is very closely monitored and that they will be telephoned promptly if their children are absent without explanation. Parents are often involved in pastoral matters and are conscientious in making contact with the pastoral staff about problems such as behaviour. Planners are often used for such home-school communication. Parents attend consultation meetings if their children are being considered for the learning support unit, and contribute to personal support plans for behaviour. Not all news is bad news. The certificates and commendations sent home for pupils' good work or behaviour are very much appreciated both by parents and children. Parents are also involved for example in Year 7 evenings, in progress meetings and in meetings about choices at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Parents' evenings provide good opportunities for parents to contact the special needs co-ordinator. Parents are appropriately involved in statutory review procedures. Although some parents receive copies of individual education plans and informal links are good, not all parents are sufficiently informed of the provision made.

61. About 13 per cent of parents who replied felt the school did not work closely with them, but the inspection found no evidence at all to support this view. The same proportion felt that they are not kept well informed about how their child is getting on. The inspection team only partly supports this view. The shortcomings in the annual reports are indicated above, but there are helpful parents' meetings with teachers for further discussion of progress. A

minority of parents (16 per cent) were unhappy about homework, particularly that it does not make enough demands to be effective in improving standards. This view is supported by the findings of the inspection.

62. Musical performances such as the carol service and school concert are very popular with parents. The Parents, Teachers and Friends of the school are proactive in running social and fundraising events. Parents also enthusiastically support sports events such as football matches and the famous *panathlon*, which is a series of sporting and intellectual challenges. However parental support for promoting academic achievement is not strong. In most academic subjects, many pupils are achieving only modest standards. In modern foreign languages, for example, lack of parental support is identified as a key factor holding back development. A great majority of parents support their children's learning effectively by ensuring regular attendance. However, frequent and sporadic absence from school, which is condoned by a small number of parents, disrupts learning and leads to poor attainment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. The headteacher, who was appointed shortly after the previous inspection, leads the school very effectively. His commitment, conscientiousness and clear sense of purpose have been significant factors in improving key aspects of the school. He provides very clear direction focused on raising achievement and promoting the school ethos. There is a good team spirit within the senior management team, which is equally dedicated and diligent in giving encouragement and support to other staff with managerial responsibilities. There is a close association with subject departments and year groups. Senior managers' involvement in a planning and review agenda at departmental meetings every half term boosts their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

64. Middle managers in academic and pastoral roles carry out their responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Some especially good and productive working relationships are established within subject departments. Of particular note are the clear role models offered in mathematics, where good use is made of attainment information to evaluate the department, and of observation of work to support less experienced teachers. Expertise, vision and commitment contribute to direction and purpose in the development of work in design and technology that has led to the successful bid for technology college status. The value of a good team spirit is evident in for example science, art, geography, history and PE, where there is a clear view of future needs. Hard work, enthusiasm and extensive knowledge are taking ICT and modern foreign languages forward. Clear and well-established procedures in English and music have successfully enabled teachers to maintain impetus in their work during the unavoidable absence of their management. The pastoral team very successfully meets the demands of day-to-day administrative matters, recent training initiatives and pastoral support to make a substantial contribution to the personal development of pupils.

65. The governors have a high level of commitment to promoting the interests of the school and are directly and actively involved in monitoring its work. The committee structure is well defined with appropriately clear terms of reference. The headteacher and other members of the senior management team keep governors well informed. Governors have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is gained primarily through active contributions to a programme of visits and meetings. They receive and consider reports, ask questions of the staff making presentations to them about the work of the school, and in turn offer suggestions for further action. For example, they are proud of their involvement in and contribution to the preparation of the school's successful bid for technology college status. Governors are well informed about the significance of test and

examination results, and about targets for each year group and how they relate to the Local Education Authority's targets, and are looking forward to improved information that will help them make better comparisons with similar schools. Governors are very appreciative of the extent of work that the senior management team has undertaken and value the recent development of openness in their working relationships with them.

66. However, as well as receiving and discussing information about the school, the governing body recognises it has to develop a more proactive strategic role, in partnership with the senior management, in the drive for further improvement. They see the value of developing their association with the school, to see aspects of its work at first hand, and to relate them to how well targets are being achieved. In this way governors know they can extend their knowledge of the quality of work in school, and have greater confidence in their opinions. The need now is for governors to build upon their strengths to improve and evaluate the quality of strategic development planning, whilst always basing decisions on what improves the standards and quality of education in the school.

67. The very comprehensive school development plan properly focuses upon raising achievement, improving the catholic ethos, extending access to ICT, undertaking the Excellence in Cities and inclusion initiatives, carrying out plans for technology college status, and maintaining and improving attendance. The school has organised its improvement plan to take account of the national agenda, the Leeds education development plan, an audit of the present situation and departmental action plans that commit time and funding to development activities. Planning also usefully indicates a programme for review.

68. The responsibilities of the governing body, the headteacher and other staff in relation to financial management are clearly defined. Educational improvement lies at the core of the school's spending, and appropriate arrangements are in place for the preparation, monitoring and control of the school budget share. The school values its association with the LEA and the expertise it offers in helping prepare the budget and monitor spending during the year. At present governors undertake a half yearly review. They would have greater security in knowing patterns of expenditure at first hand if reviews were undertaken at quarterly intervals.

69. The earmarked funds, such as those associated with technology college status, *Excellence in Cities*, special educational needs, and the standards fund budget are being fully used. For example, recent initiatives to provide learning mentors and offer enriched opportunities for gifted and talented children are funded by *Excellence in Cities*. However, it is too early to be able to evaluate their effectiveness. Financial control procedures are good and effective and the recommendations of the most recent auditor's report are met. The headteacher and other senior staff make good use of information and communication technology to gain ready access to financial and performance information.

70. Best value principles are being effectively applied in relation to academic success and spending on services and resources. For example, valuable new approaches to support pupils academically and personally by researching, purchasing and using the ICT

Successmaker programme in Years 7 to 9 emanate from self review and desire for improvement within the school. The school recognises that the next step to extend best value principles is to obtain and act upon views of parents and the community the school serves.

71. The governing body is committed to the school's well-being. Governors are successful in contributing to developing its Catholic ethos, and to the goal of helping all young people become well-rounded individuals. The mission statement and school aims are published widely, as in the prospectus and information for parents. They help foster good relationships with parishes that the school serves, and with other local schools. Governors value training activities that help their own development, for example through the Local Education Authority's induction programme and newsletter, and through the diocesan programme.

72. The governing body understands that the school is not fulfilling all its statutory obligations at present. Specifically, the arrangements for information and communication technology do not meet the National Curriculum requirements for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.

73. The whole-school approach to special needs was referred to at the time of the last inspection, but it is not yet fully embedded in current practice and planning. Governors are appropriately involved, and have a designated governor in place, but their annual report does not make sufficient reference to the implementation of the school's special needs policy. Regular meetings foster good links between senior management, the special needs co-ordinator and the base co-ordinator, and between co-ordinators and support staff. However, links with departments are not sufficiently established. For example, some departments have designated staff to liaise with the co-ordinators whilst others do not. In turn awareness amongst teaching staff of special needs issues and of the requirements of the revised code of practice is unduly variable. The school's policy does not incorporate the new requirements or contain sufficient detail on procedures. The school's base gives a small number of pupils with more severe learning difficulties a very supportive environment for learning, including their personal development, but criteria for admission are not clear. There is no equivalent accommodation for the majority of other pupils with special needs.

74. Overall the match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory. There is a good balance between experienced staff and a growing number of young and newly qualified teachers. The pupil-teacher ratio is about average, but the contact ratio is lower than average to allow for greater development in areas of the curriculum. There is a good balance of male and female teachers at all levels of staffing and management. At the last inspection there were problems caused by non-specialist teaching in art and PE. Improvements have been made, but some difficulties remain in PE. In some subjects continuity of teaching and learning has been clearly disturbed, both by the unavoidably extended use of supply teachers to cover long-term absence, particularly in English and science, and by recruitment difficulties in mathematics. The school works hard, with some success, to reduce the impact of these issues on learning.

75. Support staff fulfil an important role in the school and provision overall is satisfactory. In ICT, design and technology and mathematics, technical and other support is good. Two language *assistantes* are used effectively to help language development. Levels of support for pupils with SEN are high, but absence has, on occasion, interfered with the support programme. The deployment of learning support staff is well managed with clear priorities

established. However, the need sometimes to re-allocate support at short notice has an adverse effect on learning because teachers do not have alternative arrangements planned. Non-teaching staff are highly thought of and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school.

76. Since the last inspection the school has maintained high levels of staff training and support and has developed systems that are rigorous and consistent in application, to assess teachers' performance. Staff appraisal has been succeeded by Performance Management. The scheme is in the first 18-month cycle, which finishes in July of this year. All except recent appointees have been involved. The scheme gives senior and middle management a chance to develop their leadership skills further. The importance of target setting is emphasised and the identification of training needs forms an integral part of the scheme. Training requirements conform to departmental and school development plans, but support is also given for individual career training. There is very good documentation of all areas of staff training and also thorough arrangements for evaluation and appropriate feedback. Final evaluation of the performance management scheme must wait a few months, but all indications are that the school's strategies are good.

77. The school has very good provision for inducting new teachers and providing initial teacher training facilities (ITT). The induction scheme is very thorough and provides high levels of support and encouragement for all teachers new to the school, particularly newly qualified teachers. The school delivers a comprehensive package of training through trained mentors who are closely supervised by a deputy headteacher. Teachers have confirmed that support is strong and valuable. Additional praise for the school's training role comes from Trinity and All Saints College, which provides most of the school's trainee teachers. The school usually has 5 students on the ITT programme, which enriches the work of departments.

78. Accommodation is well managed and sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum. The external fabric of the building is kept in a satisfactory state of repair by a planned co-ordinated maintenance programme. However, the appearance of some areas of the school grounds is marred by litter and mud. Some corridors are narrow but the orderly behaviour of pupils avoids problems when these areas become congested at lesson changeover times. The quality of displays in physical education and design technology has been affected by the ongoing or imminent building works but many other teaching areas benefit from colourful and informative displays of pupils' work.

79. A continuous repair and decoration programme is in progress. Accommodation for information and communications technology has been developed since the last inspection and now consists of three well-equipped rooms. The provision of a fully equipped language laboratory has added to the good classroom accommodation for modern languages. The learning support base provides a pleasant and welcoming environment. The school building has been partially adapted to allow access to the ground floor for wheelchair users. Toilet facilities for boys have recently been modernised and plans are in place to up-grade facilities for the girls. Improvements to site security have reduced the effects of vandalism and graffiti. Outdoor spaces for physical education are adequate, but the use of a public playing field across a road causes loss of time and gives some concern about access by the public during lesson times. Many areas still need attention. Considerable efforts have been made to improve accommodation and many other changes are planned in order to meet the school's technology college targets. The loss of the gym in a serious fire has greatly handicapped work in physical education and the facility was not ready for use at the time of the inspection.

80. The library is developing into a valuable learning resource under the guidance of a recently appointed full time librarian. It is open for use during lessons and the lunch hour, and before and after school. The book stock is up to date with a good mix of fiction and non-fiction, good background information and books specific to particular topics. Provision is already being made to cater for an expansion of GCSE courses after consultation with subject departments. The library is well used and usage is monitored, but not by gender. Library skills are taught. For example, Year 7 has regular weekly lessons that focus on developing research skills. A community group who support pupils with literacy difficulties use the library. The careers section is relevant for all, including those with SEN, and is introduced to all of Year 9 pupils. The proposed refurbishment of the library will cater for the demands of Technology College status and increase its effectiveness.

81. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning in most subjects. Additional funds have been allocated to help raise standards and this has led to improvements in some areas since the last inspection. The ratio of computers to pupils has increased and resources for ICT in general are significantly better than at the last inspection. There are plans in place to extend provision further and to install a parallel system donated by local business. The learning support unit is well equipped with computers and Internet links. The benefits of the valuable resource provided by the new language laboratory have not yet been fully realised, partly because of technical difficulties, and the need for further staff training.

82. Prudent management of departmental funds has ensured that there are sufficient textbooks in history, science and in mathematics to support revised schemes of work and the National Numeracy Strategy. There are insufficient textbooks available for modern language courses. Successful efforts have been made to expand resources to meet the demands created by increased numbers studying GCSE physical education. Good management of resources in art makes effective use of study packs from the school library. Until plans and funding for technology college status are fully implemented, design and technology resources are limited by insufficient provision for computer-aided design and manufacture. Resources in geography are unsatisfactory because of elderly textbooks, limited access to computers and insufficient use of audio-visual equipment.

83. Overall the school is giving good value for money at present, when the resources available, the pupils' standards of attainment on entry, and the context in which its work is set, are measured against the standards it achieves, particularly the high standards of conduct and personal development. There is a high level of commitment to school improvement amongst the staff, and strategic planning is strong. The arrangements for targeting resources for specific purposes are good, and procedures for monitoring their impact and evaluating their effectiveness in raising standards are now securely in place.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84. The school should act to:

- Raise attainment further, in English, mathematics and science, by:
 - * improving pupils' research and analytical skills for coursework, and their ability to recall knowledge and show understanding;
 - * implementing the Key Stage 3 strategy to extend and develop literacy and numeracy skills more widely;
 - * increasing opportunities in lessons for pupils to become more self-reliant and take greater responsibility for their own learning;
 - * making more use of homework to extend class work and increase the level of challenge in work set;
 - * extending the demands made of gifted and talented pupils in their class and homework;
 - * improving written reports on pupils' progress to indicate more clearly their knowledge and understanding, and what they need to do to improve.

- Make greater use of assessment to inform curriculum and lesson planning, by:
 - * increasing the rigour of target setting for all pupils;
 - * increasing levels of challenge so work is more closely matched to the ability of higher attaining pupils;
 - * increasing the use of IEPs in all lessons where there are pupils with SEN.

- Implement arrangements for the development of pupils' ICT capability, and use of ICT to support their learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11, by:
 - * implementing plans already made to extend facilities;
 - * all subjects using them to meet National Curriculum requirements.

- Add to the present excellent arrangements to strive to improve attendance, by:
 - * working more closely with parents to reduce levels of condoned absence.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	136
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	81	44	0	0	0
Percentage	1	8	59	32	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	789
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	215

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	37
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	206

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.7
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	79	71	150

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	35	46	44
	Girls	40	31	34
	Total	75	77	78
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	50(59)	51(61)	52(51)
	National	64(63)	66(65)	66(69)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	21(30)	25(30)	19(21)
	National	31(28)	43(42)	34(30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	39	38	33
	Girls	45	30	35
	Total	84	68	68
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	56(42)	46(46)	46(55)
	National	65(64)	68(66)	64(62)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	21(15)	26(23)	7(20)
	National	31(31)	42(39)	33(29)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	70	74	144

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	12	53	66
	Girls	23	60	64
	Total	35	113	130
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	24(28)	78(77)	90(86)
	National	48(47)	91(91)	96(96)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	27
	National	39

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied.	School	55
	National	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	10
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	756
Any other minority ethnic group	8

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	40	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	46.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3

Education support staff:

Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	669

Deployment of teachers:

Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	68.3
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Average teaching group size:

Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26.4
Key Stage 4	21.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	2,658,044.00
Total expenditure	2,680,690.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,397.8.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,286.00
Balance carried forward to next year	21,640.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10.3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14.7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

790
175

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	36	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	52	4	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	49	11	5	1
The teaching is good.	47	47	2	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	49	12	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	28	5	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	28	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	43	39	13	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	53	37	2	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	41	2	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	41	9	2	10

Other issues raised by parents

More parents voiced concerns about the low level of demand in homework than felt there was too much.

Disagreement over the term *gifted and talented* – feeling that more should be done for “middle of the road” children.

Parents also mentioned the good quality of arrangements for transition from primary to secondary school.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

Strengths:

- Response of pupils in lessons.
- Presentation of pupil's work.
- Team work within the department

Areas for improvement:

- Attainment at both Year 9 and GCSE
- Training for the Key Stage 3 strategy
- Use of ICT in teaching.
- Resources, where they do not reflect the multi culture nature of society.

85. At the end of Year 9 in 2001, National Curriculum tests indicate that 50 per cent of pupils reached Level 5 or above. This was well below national average but close to the average of schools in similar contexts. Twenty one per cent of pupils achieved Level 6 and above, which is below national averages and close to the average of similar schools. The overall results in English fell in comparison with the national average in 2001, having been close to average between 1998 and 2000. However, pupils' achievement in 2001, from Year 7 to 9, was in line with expectations given that their attainment on entry to the school was well below the national average. By the end of Year 11 in 2001 34.6 per cent of pupils achieved grades A*-C in English language and 48.1 per cent in English literature. Both results were well below national averages. Only a very small number of candidates obtained A* grades in both subjects. Results for boys at A*-C grades in both English language and English literature very low in comparison with national averages, and were very low in comparison with the girl's results in the school. Only half as many boys attained a grade C or higher compared with girls.

86. By the end of Year 9, pupils' standards of speaking and listening in lessons are good overall. Most pupils listen well and have the confidence to take part in oral work. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on *Macbeth* they showed good discussion skills when considering the characters and theme. Pupils with SEN in the base unit showed some impressive speaking skills in relation to their ability in response to open-ended questions about their weekend activities. At the end of Year 11, standards in speaking and listening are also good. They are very good for high attaining pupils, for example a Year 10 lesson on the media, where they used correct language to describe the effect of different camera angles in the film *Thelma and Louise*.

87. Writing skills are satisfactory at the end of Years 9 and Year 11. Higher attaining pupils in Year 7 use vocabulary well in their creative writing, but a majority have difficulty with punctuation and presentation. By the end of Year 9 pupils have made good progress in relation to their ability. Higher attaining pupils write expressively and can adapt their style to one that is appropriate for story and letter writing, reporting or recording information. Middle ability pupils make mistakes in grammar, but use a range of words imaginatively in their writing. Lower attaining pupils make good use of literacy strategies such as writing frames to help them write fluently and legibly, but with a limited range of words. Pupils redraft their work frequently, and make use of dictionaries to help them. By Year 11, good progress in writing is evident overall and very good for the higher attainers, who write creatively with

confidence and fluency. However, all pupils do make errors in grammar and punctuation, and although higher attaining pupils correct mistakes themselves when redrafting their work others need support from the teacher. Some lower attaining pupils are able to produce imaginative work and work that is appropriate for different tasks.

88. Reading standards are satisfactory in years 7 to 11. The higher attaining pupils are able to read fluently with expression, and show understanding by referring to textual evidence. For example, in a Year 8 poetry lesson, pupils read the poems, *Among Ourselves* and *Square Dance*, with understanding and were able to use language well in their discussion about the symbolism in the poetry. More often, middle and lower attaining pupils throughout Years 7 to 9 lack confidence: in consequence they are hesitant and read without fluency because they require prompting. Higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 read well from a wide range of texts, however, most pupils have yet to heed advice teachers have given them on how to improve pace and intonation in their reading. For example, in a Year 10 study of an anthology of poems where pupils read their choice of poem aloud; and in another lesson where they compiled and read out a 90 second news bulletin too quickly.

89. Pupils' attitudes are good throughout. Pupils always respond to learning opportunities in a mature and responsible manner, whether providing feedback from a discussion or answering questions. Pupils are co-operative with each other and relationships between pupils and teachers are good and generally good-humoured. Most pupils displayed a capacity to work well independently in small or large groups. Pupils demonstrate that they enjoy their lessons and respect and appreciate their teachers. Work is well presented and demonstrates a commitment to the subject.

90. The quality of teaching is mostly satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, with an excellent lesson seen, and a small majority of good and very good lessons in Years 10 and 11. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Teachers' planning has clear learning objectives and expectations and good lesson structure. These lead to progress that is satisfactory for most pupils in Years 7 to 9 where high attainers make good progress in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs are supported satisfactorily and make appropriate progress. For example, in a Year 9 lower set, learning support assistants help pupils with inadequate reading skills use a worksheet to maintain a full involvement with other pupils in answering questions about the role of the witches in *Macbeth*. Pupils with severe special educational needs in the base unit learn well to develop literacy skills in lessons where the teacher and learning support assistant work well together. For example Year 7 and 8 pupils make very good progress in learning speaking skills as a result of a high level of challenge in questions; and Year 9 learn to handle alphabetical order well in a classification activity. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in their questioning and interpretation of literature to support pupils' learning. There is a good mix of fiction and non-fiction text in use. Class management and control is good overall. In most lessons teachers insist on attention and this helps pupils to improve and make good progress. Homework is set regularly to complement class work. Where teaching is very good and excellent it is characterised by a combination of clear objectives, information presented using a variety of media, a wide range of activities that challenge pupils' thinking and stimulate involvement, lively pace that sustains motivation, differential support, and consolidation of learning through focused questioning and feedback. However, insufficient use is made of individual education plans for some pupils with SEN in mainstream classes and there is not enough use made of assessment information and of target setting to promote learning towards the higher levels of attainment. These areas need further development, together with an incorporation of the features of the very best lessons into English teaching more widely through the school.

91. The head of department had been on extended sick leave at the time of inspection. The department works well together to implement the aims of the school. A deputy headteacher and two experienced teachers give clear guidance and good support to others in the department to maintain planning and teamwork. The identified priorities for development are to improve boys' attainment, assessment and target setting. Planning is well under way to implement the National Key Stage Three Literacy Strategy. Accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory, but should be enhanced with more examples to reflect the multi-ethnic nature of society. There is limited use of information technology and greater access to ICT is needed. There have been some improvements since the last inspection, for example in the quality of teaching. However, further progress is needed in the use of assessment, the use of ICT and in extending the range of books.

Literacy

92. There is a policy for literacy but it is implemented inconsistently in the school. Many departments identify key words and have them displayed to support learning. Others, such as art, take part in a cross-curricular literacy strategy in which, for example pupils in Year 8 relate the feel and smell of fruit to the poetry of Christina Rossetti and John Keats. Listening skills are successfully developed in useful discussion work in English, geography, and history. Pupils talk clearly about their work, for example in mathematics, and in ICT they can explain the facilities in software, and how and why they use them to undertake particular tasks. However, speaking is generally good but sometimes hesitant in geography, where the use of technical vocabulary is just acceptable but could be improved. Reading skills are good in English but more limited elsewhere. For example, they are satisfactory in mathematics except for lower attaining pupils who require considerable support. Pupils explore the Internet competently and can use information they acquire to produce their own newspaper pages, for example. Written work is generally satisfactory. There are good examples of extended writing in science and geography as well as competent note taking. Pupils use word processing to explain and display some of their mathematical work, and their handwritten work is neat and accurately presented. In ICT they write cogently and use the *spellchecker*, but they are not always aware that it does not cover all errors. The school makes substantial use of the *Successmaker* computer software to develop literacy and numeracy skills for pupils in Year 7 particularly, and for Years 8 and 9. Pupils respond well to their teachers' expectations and make good progress. The emphasis last year on key words in different subjects has recently been followed with the intention to focus on reading. Fuller implementation in all subjects, and greater coordination of activities drawn from the National Literacy Strategy, are now needed to embed the school's literacy policy fully in practice.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths:

- Teaching is good in throughout the school.
- The very good relationships between teachers and pupils are a firm foundation for learning and very good behaviour in classes.
- Standards observed during the inspection have improved in comparison with previous years with a higher proportion of pupils' work closer to national averages, particularly in Years 8,9 and 11.

Areas for improvement:

- The full entitlement of information and communication technology needs to be provided in Years 10 and 11.
- The marking of pupils' work should include grades which are related to levels in national tests and GCSE grades as a focus for the raising of standards.
- Targets relating to number work should be included in the learning plans for pupils with special educational needs to promote the learning of those pupils.

93. In 2001, standards in mathematics as measured in national tests were well below national averages for all schools in Year 9. They were in line with the average for the normally expected level for Year 9 in similar schools in that year. Standards, particularly those of girls, show a rising trend between 1998 and 2000 but decline in 2001. In previous years standards of boys and girls were comparable. In 2001, standards in mathematics were comparable with English but above those in science.

94. In Year 11, standards in GCSE were well below national averages but show a rising trend from 1998 to 2000. This is followed by a decline in 2001. Throughout the four-year-period, the proportion of pupils obtaining all grades in mathematics is close to the national average. The standards of boys and girls fluctuate during this time. Standards in mathematics are below those for English and slightly above those for science. Lower attaining pupils take the foundation tier examination in GCSE in Year 10 and a nationally accredited certificate course in Year 11. Both give good opportunities to record pupils' attainment.

95. Standards of pupils on entry to the school are well below national averages. The achievement of pupils up to Year 9 and up to Year 11 is satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Difficulties in filling vacancies in staffing in a satisfactory way during the last two years have had an adverse effect on standards, as is indicated by national tests in 2001.

96. Standards of work seen are below national averages in general. However a much higher proportion is in line with national averages than in previous years particularly in Years 8, 9 and 11 as a result of teaching that focuses on numeracy skills in Years 7 to 9, and on revision and extension classes in Years 10 and 11. For example, in one lesson in Year 9, pupils worked out the perimeters of rectangles and triangles and were able to extend their work in algebra to form equations so that unknown values could be found by solving the equations. In contrast, in another lesson, pupils worked out the areas of rectangles and parallelograms but found difficulty in working out decimal quantities mentally, although they found answers successfully on paper. Higher attaining pupils are able to find the sides of right-angled triangles by trigonometry after some initial difficulty in deciding on the correct ratio to use. In Year 11, higher attaining pupils are able to solve quadratic equations of increasing difficulty. In a well-managed lesson that built upon an area of difficulty identified in

recent tests, pupils successfully revised the rules for multiplying positive and negative numbers together. In all lessons pupils' listening and speaking skills are good and their writing is neatly and accurately presented. Higher attaining pupils produce good examples of extended writing in course work.

97. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress with regard to their prior attainment, despite the lack of targets related to number work in their individual education plans. Pupils taught in the base unit make very good progress, in mental arithmetic for example, as a result of sharply directed questions and very skilled assistance from learning support staff. However, a particularly large group of very low attaining pupils in Year 7 who present challenging behaviour require specific and extensive support to establish basic skills.

98. Teaching is good overall. Learning by pupils is closely related to the quality of teaching and is good overall. All observed teaching is satisfactory or better, two thirds of it being good or very good. In turn, learning is good in the great majority of lessons in Years 7 to 9 and in all in Years 10 to 11. Teaching is based on the good relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic. For example in two lessons, mental arithmetic examples were on the board at the start and pupils immediately began to answer them without prompting from the teacher. The use of *Successmaker* in Year 7 supports the learning and use of tables, which are areas of weakness for some pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good where it is provided, as happened in a lesson where they successfully learned how to tabulate results by throwing two dice. However, learning support is not always available because of staff absence. Good planning and clear objectives help pupils to learn, for example in a Year 11 lesson where they were clearly based on prior attainment and were related to examination requirements. Pupils work at pace, as for example in a Year 11 lesson revising decimals and percentages because of good class management by the teacher. However, the introduction to work sometimes lacks pace so that insufficient time is available to develop the topic in preparation for homework. Otherwise homework is used effectively to reinforce class work. Opportunities are given to low attainers to help them in their preparation for coursework investigations. There is extension work for higher attaining pupils, and they are helped to take the higher tier examination for GCSE by additional classes after school. Pupils enjoy taking part in Maths Challenge and a university-based project designed to make them think more deeply about mathematics.

99. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The head of department has clear and appropriate aims for raising standards and sets high standards in his own teaching. Good use is made of attainment information to monitor the progress of the whole department, teaching groups and individual pupils. At present it is too early to use this information to assess the effectiveness of the recent revision of schemes of work required by the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 7 and 8 and of changes in GCSE syllabuses in Years 10 and 11. Similarly, the department has yet to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of recent changes in teaching groups gauge the initial impact of the work done so far. Classroom observation has concentrated on supporting inexperienced teachers and needs to be extended to the work of the whole department. Information and communication technology is used in Year 10 in the production of spreadsheets and databases and plans are in place with new facilities to extend this contribution. Teachers are starting to make good use of the recently installed interactive white boards for diagram work. Mathematics has made a good improvement since the last inspection and has the capacity for further improvement.

Numeracy

100. The school's provision for the development of numeracy is satisfactory overall. The school's policy is confined to the potential contributions that mathematics, science, design and technology, and geography can make to number work. The extent of provision is not currently monitored but a review of contributions is indicated in the school development plan. Standards of numeracy in mathematics are rising in Years 7 to 9 where the teaching takes the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy into account. Graphical work is sound in science and geography, where, for example, pupils handle data about the growth of population and climate. Science teaching supports learning in algebra by teaching division and appropriate substitutions in formulae. In history, the sequence of events and chronology are emphasised. Although there is no explicit reference to numeracy in lesson plans, opportunities are taken in physical education for making measurements in athletics and recording health and fitness data, and in ICT for the production of formulae when using spreadsheets. However, pupils lack some numeracy skills necessary in business studies and for graphics work in design technology. Numeracy is fully integrated into the scheme of work in modern foreign languages as a result of review and planning. There are many examples of good practice in the school which should be used throughout all subjects.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths:

- A well-managed department.
- The commitment of staff to raising standards.
- Test and examination results are improving.
- Good teaching.

Areas for improvement:

- Use of computers in science lessons.
- Use of assessment data to inform lesson planning.
- Developing activities that offer greater challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Increasing the amount of investigative work in lessons.

101. Pupils enter the school with standards that are very low compared to the averages of schools nationally and of other schools in similar circumstances. In the 2001 national tests at age 14, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 and above was well below the national average, though broadly in line with similar schools. Results have shown an improvement since 1998, but slower than the national trend. Boys attained more highly than girls in the most recent tests. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE double award science examination in 2001 was well below the national average, whilst the proportion achieving A*-G was close to the national average. The difference in performance between boys and girls was not significant. There has been an improvement in results since 1998, but standards are still low.

102. At the end of Year 9 standards in work observed during the inspection are approaching the expected levels for the topics taught. This represents an improvement over attainment on entry and is better than the attainment demonstrated in the national tests. Pupils are able to plan experiments, given a structure to work within, but they lack the knowledge and understanding to devise their own experiments. Pupils' attainments are higher in teacher-led investigations. For example, middle and lower attaining Year 9 pupils successfully

investigated the importance and usefulness of thermal conductors and insulators, and gave good explanations based on particle theory. They identified factors that affect the results, though lower attaining pupils were not confident of how to ensure a fair test. In Year 8 pupils are developing understanding of the movement of planets around the sun. Year 7 pupils have a sound understanding of biology. For example, they appreciate the relationship between form and function in the arrangement of the human skeleton. Pupils with special educational needs attain at appropriate levels. The department ensures pupils have a good understanding of key scientific words and the development of numeracy skills is satisfactory.

103. In Years 10 and 11, the work observed during the inspection is in line with national expectations for GCSE. This suggests that the low attainment in GCSE is because they find it difficult to cope with examination requirements. Pupils build on their knowledge from Years 7 to 9 and in particular develop their practical skills. They work safely and competently with apparatus. In Year 10, higher attaining pupils competently carried out a practical experiment in photosynthesis comparing the effects of differing light intensity on plants. A lower attaining group, again Year 10 pupils, were able to undertake a sequence of activities investigating current and voltage. Pupils with special education needs received constant guidance from a learning support assistant and all showed levels of attainment appropriate to their ability. In chemistry, higher attaining Year 11 pupils have a good understanding of chemical formulae and are clear regarding the difference between an atom and a compound. They write chemical equations in symbol form and calculate empirical formulae. All pupils have sound practical skills. Their knowledge and understanding remains at a lower level.

104. The majority of pupils of all levels attainment in Years 7 to 9 make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in lessons, given their low attainment on entry. Pupils display a breadth and depth of knowledge and make a correct use of scientific terms. In Years 10 and 11 pupils make good progress in the lessons observed, whilst those with special education needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils' ability to use mathematics to help solve scientific problems is satisfactory. Most pupils can insert data into formulae to find physical quantities and use correct units in their answer. A middle attaining Year 11 group were able to use distance and time data to calculate speed, and subsequently understand velocity. Pupils show progress over time in the development of practical skills, but their scientific knowledge and understanding are less secure. This is revealed in their national test results. Pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11 and some good examples of pupils' work were seen. However, they do not learn to think for themselves enough and this holds back their achievement.

105. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good in all lessons observed. Pupils enjoy science, show interest and enthusiasm and listen attentively. They are aware of health and safety issues and respond positively to questions. Pupils sustain concentration during teacher-led work and demonstrations. Participation in class discussions and a willingness to listen to others' answers reflect the good relationships between pupils and teachers. During practical work pupils handle apparatus with respect and increasing precision. Theory work is well presented and accurate. However, it is rare for teachers to encourage pupils to think and develop ideas themselves. Pupils are keen to answer questions but few pose any of their own.

106. The quality of teaching overall is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Lessons have explicit aims that are made clear to the pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of work and behaviour. However, there is not sufficient challenge in the work to extend the gifted and talented pupils. A range of teaching styles is used to maintain pupils' interest, though some work is strongly led by the teachers. For example, a middle-attaining group in Year 9, studying heat transfer by conduction, carried out a series of teacher directed activities. No opportunity was provided for pupils to show initiative in devising their own investigations. The most effective lessons are characterised by pace and

challenge and an enthusiasm by the teacher for the topic studied. For example, when teaching the topic of variation to lower attaining Year 11 pupils, the teacher sustained pupils' interest by using good quality resources and making effective use of video. Learning is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9.

107. The department is well managed. The head of department leads a motivated and hard-working team of teachers and technical staff who work well together. The department has made good progress in dealing with the issues raised in the last inspection. The department plans well and its priorities integrate with whole-school aims. Monitoring of teaching and learning is established. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and consistent. Helpful comments tell pupils what they need to do to improve. Homework is regularly set and supports class work. Arrangements for assessing and recording meet statutory requirements. The department maintains good assessment records, and end-of-module test results are used to inform pupils of their progress. However, this extensive assessment data is not used to inform curriculum and lesson planning. Schemes of work are newly developed in Year 10, reflecting the recent move to double-award modular science, and also in Year 7. Opportunities for exploring spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues are not fully integrated. The science laboratories do not provide the best environment and are in need of refurbishment. Resources are used effectively, but limited access to information technology restricts learning opportunities.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths:

- The relationships between the teachers and the pupils.
- The management of the subject.
- Good teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement:

- The educational provision for the most able pupils throughout the school.
- The provision, development and use of computer aided art applications throughout the school.

108. By the end of Year 9, the standards of attainment are average to below average when compared with national expectations. Small proportions of pupils, primarily girls, produce a good standard of work. In the year 2001, GCSE results were below average compared with national averages, but were above average when compared to other subjects within the school curriculum. Few pupils obtain A*-C grades compared with the national picture. The best results are with grades A*-G where, for the past two years, all pupils entered for GCSE art have achieved a pass. In the three years from 1999, attainment has shown a gradual improvement against national averages. The best results were achieved by girls, who often showed a greater maturity and some degree of originality in their work.

109. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils draw and paint with a reasonable degree of confidence and have some appreciation for the use of colour, line and tone. Some interesting work has been produced in Years 7 to 9. For example, Year 7 pupils were making gargoyles in a ceramics lesson as part of a series of lessons based on medieval art. In a Year 8 lesson that was part of the cross-curricular literacy strategy, pupils were competently investigating the structure of natural forms by drawing and painting fruit, discussing the feel and smell of the fruit and linking their experiences to the poetry of Christina Rossetti and John Keats. Pupils in a Year 9 class were using the influence of the work of Salvador Dali showing

ability to develop drawings from observation into 'soft' and 'melting' abstract compositions. Some pupils demonstrate reasonably good research skills when completing homework assignments. Pupils are willing to discuss their work and a significant proportion show pride in their achievements, which is a reflection of the quality of teaching and learning. When attainment is below national expectations, it is usually found in Year 9 classes amongst some disaffected pupils for whom the subject has little attraction. Overall, pupils make satisfactory to good progress and those with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.

110. The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 handle drawing instruments and materials competently and show a sound understanding of their progress. Pupils are reasonably competent in drawing, painting and three-dimensional work. A small number of pupils produce work to a good standard. Research skills are satisfactory, but too often they are the result of copying rather than analysing the information. The majority of pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress but the most able pupils require greater challenges in order to achieve their true potential.

111. Throughout the school the majority of pupils are reasonably articulate when discussing their work and many are capable of understanding and using technical language. The attitude of the pupils is good overall. The pupils experience a satisfactory variety of creative experiences, and as a result of the level of provision combined with effective teaching, the majority of pupils show an interest in their work. A minority finds sustained concentration, independent learning, problem solving, and an understanding of aesthetics difficult. These problems are more common with low achieving boys in Years 7 to 9. Relationships between pupils and towards the teachers are good. Pupils are more than willing to share materials and ideas and are willing to assist in the distribution and collection of equipment in lessons.

112. Teaching is good overall. The best lessons are challenging and well planned in order to provide all pupils with opportunities to progress and in turn pupils learn well to attain levels of achievement commensurate with their abilities and aspirations. Pupils with special educational needs are well served through sensitive teaching and specially designed learning opportunities which offer them the opportunity to succeed. Classroom organisation and management are very effective. The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are very good providing a pleasant atmosphere in the lessons. Regular references are made to the work of significant artists and cultures in order raise creative and visual appreciation and awareness. All classrooms within the department contain good displays relating to the work of significant artists or cultures. These provide an opportunity for pupils to learn and appreciate the wider aspects of art education. One classroom contains a time line of art history from prehistoric to present day art and artists, which is used in lessons to position the artists whose work influences the lessons. Assessment is effective and is used to inform future curriculum development and lesson planning. Because assessment includes a certain amount of pupil self-assessment, pupils when questioned were well aware of teacher expectations and their own strengths and weaknesses. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are given target grades for GCSE examinations and are capable of discussing their progress towards achieving their targets. Work is marked at periodic intervals usually linked to the completion of a project.

113. The management of the department is effective in promoting high standards in lessons and giving clear direction. The teachers work as an effective team. The good work of the pupils that is displayed in the department and around the school promotes standards and interest in the subject, and celebrates achievement. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Accommodation is good. Resources are sufficient for need. Good quality papers, paint, sketchbooks and drawing and painting equipment are provided. The department is improving in relation to the opportunities afforded to pupils and the gradual improvement in attainment by the end of both key stages.

114. The last inspection drew attention to the fact that the pupils should be afforded greater opportunities to develop their computer skills. This situation is still present. The department should consider the further development of opportunities for pupils to experience computer applications in art. Consideration should be given to providing greater challenges for the most able pupils in both key stages. In the previous report, attainment was well below average in both key stages. This is no longer the case because, although standards in general are below average, particularly in GCSE grades *A-C, there has been a gradual improvement from 1999. The quality of teaching was considered to be unsatisfactory as a consequence of the subject being taught largely by non-specialists. This too is no longer the case. The teachers are specialists and the quality of teaching is good. Assessment was considered to be ineffective. This is also no longer the case. Work is marked regularly; pupils are given targets for academic attainment; pupil self-assessment is used, and the department is monitored by a member of the senior management team.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Good management of the curriculum area.
- The quality of relationships between pupils and teachers leads to positive attitudes to learning.
- Good teaching supported by well-planned courses provides pupils with a broad and worthwhile experience of technological activities.
- Good management of pupils promotes good behaviour.

Areas for improvement:

- Standards of work in all areas.
- Strategies for developing pupils' independent learning skills.
- Further refinement of teaching materials.
- Integrate ICT skills more fully into pupils' work (particularly computer-aided design and manufacture).
- Meet the needs of pupils of all levels of ability.

115. Standards of work for pupils at the end of Year 9, measured by teacher assessments, are well below average but show a rising trend. Forty four per cent of pupils were judged to be at Level 5 or above in 2001 against a national average of 63 per cent. Inspection evidence indicates that this figure will continue to rise.

116. GCSE results in 2001 were well below average. Only 30 per cent of pupils gained A* to C grades, which was 20 per cent below the national figure. This was lower than the previous year's figure but in line with results in 1999 and higher than at the previous inspection. Graphic products results are higher than those in resistant materials and food technology. Girls performed better than boys in 2001. Comparative figures show that pupils performed less well in technology than in many other examination entries.

117. Attainment for pupils at the end of Year 9 is below average. Pupils are being introduced to a good design methodology and many can produce a range of ideas from which to choose. With few exceptions, however, pupils find design work difficult. They do not readily carry out independent research and the range of methods used is usually limited to magazine cuttings and information from textbooks under the direction of the teacher. With skilled

questioning from teachers, pupils can give accurate answers indicating what they have learnt during a lesson. Longer-term learning is less secure. For example, Year 9 resistant materials pupils making mechanical toys could explain how their chosen mechanism worked but were unsure of the alternative methods discussed in a previous lesson. Pupils work better on practical tasks than when working on written and graphic work. A Year 9 pupil with special needs was able, with help, to thread and use a sewing machine and produce workmanship of similar quality to others in the group. All pupils in the group were able to carry out practical tasks such as pinning, tacking, hand stitching and machine work. Most had folders containing responses to each aspect of the design process, but written and graphic work lacked quality. The use of ICT is not widespread at this stage. Where computers are used, the quality of pupils' work improves. For example, a resistant materials project based on 'keys' had enabled pupils to combine work in metal and plastic with computer graphics skills to make a range of associated artefacts in an imaginative and colourful way. Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their low level of ability on entry to the school.

118. Attainment for pupils at the end of Year 11 is below average and pupils maintain the satisfactory progress made in Years 7 to 9. Some pupils are able to attain higher standards than this and examples were seen of detailed and high quality project folders. For example, one GCSE food technology pupil had made extensive use of ICT to produce a high quality folder. Similarly, some graphic products pupils had used computers to enhance the presentation of project folders and process information gathered from questionnaires. They were able to use effective modelling techniques to support their design work. Most pupils, however, do not have the independent learning skills necessary to produce work of this quality, and they require considerable guidance from teachers. Sources of research material are still limited and skills of analysis and evaluation are not well developed. Pupils in a Year 11 resistant materials lesson, for example, worked confidently and competently with hand tools and machinery on a range of well-chosen projects to match their abilities. However, the design and development work in many folders lacked depth and quality.

119. Teaching is good in nearly three-quarters of lessons, and satisfactory in the remainder. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers work hard to establish and maintain good working relationships with pupils and this is a key factor in the positive working atmosphere in most of the lessons seen. Pupils respond with good behaviour. A well-planned lesson, together with good organisation of time and resources, enabled Year 7 pupils to understand, plan and construct successful 'nets' during a graphics lesson. The brisk manner and decisive management of pupils' activities generated a sense of urgency and enthusiasm for the topic. Higher attaining pupils were able to extend the work whilst those pupils experiencing difficulties were well supported. Pupils of all abilities were able to produce a successful outcome. Clear lesson objectives are fully explained to pupils, so that they know what is expected of them and work with a sense of purpose. Teachers take care to ensure that pupils understand the technical vocabulary they encounter. A sensory analysis task in a Year 11 food technology lesson, for example, was supported by an appropriate vocabulary list. Together with good support from a learning support assistant, this enabled pupils with special needs in the group to respond well to the task of analysing a bought food product. There are no specific strategies for promoting numeracy skills, but much good practice is evident in teaching. In a resistant materials lesson, Year 11 pupils were able to check measurements using a Vernier calliper. In food technology, the use of electronic probes increased pupils' awareness of the importance of correct cooking temperatures. Where teaching was only satisfactory one or more of these elements was missing. For example, Year 11 pupils' understanding of isometric projection would have been improved by working from 3 dimensional practical examples rather than textbook illustrations. Homework tasks usefully reinforce work done in lessons but could be used more effectively to develop pupils' research skills. The department receives good support from a full time technician but his

time is shared with other school duties. Insufficient time is allowed for technician help in food and textiles work.

120. The leadership and management of the department are good. A great deal of effort has gone into the preparation of documentation for the successful bid to achieve technology college status. This incorporates a clear vision for the development of design and technology and the development plan is detailed and thorough. There is a clear sense of purpose and direction, and a determination to make full use the opportunities that being a technology college presents. The effectiveness of some departmental policies would be increased if supported by specific strategies for their implementation in the classroom. For example, the school policy for numeracy has not yet been interpreted specifically for use in technology. Assessment procedures are thorough and systems for informing pupils of their attainment and progress use National Curriculum criteria where appropriate. Examination data are analysed thoroughly and GCSE pupils receive good written and oral information on the progress of project work. Assessment information is not, however, used in systematic way to identify underachieving pupils and inform future developments. Because no formal monitoring takes place, a valuable opportunity is missed to develop teaching by sharing good practice.

121. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 offers pupils a broad and balanced experience and includes food, textiles, electronics, resistant materials, graphics and control technology. At the moment pupils do not have the opportunity to continue with textiles and electronics to GCSE Level, but recent staff appointments will remedy this. Extra-curricular activities represent a major commitment of time and effort by teachers and are well supported by pupils. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and is being expanded and improved in line with technology college targets. At the moment standards in food and textiles are being affected by unsatisfactory accommodation. Rooms are small and textiles is taught in a food area and a non-specialist classroom. Resources are adequate. The financial benefits of technology college status are beginning to be felt, but the lack of computers and computer-aided design and manufacture equipment will not be remedied until all the proposed changes have been carried out.

122. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements in departmental organisation, (including the vision and planning for technology college status), and in examination results.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths:

- Girls' examination results.
- The provision of suitable materials for SEN pupils.
- The teaching in its concern for pupils' welfare and progress.
- The careful and perceptive analysis of the department's shortcomings.
- Achievable aims of the action plan.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.

Areas for improvement:

- Widen the variety of teaching techniques and monitor in such a way as to share good practice.
- Widen the scope of fieldwork.
- Increase the classroom use of resources, in particular the availability and use by pupils of computers.
- Develop a wider range of writing styles at an earlier stage in Key Stage 3.

123. Overall, pupils at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE are achieving well, given the low levels of attainment of many on entry. Although the A*-C grades in 2001 were below the national average, this can be attributed to the lower attainment of that cohort. Results were still in touch with the national average, but lowered by the erratic performance of boys, who in 2000 had achieved scores close to the average. Girls' results have shown a steady upward trend and, from being in line in 2000, are well above the national average in 2001, at 78 per cent. In 2001 all pupils gained an A*-G pass, above the national average. Boys A*-G grades have improved each year for the last three years. Girls have gained 100per cent A*-G, above the national average, for the last three years. In 2001 girls gained their first A*grade for three years.

124. At the end of Key Stage 3, teachers' assessments indicate that, in 2000, 63 per cent were at Level 5 and above. In 2001 the percentage was much lower at 40 per cent. These scores are reflected in the work of the current Years 10 and 11. Subject performance indicators using national data suggest that pupils taking geography do better than in most other subjects they take.

125. Basic geography and number skills are put in place early in Years 7 to 9, compensating for a lack of specific knowledge on entry. Pupils are able to use coordinates and construct and interpret graphs. They gain spatial awareness through map exercises and by locating places on the world map by using latitude and longitude. Written skills are not well developed at first and there is a great dependence on notes and the completion of worksheets. In Years 8 and 9, higher and average attainers increase their extended and imaginative work. This was seen in an essay 'My House has flooded', and in informative tourist brochures resulting from fieldwork at High Force. All pupils work hard to improve their technical vocabulary, helped by generally well-kept glossary notebooks. Pupils with special needs benefit from well-chosen materials and make satisfactory progress. Writing continues to improve through Key Stage 4, with pupils acquiring enquiry skills and producing some very well presented coursework, the best of which, a study of the Grand Canyon, combines research and the good use of information technology skills. However, the use of I.C.T. is unsatisfactory in all other areas of work.

126. The majority of pupils achieve well throughout and lower attaining pupils, whose presentation skills are not high, can demonstrate a growing understanding of the subject. Most pupils have a good understanding of more complex concepts such as economic growth and of geographical processes and patterns. This is seen in Year 9 work on earthquakes and damage limitation and Year 10 work on measuring quality of life in Leeds. By the end of Year 9, attainment is in line with the national average. At age 16 it is slightly below average, brought down mainly by boys' poorer standards of coursework. This is a problem the department is working hard to resolve.

127. Teaching was never less than satisfactory and it was good or better in 3 out of 4 lessons. Pupils' high levels of concentration and involvement in lessons stem from good planning and access to the curriculum for all, through support, appropriate materials and teachers' patience. Though some lessons lack a variety of technique, due to a lack of audio-visual resources, the teaching is sufficiently challenging to ensure that pupils work at a good pace. Information is constantly reinforced through question and answer and pupils' understanding grows accordingly. Lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of good humour and sympathetic attention. Teachers' day-to-day marking is regular and thorough, with constructive comment, and long-term assessment in Years 7 to 9 is steadily improving. Homework is almost always valid exercises, and expected outcomes are explained. More able pupils are provided with extension work to encourage progress, but although the department provides appropriate work for SEN pupils, the availability of support for them from learning support assistants is rather erratic.

128. Behaviour of pupils at both key stages is very good. Attitudes are very positive and most work hard in a cooperative and friendly atmosphere. Good relationships are obvious in lessons and are a great help to learning. Pupils are generally relaxed, but some girls need encouragement to give verbal responses and all need more opportunity to develop confidence in individual learning. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, despite problems of staffing, which though improved, still exist with regards to non-specialist teaching. Progress in Years 7 to 9 is similar to that described in the last report. However, the percentage of good teaching has improved and this should lead to further improvements in pupils' learning. The head of department has produced a development plan with achievable aims. It includes the two areas mentioned in the last report that still need to be improved: the use of ICT and increased provision of fieldwork. A strengthened team, led by a head of department with a clear view of future needs, has the capacity to improve further.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths:

- Attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- Leadership and management.
- Moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Areas for improvement:

- Raise standards of attainment at GCSE.
- Review teaching and learning styles to achieve greater awareness of, and independence in learning.

129. The attainment of pupils in the GCSE examinations has fluctuated over the past few years, although it has always been below national averages. In 2001 it was well below, as only 23 per cent of pupils achieved grades A*-C. Contrary to the national picture, boys

performed significantly better than girls in 2001, as 40 per cent of them obtained grades A*-C. In 2000 41 per cent of both boys and girls achieved grades A*-C although in both years there were few passes in the upper grades. The attainment of pupils in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 has also fluctuated over recent years; it was in line with national expectations in 2000, but well below in 2001. The proportions of both boys and girls that achieved the expected levels were some 30 percentage points below national figures for the latter year.

130. The attainment of current Year 7 to 9 pupils in work seen is much closer to national standards. By the age of 14 pupils have undertaken a good quantity of written work, much of which is well presented and completed. Despite the considerable emphasis placed on chronology in the introductory unit and the recurring use of timelines, one Year 8 girl was unable to say in which century the 1600's were. In a lesson on the causes of the English Civil War one Year 8 pupil did not know what Parliament was, although another, who has special educational needs, correctly identified the reigning monarch and clearly explained what was meant by "civil war". Nearly all pupils can distinguish between primary and secondary sources and can select from a range of materials to draw conclusions which are supported by evidence. There are indications that pupils' literacy is improving and most read aloud and offer, usually fairly briefly, oral contributions, quite confidently. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in those lessons where they receive additional classroom support. The conceptual, analytical and evaluative skills of all pupils are less developed than they might be, but pupils do undertake individual research in a number of areas, and are well supported by the school librarian in their work. The majority of pupils are well below average on entry to the school and so make good progress to reach the standards that they do in lessons.

131. At GCSE Level, pupils write at length and are ready to advance lines of argument, although these are not always sufficiently substantiated by historical facts and reference to chronology. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to express ideas coherently in writing and do not always complete their work. Source-handling skills are reasonably well developed, although many pupils find it difficult to assess the extent to which the nature of a source affects its reliability. There are some weaknesses in lower attaining pupils' organizational and study skills, and their understanding of the complex and interrelated nature of historical events is sometimes limited. Overall pupils make sound progress considering their ability and there are grounds for anticipating an improvement in results this year.

132. The quality of teaching and learning is always satisfactory and much of it is good. Questions and answers are well used to explore, extend and sometimes challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers usually plan lessons well and adapt resources and tasks appropriately to cater for differing ability levels, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Teachers manage their classes very well; pupils respond very positively to their staff and each other, and this contributes significantly to their learning. In Years 10 and 11 teachers' detailed subject knowledge and clear explanations are much in evidence, although the prevalence of teacher led and directed lessons restricts pupils' independence in learning. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations and set challenging tasks which extend pupils of all ability levels. There is a clear commitment to the use of ICT in history. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, pupils used the Internet and a word processing program to draw conclusions about Turner's opinions on the new industrial world in his painting of *The Fighting Temeraire*.

133. The subject is well managed and led. The head of department has a clear vision for the department's direction, and detailed planning has an appropriate focus on raising attainment. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 have been extensively revised although there is still a heavy emphasis on British history in Year 8. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of the progress of individual pupils and a tracking process to chart it more effectively has

recently been introduced. Teaching and learning styles are monitored although additional time and support are required to implement development fully. There has been a satisfactory degree of improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Strengths:

- A recognition of the place and role of information and communication technology as a discrete subject and as a crucial element across the curriculum.
- Significant investment in resources.
- Hardworking and forward-looking head of department.
- Good quality teaching and enthusiasm from departmental staff.

Areas for improvement:

- The use of ICT to support learning throughout the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 and particularly in mathematics, English, geography, history, art and physical education.
- The procedures for the assessment of all pupils' capabilities in ICT.
- The structure of the scheme of work for Years 7, 8, 9.

134. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is slightly above the national average, although the school figures are based upon teacher estimates, as there are no external assessments to confirm or amend the levels indicated. A small group of about 24 per cent of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 take a GCSE in ICT. At the end of Year 11 these pupils achieve grades which have improved in recent years to a point slightly above the national average. There are no other formal or teacher assessments of the other pupils at the end of Year 11.

135. The progress shown in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good. The work is based on desktop publishing and word processing and pupils demonstrate an ability to manipulate, format and edit both text and graphics. The depth of work is satisfactory and there is evidence of a wide range of skills and use of formulae and formatting. The more able pupils produced good quality output and, by the end of Year 9, their work is commensurate with the requirements for Level 5 and in some cases higher levels. Pupils demonstrate that they select information and organise it in an appropriate manner. They are also able to assess the use of ICT in their work. They are able to talk constructively about the use and advantages of ICT.

136. Pupils work with enthusiasm and are able to explain their use of the facilities of the software. They work independently, showing confidence in the handling of software. For example, in Year 7 pupils work with animation on creating presentations and show skill in accessing the Internet and formatting text and graphics. Year 8 pupils are able to use desktop publishing packages constructively to make newspaper pages. Year 9 pupils demonstrate the values of spreadsheets in costing the food and drink for a party and confidently construct appropriate formulae.

137. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are working on course work for their GCSE. In Year 10 they undertake the assignment set by the examination board and have completed the analysis stage. They are now implementing designs they have written for the various tasks. They work independently with confidence and are able to explain the task they have undertaken and how they are using the software in that task. They demonstrate a range of skills and techniques and are able to explain how ICT is part of modern society. Year 11 pupils are

working on a project of their own choice. They explain how they chose the topic and how the use of ICT will enhance the work that they have set themselves.

138. The scheme of work used in Years 7, 8, 9 is positive and provides a range of opportunities for the pupils. Pupils come to the school with a range of ability in ICT, but in Year 7, teachers provide challenging tasks which develop the pupils and progress their skills and competence. They demonstrate confidence in using the facilities of software packages for their own needs and the task undertaken. In Year 8 they progress and advance these skills using a range of techniques with ease. In Year 9 they are using their potential to create spreadsheets with suitable formulae and data input. They meet the challenges of each task with enthusiasm and are anxious to extend their own learning so as to meet their full potential. Pupils of all levels of ability work with equal interest make the most of opportunities given to them.

139. All teaching is good or better. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are able to use the software with thought and in an appropriate manner. They plan and prepare lessons well, which are generally practically based. They provide tasks appropriate to all pupils in a class. In turn these tasks offer pupils the opportunity to learn and demonstrate a wide range of ICT skills and knowledge of software. They challenge the pupils to work independently and research a variety of topics. Lessons have good pace and provide a framework in which pupils advance their own learning and acquisition of knowledge and skills. Teachers consider the range of ability of pupils in a class and provide individual attention as required. They regularly assess progress and mark class and homework constructively. The teaching ensures that the pupils learn new skills and techniques with confidence and progression.

140. The department has a hard working and enthusiastic leader and a wide range of resources. The main ICT rooms are well equipped, and enable pupils to undertake both theoretical and practical work. There is good provision around the school with a modern ICT based language laboratory, small satellite systems in CDT and computer access in all classrooms. Plans for extensive development to install another 100 computers around the school will give the school very good ICT resources. The two technicians will be fully employed when the next stage of development comes into force.

141. The number of other departments fully using ICT in schemes of work and lesson is limited. Although there was an agreement June 2000 for subject departments to deliver various aspects of ICT, in reality this has not been achieved. The Head of ICT has been and is anxious that all pupils have access to their entitlement in ICT. It was hoped that this would be achieved using a cross-curricular approach, but this is not the situation at present. There is some good use in design and technology, modern foreign languages and science, but as yet other subject areas have not embraced ICT as a crucial element in teaching and learning. There is a need to establish a cross-curricular working party to plan the delivery of various aspects of ICT and monitor and assess its progress. There would be value in providing a discrete course for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 to ensure that they had access to a range of ICT experiences. At present the requirements of the National Curriculum are not being met and such a course would ensure that the school provided the statutory curriculum. The appointment of a second full time ICT teacher would provide a suitable resource and stabilise the fragmentation of teaching in the first three years of the school.

142. The progress in resources is matched by good quality teaching. However the structure of the curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 needs re-organisation to ensure pupils experience a wider range of basic skills in Year 7. A greater number of differentiated tasks

should be provided, each with its own criteria and assessment sheet. Such a sheet can be first completed by the pupil and then confirmed by the teacher. This development will strengthen the already positive curriculum in Year 7.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **good**.

Strengths:

- Teaching is good and pupils make good progress.
- Use of French and Spanish widely in the classroom.
- Very good use of foreign language assistants to 'bring the language alive' for pupils.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and the behaviour
- All pupils, irrespective of ability, can follow a full GCSE language course.
- Good use of assessment information from pupils when teachers plan lessons.

Areas for improvement:

- The full potential of the new language laboratory is not yet being realised.
- Gifted pupils are not sufficiently stretched either in class or through homework tasks.
- No pupil has the opportunity to study more than one foreign language.
- Book-based resources are inadequate and pupils do not have enough opportunities for extended practice in reading and listening skills.

143. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 are well below those achieved nationally by pupils of this age. Standards achieved by pupils in GCSE in 2001 are well below national averages. There is little difference between the proportions gaining A*-C grades in French (27.7 per cent) and Spanish (28.5per cent). The results in both French and Spanish are better than the average of other subjects in the school although numbers achieving the very highest GCSE grades in both French and Spanish remain very low. There is a very wide difference between boys' and girls' results. Boys' results are extremely low in comparison with girls', particularly in French, and although this pattern reflects the national picture the difference in the school is much greater than nationally. Standards show a rising trend, however, and teachers share a commitment to raise achievement and have developed strategies to this end.

144. In work observed during the inspection, pupils' achievements were in line with national expectations in Years 7 to 9, but were below national standards in Years 10 and 11. In Year 7 French for example, pupils improve pronunciation through repetition and interactive oral work with the teacher. By Year 9 they show clear understanding of Spanish spoken at normal speed in the classroom, for example in a lesson they identified and noted down main points from the passages and were correctly able to answer questions on specific details, too. Pupils' ability to use language is improving further in Years 10 and 11. In Year 10 upper set, pupils showed increasing confidence in spoken language as a result of work in the new language laboratory, and in a lower set which contained a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils showed that they understood a range of familiar statements and took part in brief speaking tasks of two or three exchanges. By Year 11 pupils are building their vocabulary but there are inaccuracies in their use of words in the language. In a Year 11 class for example, pupils' spoken French contained many mistakes although they were able to correct them once they were pointed out by the teacher. In the light of the pupils' attainment on entry to the school, pupils make good progress in modern foreign languages with good levels of achievement shown.

145. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is good. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is good overall. It was very good in almost half of lessons observed. Teachers have clear and manageable objectives for lessons and share these with pupils. This means that pupils have a good sense of the progress they are making lesson by lesson. They are learning well in lessons where teaching is good.

146. Teachers adopt a warm and encouraging manner which creates a very good response from pupils. Pupils show respect for each other and their teachers and are mature and cooperative in all activities. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The overwhelming majority of pupils express a liking for their language lessons. A very few instances of minor misbehaviour were observed but they were handled calmly and tactfully, in a way which did not disrupt the learning of other pupils.

147. Lesson planning is very good. There are clear targets and learning objectives which are shared with pupils and frequently referred to in the best lessons. Teachers set different work for different groups of pupils. For example, they provide more demanding work for gifted and talented pupils but the level of challenge should be greater still if these pupils are to achieve their potential. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to language lessons where they are well supported by learning support assistants. Their individual education plans are used well, but were not always available when they should have been. Teachers use a wide variety of approaches in every lesson confidently and successfully to ensure that all pupils remain actively engaged in learning throughout the lessons. Teachers have a very good command of the languages they teach and use this to very good effect in the classroom. They reinforce the idea that the foreign language is a living means of communication and provide good models for pupils' own speaking. The two foreign language assistants 'bring the language alive' for pupils and thus enhance their learning. As a result pupils' pronunciation has improved markedly. Teachers make good use of the new language laboratory, which is fully used throughout the school week. In all lessons observed in it, shy pupils worked with confidence, and individual pupils progressed well at their own pace. However, teachers feel the need to expand their expertise in exploiting this facility.

148. There are some areas of teaching that would benefit from development. Pupils can be too passive and rely too much on the teacher to do the work. For example in a Year 7 French lesson, pupils could have been more involved rather than merely watching and listening to the teacher. They should be given more opportunities to shoulder responsibility and take initiative. In some lessons teachers missed opportunities to use the foreign language when to do so would have been effective. This meant that pupils were not challenged to make the effort needed to understand the foreign language. Only one lesson was observed in which pupils read a printed text of substantial length. They do not have the opportunity to develop reading or listening skills sufficiently.

149. Teacher mark pupils' work regularly and supply helpful comments so that pupils know what they need to do to improve. They discuss mistakes with classes in an open and supportive way which makes pupils want to improve. They use their assessment of pupils' work to tailor lessons to the needs of the class, for example in a Year 10 Spanish lesson where the teacher developed specific points which she had noted as she marked the previous piece of pupils' work.

150. The department is very well managed. The head of department has an extensive knowledge of developments in language teaching and is a very good classroom practitioner. Teachers work well as a team and share a common approach to development planning. The department follows the National Curriculum, and teachers refer to attainment targets in their planning. Schemes of work are clear, however, they should identify more opportunities to stretch gifted and talented pupils,. No pupils have the opportunity to study more than one

foreign language but the department offers a full GCSE course to all pupils irrespective of ability. Foreign visits provide some pupils with valuable opportunities for cultural development. Book-based resources are inadequate, which severely restricts opportunities for extending reading skills and the type of homework that can be set. Although the library has a very small collection of reading material, more reading and listening resources are needed. More work is needed to incorporate the use of ICT to support language learning in addition to developing further expertise to expand the opportunities that the language laboratory provides.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths:

- Good attitudes and confidence of pupils in their work.
- Use of self-assessment.
- Extra-curricular provision.
- Improvement in resources.

Areas for improvement:

- Extend opportunities for singing for pupils aged 11 –14.
- Extend the use of homework.
- Extend provision for pupils with special needs.
- Formalise the curriculum and create closer links with assessment.

151. Pupils come to the school with below average attainment and by the age of 14 they reach standards that remain below average. Recent GCSE results have shown steady improvement but are below the average standards achieved nationally and by pupils in local schools.

152. In work that was seen, it was clear that units of work were well planned and conscientiously taught. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve attainment which is just below average, but with strengths in performing. A high proportion of pupils take advantage of instrument lessons and are able to achieve results in class that are average or better. In general, pupils are making satisfactory achievements at this level. In class and in work seen, GCSE pupils show that they are making good progress. They achieve standards that are approaching national averages in performing and composing. Boys taking GCSE show particular strength in performing and composing. The achievement of GCSE pupils is satisfactory. However, at all levels pupils are less confident in their knowledge of the elements of music.

153. Music is well taught in the school. Teachers know their subject well and use time and resources well in carefully planned lessons. They manage pupils well and challenge them effectively. In Years 7 to 9 teachers use a variety of ways to assess pupils progress effectively. As a result the standards of learning and behaviour in lessons are good. In a Year 7 lesson on reading music, pupils were challenged with a variety of tasks and were clear about what they had to do. As a result progress was good because they worked hard to play a tune on a keyboard and some pupils taught each other. Year 8 pupils watched a stimulating video and then split into groups in different rooms, where, with helpful tutorial guidance, they were able to explore a range of sounds to compose and perform music in African style. In a Year 9 lesson, class management was good and the teacher used a good range of music to discuss musical history. This, together with effective use of questioning

led to pupils gaining confidence in naming musical features. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress. Only one GCSE lesson was seen. The standard of teaching was good and as a result of a variety of well-paced activities Year 10 pupils worked hard in exploring whole-tone scales. Boys were seen to produce above average results in composing harmonies and structures in a sensitive way. Scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils show that units of work are well planned and that pupils are assessed regularly and know their strengths and weaknesses.

154. The department does not take sufficient opportunities to set homework so that pupils can extend their learning. Visiting teachers maintain high standards in their work and use their expertise as musicians well to demonstrate technique and to encourage pupils.

155. Pupils at all levels enjoy their music and talk with confidence and enthusiasm about their work. Relationships between pupils and with staff are good and pupils enjoy listening to their peers perform in class. The music rooms are a hive of activity every break and lunchtime with pupils practising. There is culture of mutual respect and shared values in the department.

156. The newly appointed head of department was unfortunately away ill during the inspection. However, the department has taken effective action to meet the school's priorities for the subject and has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. There are relevant targets identified for development. The work of the department is significant in raising the expectations of pupils through its activities. The standard of resources has improved to keep up with demands made on the subject. The accommodation for music is adequate.

157. The department makes a good contribution to the cultural and social development of the pupils. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. A high proportion of pupils attend instrument lessons that are paid for by the school. Since the last inspection the department has introduced grade examinations that help raise pupils' expectations. The school band, jazz band, junior band and choir rehearse regularly for regular performances in and out of school that are well attended by parents. The help of former pupils is valued when they regularly return to sing in the choir.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils behave very well. Relationships are very good and pupils work co-operatively and positively together.
- Inclusion.
- Leadership of the department is good.

Areas for improvement:

- To increase core-curriculum time in Years 9, 10, 11.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress to set pupils targets and learning goals and familiarise pupils with National Curriculum levels.
- Implementation of ICT policy.
- To develop and reinstate on site facilities to make best use of curriculum time.

158. Examination success is a weak feature of the physical education curriculum at present. In 2001 no pupils gained an A*-C grade. However, 100 per cent did achieve an A*-G grade. More significantly the predicted grades for the present Year 11 cohort indicate far greater improvement.

159. On the evidence of lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' attainment in Years 10 and 11 is in line with national expectations. Boys are attaining higher than girls. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2001 indicated a below average percentage of pupils attaining in line with national expectations. Evidence from the inspection suggests that pupils in Years 7 to 9 are attaining in line with national expectations.

160. All pupils throughout the school work at a level in line with their age and ability. During Years 7 to 9, boys learn to apply skills accurately. They are also developing their knowledge and understanding of spatial awareness. This was apparent for example, in a Year 8 football lesson where boys moved into space to receive accurate passes. They successfully transfer these skills into Years 10 and 11, as was evident in a Year 10 football lesson where boys were beginning to combine and select skills well and appreciate tactics in the game. In dance throughout the school, girls worked hard to compose movements which effectively conveyed the theme of the lesson. Most pupils have a good understanding of health-related fitness and know how and why to warm up before exercise. In a Year 11 GCSE class, pupils showed good understanding of physical exercise on the heart and could take accurate pulse readings.

161. Pupils' achievement, in relation to their standards on entry to the school, is good. They make good progress as they move through the school. The achievement of pupils with special education needs is good. The department has a well implemented policy of inclusion and has adopted a variety of teaching and learning styles appropriate to pupils of different abilities within groups. This was seen in a Year 8 dance lesson where two pupils with severe learning difficulties made significant progress when combining different body movements with a partner. More able pupils also achieve appropriately.

162. Pupils are encouraged to learn by the good quality of teaching that they receive. It is all satisfactory and 93 per cent of teaching is good or better. The quality of learning matched the quality of teaching. The high quality of teaching has a good impact on the pace and productivity in lessons. It enhances the learning environment and promotes pupils' progress and success. All teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject and in the teaching of physical skills, as was well displayed in a Year 8 football lesson where boys learned to control the ball well. Teachers' management of pupils and relationships with pupils are very good. This produces lessons of great enjoyment, which promotes high levels of enthusiasm and participation. This was epitomised in a Year 10 football lesson when all the boys engaged with great energy when creating space and shooting. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Staff are beginning to use assessment in lessons to inform their planning. For example, in a Year 9 dance lesson the teacher continued to reinforce newly learnt techniques rather than introduce a new style of dance. On very few occasions were instructions unclear so that some pupils had difficulty staying on task.

163. The department is effectively led and managed. The head of department has a clear vision of the standards to be achieved and understands how to achieve these standards. Staff relationships are good. They support each other well and work with commitment to the pupils and the subject. The staff contribute significantly to the ethos of the school. They have a clear imperative to improve previous best standards. The department has responded positively to the findings of the last inspection. Strong aspects have been maintained and extended. Areas noted for improvement have been addressed. In consequence the department has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and balanced

and meets statutory requirements. A fully open-access GCSE course is now available. The curriculum now offers girls the opportunity to participate in football, basketball and more recreational activities. Because they are offered a more exciting and stimulating curriculum, older girls maintain their interest in physical education. However, the time allocation given to core lessons in Years 9, 10 and 11 is only 4 per cent. This is half the national recommendation and it has an adverse impact on standards. Extra-curricular provision is sound but not extensive.

164. There are some areas that would benefit from further attention. Assessment procedures are at an embryonic stage. Pupils are now being assessed at the end of each unit of work but the information should be used to show evidence of pupil progression. Accordingly, levels of attainment should be indicated in schemes of work, long and short-term planning. More use should be made of assessment information to set pupil targets and familiarise them with National Curriculum levels. The introduction of a GCSE dance course would broaden the curriculum further and develop pupils' interest and creativity. The department must develop its ICT provision. Risk assessment reports should be completed on all activities. The department has the acumen to progress and succeed given appropriate curriculum time, suitable on-site facilities, and a balanced staffing profile.