

INSPECTION REPORT

Lawnswood School

Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108055

Headteacher: Lindsey Wharmby

Reporting inspector: David Jones
8197

Dates of inspection: 4 – 8 March 2002

Inspection number: 190262

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
School category:	Comprehensive
Age range of pupils:	11 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ring Road West Park Leeds
Postcode:	LS16 5AG
Telephone number:	01132 782321
Fax number:	01132 307648
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	J R Shemilt
Date of previous inspection:	October 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8197	David Jones	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and Management
9907	William Orr	Lay inspector		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?
18032	Isobell Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology.	Post 16 co-ordinator How well are pupils taught?
22723	Bob Hartman	Team inspector	Mathematics	
18850	Andrew Hodges	Team Inspector	Science	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31693	Tim Hanafin	Team inspector	Art and design	
11508	Chris Griffin	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
20716	Reg Grogan	Team inspector	Religious Education	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
17233	Glynis Yates	Team inspector	Physical education	
29972	John Webster	Team inspector	Geography	
2172	David Saunders	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
12825	Nial Carr	Team inspector	Psychology Business Education Law	
10275	John Cosgrove	Team inspector	History	
22491	Lorraine Small	Team inspector	Design and technology	

15208	Anthony Briggs	Team inspector	Music	
28101	Andrew Lagden	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
8873	Charlotte Evers	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	
12328	Patricia Mitchell	Team inspector	Sociology	

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants Ltd
6 Sherman Road
Bromley
Kent BR1 3JH

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Situated in the north of the city, Lawnswood School is larger than other secondary schools with 1525 pupils on roll. A new purpose-built school, currently under construction in the school grounds is part of a Local Education Authority (LEA) private finance initiative (PFI). The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (20.3 per cent) is above the national average and the percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language (15.3 per cent) is high with more than 15 different mother tongues spoken. Some 20 per cent of pupils come from families with higher education qualifications. Very few pupils have little or no English (less than 2 per cent in all). The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, (21.7 per cent) is in line with the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs (3.1 per cent).

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lawnswood is an improving school with good sixth form provision. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 – 11 and in the sixth form. Standards of attainment are in line with both the national average and those in similar schools. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning are good with almost no unsatisfactory lessons seen.
- The progress made by gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs is good.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities offered are good.
- The work done by the governing body and one of the senior managers to ensure that the new PFI building will meet the educational needs of the school and in the search for best value is very good.
- Good induction and support of new teachers, student teachers and heads of department. The contribution of middle managers is a strength.
- The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school and their work with the LEA are very good.

What could be improved

- The resources available to many departments are unsatisfactory.
- The use of assessment to inform teaching, learning and curriculum planning.
- The unsatisfactory provision in information and communication technology.
- The current accommodation available is unsatisfactory with many poor areas affecting learning for some subjects and years groups.
- Attendance needs further improvement and the number of exclusions remains above average.

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 October 1999 when it was found to have serious weaknesses. Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall. Strategies for planning and sustaining improvement are now sound, as is the planning of the curriculum provision across the school and the use made of assessment information to promote the progress pupils make. Good work has been done to improve the environment, rectifying all possible health and safety issues. Attendance is now in line with the national average, but the data available for the week of the inspection was below 90 per cent. Exclusions remain high but are on a declining trend. The school no longer has serious weaknesses.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A level/AS level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	C
A levels/AS levels	A	A	A	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards of attainment on entry to the school are just below the national average. In the national tests at age 14 taken in 2001 standards of attainment in English and science were in line with the national average. Standards in mathematics were above average in comparison to all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools (schools that serve a similar catchment area) performance in English and science was above average and that in mathematics was well above average.

The percentage of pupils who achieve five A* - C grades at GCSE was below the national average but in line with expectations when measured against pupils' prior attainment. Similarly, the percentage of pupils who achieve five A* - G grades at GCSE was also below the national average but in line with expectations when measured against pupils' prior attainment. However, the percentage of pupils who achieve at least one A* - G grade was well below the national average and expectations when measured against pupils' prior attainment. This indicates some weakness in the progress made by below average pupils in their last two years in the school.

Achievement is satisfactory, except in information and communication technology, in all subjects in Years 9 and 11. The school's results have improved steadily in the last two years, with the school placed halfway up the table of Leeds LEA secondary schools. Standards of attainment at advanced level are above national expectations when compared with all schools.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students' attitudes to the school are satisfactory
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall, with some unacceptable behaviour seen around the school and in Year 7. However, it improves as pupils move through the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and their relationships are good in both teaching and social groups.
Attendance	Attendance is just in line with the national average but was weaker in the inspection period.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	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.

Teaching is good throughout the main school. Of 162 lessons seen in the main school, more than 99 per cent were judged to be at least satisfactory, while 68 per cent were good or better. Departments have a clear understanding of what makes for effective teaching in their specialist area.

As a result, students' learning is good, and their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 - 9 in English. It is satisfactory in science and mathematics. In Years 10 - 11 teaching in English and science is good but that in mathematics is satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A good range of extra-curricular opportunities enhances satisfactory breadth and balance of subject provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good in all subjects but the range of courses for the least able is limited.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This is satisfactory in all subjects and in all year groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities offered are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care of pupils is satisfactory overall with pastoral support and Child Protection procedures good. Current assessment practice is sound but does not consistently inform teaching and learning.

The school's working partnership with parents is good. Parents who replied to the questionnaire or attended the meeting were almost all positive about all aspects of the school. In particular, parents believe that their children like school, that the teaching is generally good and that their children make good progress. A small number of parents were critical of the standards of behaviour in the school. Some parents believe the school should keep them better informed and were concerned about the balance of homework. The information the school provides for parents is satisfactory and the school produces good written reports on pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, with particular strengths in the leadership of middle managers, pastoral staff, the induction of new staff and the project management of the PFI building scheme.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school and their work with the LEA is very good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The action taken to meet the schools' targets is satisfactory, but weaknesses in the use of assessment to inform curriculum planning allows up to 10 per cent of pupils to become de-motivated and absent themselves from school.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of limited resources.

There is a good match of staff expertise to the needs of the curriculum except in ICT. The resources available for teaching are unsatisfactory. Many aspects of the school's accommodation are poor and all of it is unsatisfactory. This is jeopardising the further improvement of standards in all subjects. The school will move into excellent new PFI premises in September 2003. When the progress since the last inspection, quality of provision, and standards achieved are considered, the school is found to give satisfactory value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching • Extra-curricular opportunities • Standards achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with parents • More consistent use of homework • Some aspects of behaviour

The inspection team agrees with the almost all of the views expressed by parents, but feels that homework is generally used appropriately.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is above the average size nationally with 220 on roll. Sixth form provision is mixed, with entry determined by performance at GCSE. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is half as large again as that found in similar schools' sixth form provision. The breadth and balance of the provision is very good with 23 advanced level courses, AVCE and GCSE courses offered.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form provision at Lawnswood School is good. In comparison to all schools national standards of attainment are high. Students' achievement is good and often very good because of the strong teaching and supportive ethos of the sixth form. Teaching and learning are good and the school has improved the quality and range of provision noted in the last report. The leadership and management of the school's sixth form are good.

Strengths

- The breadth and balance of the post-16 provision and the equality of opportunity offered are good.
- Pastoral care is very good.
- Teaching and learning are good and often very good.
- Attainment in psychology, sociology, law, French is above average, and that in sports studies, English literature, mathematics and biology well above average.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

What could be improved

- The accommodation and resources available for advanced level teaching.
- The provision for computing as an A level subject.
- The provision for numeracy and ICT as Key Skills.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area - focus	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Provision is good, A level results well above the national average with a high proportion of A and B grades achieved. Teaching is good and lessons are well prepared.
Biology	Provision is very good, results are well above the national average. Teaching is good and the subject is well led.
Sports studies	Provision and teaching are excellent, expectations are high and attainment is at least in line with the national average despite poor accommodation.
French	Provision and teaching are good. Students have a good grasp of language and grammar.

Law	Provision is good, teaching is good and students make good progress.
Psychology	Provision is very good, teaching and learning are good.
Sociology	Provision is good, teaching and learning are good.
Computing	Provision is unsatisfactory. Teachers' subject expertise is good and the subject is well resourced.
English Literature.	The provision is very good, standards are well above average, very good teaching and excellent student attitudes help students make very good progress.
	<i>The provision in the following subjects was sampled.</i>
Economics	Provision is good, teaching and learning are dynamic.
Religious Education	Provision is good.
Art	Provision is good, standards are above average and teaching is very good.
Geography	Provision is good, A level results in 2001 were outstanding. Teaching is good.
Key Skills	Communication is well developed and popular. ICT is satisfactory but numeracy is poorly integrated into curriculum areas and unpopular.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Good overall. Very good pastoral guidance, satisfactory academic guidance with insufficient guidance on standards of attainment and means of improvement in some subjects
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of relationships with staff • The support they receive • The range of extra-curricular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation • Key skills provision in ICT and numeracy • Careers advice • Half the students did not feel they were well informed about their progress

The inspection team agrees with the students' positive comments and their views on careers, Key Skills and accommodation. The inspection team feels students are appropriately informed about their progress in almost all subjects.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement “outstanding” in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to “very weak”.

The improvement in the post-16 provision since the last inspection has been good. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good, as is its cost effectiveness.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are in line with the national average. In the national tests at age 14 taken in 2001 standards of attainment in English and science remain in line with the national average but those in mathematics are above when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to schools with a similar catchment area, performance in English and science was above average and that in mathematics was well above the average.
2. Overall the performance in the 2001 GCSE examinations was below the national average. When measured against the pupil prior attainment data published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) the 2001 GCSE results are seen to be in line with expectations.
3. The percentage of pupils who achieve five A* - C grades at GCSE was below the national average but in line with expectations when measured against pupils' prior attainment. Similarly, the percentage of pupils who achieve five A* - G grades at GCSE was also below the national average but in line with expectations when measured against pupils' prior attainment. However, the percentage of pupils who achieve at least one A* - G grade was well below the national average and expectations when measured against pupils' prior attainment. This indicates some weakness in the progress made by below average pupils in their last two years in the school.
4. Standards of attainment in English in Years 7 - 9 fell just below the national average, having dipped slightly in the last two years. On entry to the school the pupils' standards are below average according to their end of Year 6 test results. Reading standards are better than writing. By the end of Year 9 they make good progress and overall standards are broadly average. Most make good progress in writing extended pieces of work and organising it coherently, especially through paragraphing. Lower attainers make errors in spelling and punctuation but most pupils' standards are secure. A number of middle-attaining pupils are less assured in writing precise standard English. Science standards of attainment have been rising for the last three years and are close to the national average. However, those in mathematics have been on a rising trend for two years, exceeding the national average.
5. The general standard of numeracy is good and there are some good examples where such skills are reinforced. In geography, for example, pupils successfully read and interpret a variety of graphs and tables, dealing with scales and co-ordinates. Data collection, manipulation and interpretation, including lines of best fit form a significant part of fieldwork. In design and technology measurement is an important feature of practical work, and pupils gain experience in the construction and analysis of questionnaires. Examples of pupils using numerical calculations, especially percentages, are found in history. Many subjects, including science and physical education, require pupils to read scales and instruments. In science pupils are able to record observations, take accurate measurements and to present data in the form of graphs and tables. They are also required to use algebra in physics and to perform both mental and pencil and paper calculations. The mathematics curriculum includes the development of appropriate numeracy skills.

6. At the end of Year 9, standards of attainment in all three core subjects when compared with schools nationally are in line with expectations. When compared to those found in similar schools (by comparison with the nature of the catchment area) they appear above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics.
7. Standards of attainment in the foundation subjects at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations in design and technology, art, geography, history, French, German, music, physical education and religious education but below expectations in information and communication technology (ICT).
8. Overall, when pupils' attainment on entry is considered, their standards of achievement are good in mathematics and satisfactory in English, science, French, German, art, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. Achievement was considered unsatisfactory in ICT. Within these composite judgements there are some subtle variations, with pupils making very good progress in history in years 10 and 11, and in English a significant improvement in the standard of pupils' writing was seen between Years 9 and 11. The achievement of a significant group of boys speaking English as an additional language in the 2001 geography GCSE was noted as being their lowest grade.
9. When their GCSE results are measured against pupils' prior attainment in the national tests at age 14, their achievement was in line with expectations. The strengths of these results lies in the number of high grade passes gained by the most able pupils. Some 20 per cent of pupils are of above average ability within a very comprehensive intake. These pupils make appropriate progress as they move through the school. As an example, by the end of Year 11 the standards of about one-fifth of the pupils are very high in relation to the average as judged by the proportions reaching grade A*/A in their GCSE English examination.
10. Conversely the area of weakness is the underachievement of approximately 10 per cent of pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are often de-motivated boys. They were of below average ability on entry and the current curriculum experience fails to engage and support them. These pupils are a significant feature of the weaknesses in attendance and the above average exclusion rate.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in mainstream classes and when withdrawn in the learning support department. This enables most of them to complete GCSE courses successfully. One Year 11 pupil with specific learning needs made good progress in developing his skills in performing on the electronic keyboard in a music lesson. This is a result of the very good support provided by the learning support assistant; for example, in a Year 11 science lesson pupils made very good progress as a result of the support teacher's explanations and planning.
12. Those pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. They achieve at least as well as the rest of the school population and in line with their abilities. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls or by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds in most subjects. There is some difference in the progress of boys and girls in modern foreign languages, geography and ICT.

Results and achievements

Sixth form

13. Standards of attainment are high on many sixth form courses. The average points score of students entered for two or more advanced level courses was well above the national average and showed an improvement from the previous year. Male students performed slightly better than female students, a reversal of the national trend that is made possible by the inclusive and supportive teaching and management of this mixed sixth form.
14. In English results are well above average as a result of very good teaching and students' achievement is very high. Advanced level results in sports studies are well above national average because of excellent staff expertise. In French results are well above average because of very small groups and students' achievement is very high. Students studying psychology produce results and standards of work seen that are very high in relation to expectation.
15. Mathematics standards are good. Results are above average and good teaching leads to positive attitudes from students. This is also true in biology where results are well above average because of very good teaching based on very high expectations. In law results are good, based on good teaching and students have positive attitudes to the subject. In sociology results are in line with the national average and provision has improved.
16. Results in the advanced level computing course are unsatisfactory. A high proportion of students do not continue after AS level. Standards are low on entry to the subject and so students find the work difficult. Teaching is satisfactory but the course does not meet the needs of the students.
17. Communication skills are well developed in subjects across the sixth form curriculum. The compulsory weekly lessons in ICT and numeracy are unpopular among the students but standards are satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils' attitudes to the school are satisfactory overall. The great majority of pupils are keen to come to school and show an interest in all aspects of school life. They support the wide range of opportunities which the school provides such as music, outside trips and sports. When talking with pupils, inspectors found them to be friendly and polite. However, some Year 7 pupils lack basic concentration and social skills and take time to settle in lessons. In a Year 8 science lesson some pupils needed to be regularly refocused to tasks by the class teacher, although other pupils enjoyed working steadily in pairs. There is some loitering between lesson changes and on occasions pupils arriving a few minutes late disrupt lessons. Attitudes generally improve as pupils move through the school and by Year 11 attitudes are often good or very good.
19. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most pupils are well behaved both in lessons and around the school. However, on occasions some pupils display challenging attitudes to staff or to other pupils. This is more evident with some Year 7 pupils who have underdeveloped self-discipline skills. Most of these pupils quickly learn and accept the expected standards of behaviour. Exclusions are reduced in recent years, although the school has exceeded its own target for fixed term exclusions. Last year there were 92 fixed term exclusions up to the end of February and 6 permanent

exclusions for the full year. At the time of this inspection there are 70 fixed term exclusions and 2 pupils have been permanently excluded during the school year. There is no evidence of regular bullying, although one particularly violent incident was noted in Year 11. There are no signs of sexual harassment and there is much evidence of racial harmony in all years. Pupils perceive the rewards systems as fair and the management of behaviour as good, especially by heads of year. They also agree that a small number of pupils are badly behaved and that bullying is not a serious problem.

20. Personal development and relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils are on friendly but respectful terms with both teachers and other pupils. They willingly take on responsibilities, both in school and in the community, such as delivering Christmas hampers to elderly house-bound people or collecting for popular charities. Pupils are especially proud of their involvement in activities such as working as a learning support assistant in a local primary school or helping younger pupils to read music. They also enjoy working in pairs or small groups in lessons. Girls have a more positive attitude towards their work in modern foreign languages in Years 7 - 9, and in ICT. There is little significant difference in attitudes of different ethnic groups in Years 7 - 11.
21. In a Year 7 assembly the majority of pupils were surprised by and are concerned at the low wages paid to Third World workers. However, a small number of pupils are less aware of the impact of their actions on others such as when their behaviour or lateness to lessons disrupts teaching and learning.
22. Students' personal development is good. They respond easily and confidently in the various work and social situations which form the school day. They are willing to accept responsibility. Younger students have responsibilities within their own forms.
23. Levels of attendance throughout the school are just in line with the national average but the weekly analysis highlighted a decline during the inspection. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. This is a slight improvement since the last inspection. An accurate record of absence is maintained and the marking of registers meets statutory requirements. Registration periods are satisfactory and provide a structured start to the day.
24. Pupils identified as having special educational needs display satisfactory attitudes to learning in mainstream classes and good attitudes in the learning support department. They work co-operatively and their behaviour enables them to respond well to the opportunities offered by the school, including the extra help given by learning support assistants and support teachers. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties often respond well to the strategies employed by staff.

Sixth form

25. The behaviour of students in the sixth form is mostly very good or better, both inside and out of lessons. Their attitudes are very positive and they are well motivated to succeed in examinations. This is especially evident in well-led lessons such as economics where students' attitudes contribute much to the overall progress.
26. Relationships are very good. Students are on relaxed but respectful terms with their tutors. They regard the teaching as 'good' and they consider the teachers to be both very supportive and to have high expectations. They would recommend the sixth form to others. Students make remarks such as 'The teacher makes it very interesting

and unusual so it is easy to remember'. Some Asian boys in sixth form ICT lacked confidence.

27. Personal development is very good. Students willingly support each other and share information. They also express interest in taking on more responsibilities to support younger pupils, such as sixth form liaison with the school council. Year 12 students organise music festivals for Year 9 pupils. They choose, arrange, rehearse and direct choir and ensemble music. Students are happy with the enrichment activities and the pastoral support provided by the school. Attendance in the sixth form is satisfactory and the majority of pupils are punctual.
28. Sixth form students are less happy with information and communication technology provision, which they feel is not always targeted or relevant to their needs. They also express similar concerns about careers guidance and Key Skills.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

29. Teaching is good in all subjects in the main school, except in physical education where it is very good, and ICT and religious education where it is satisfactory. During the inspection teaching was at least satisfactory in almost all lessons seen. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and expertise in English, modern foreign languages, design and technology, physical education, art and music. Their knowledge is good in all other subjects. This has led in English, for example, to the development of high standards in extended writing and in analysis of a range of written and films sources. In physical education the teachers' very high level of expertise has been the direct cause of the high standards of the students.
30. Teachers make good provision for the development of vocabulary in most subjects. In religious education and music there is a highly systematic approach to the use of subject specific terms. One Year 8 class explored the meaning of the 'trinity' by researching other words with the same tri 'prefix'. Displays of words are good and frequently referred to. In history concepts such as 'hierarchy' are represented visually on classroom walls. In a Year 9 science lesson on reproduction terms such as 'placenta' and 'embryo' were carefully explained and revised. In physical education word displays in all the changing rooms are updated each half term to match the curriculum activities.
31. The encouragement of reading is strong in history. The teachers have made a collection of good quality children's historical fiction to support the pupils' study. Year 9 pupils also benefited from this approach in their religious education lessons. The systematic development of a range of reading methods is less evident in other subjects. Overall,, the provision for literacy across the curriculum is good. In ICT, however, the provision for literacy is not satisfactory. There is very little continuous writing or support format development to encourage the use of short paragraphs. There are some word lists displayed but they are not well emphasised.
32. The provision for numeracy on a whole-school basis is still in the developmental stage and a training day has taken place. There is a whole-school numeracy policy, but not all subjects' schemes of work or planning documents make reference to numeracy skills, which means that opportunities to extend and develop these skills when they are encountered are invariably missed – a state of affairs alluded to in the last report. The importance of a planned numeracy provision is recognised and a numeracy audit is planned after the training day.

33. There is, nevertheless, no evidence that lack of numeracy skill planning in any way impedes progress in subjects. In fact, the general standard of numeracy is good and there are some good examples where such skills are reinforced. In geography, for example, pupils successfully read and interpret a variety of graphs and tables, dealing with scales and co-ordinates. Data collection, manipulation and interpretation, including lines of best fit form a significant part of fieldwork. In design and technology measurement is an important feature of practical work, and pupils gain experience in the construction and analysis of questionnaires. Examples of pupils using numerical calculations, especially percentages, are found in history. Many subjects, including science and physical education, require pupils to read scales and instruments. In science pupils are able to record observations, take accurate measurements and to present data in the form of graphs and tables. They are also required to use algebra in physics and to perform both mental and pencil and paper calculations. The mathematics curriculum includes the development of appropriate numeracy skills.
34. Lessons are very well planned in music and physical education, with very effective project planning in art giving students good support at all levels of ability while encouraging them to work independently. Some geography lessons are particularly successful in preparing students to work confidently and independently. In all other subjects lessons planning is good, with clear objectives that the students can understand and work towards. There is a good range of activities in almost all lessons, with introductions that are effective in setting the scene, activities that enable students to reach their objectives and pace that maintains the momentum of learning. Almost all lessons are well timed with a session at the end of the lesson requiring students to sum up what they have learned. In some mathematics, art and science lessons, the usual good standard is not reached because the pace is slower and students go off task. A few geography lessons have a limited impact on learning because they rely too heavily on the textbook.
35. The majority of students experience a strong challenge that encourages them to do their best, with teachers in English, science, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art, music, geography, history, physical education and religious education having high expectations of their students. Teachers ensure that work meets the needs of all pupils in almost all lessons. In ICT, however, expectations are too low in that the department has insufficient time to allow students to make their own informed decisions. The most able students are not challenged enough in any subject except physical education and as a result they do not have a clear idea of the extent to which they can progress. The most able consistently do well in the Year 9 tests and at GCSE because good teaching provides challenge and support. Overall there is some lack of clarity across the school in identifying intended learning outcomes. As a result, learning objectives in lessons tend to be identified as general targeted class statement and not matched to the learning needs of groups within the class. The place of Urdu in the curriculum, criticised at the last inspection, has improved, and it is offered as a second foreign language. There is, however, no vocational course in Years 10 and 11.
36. Pupils who speak English as an additional language generally make appropriate progress that is in line with their ability. They do well in mathematics but the results obtained by boys of Asian origin in the 2001 geography were lower than those which they obtained in other subjects.

37. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. The most effective teaching is where expectations are high, classroom management skills are used effectively, appropriate challenging tasks are set, teachers are aware of pupils' needs and make good use of the additional support where provided. The use of the learning support assistants and support teachers is good overall, with some teachers, for example in geography, music and science, using their commitment, experience and skills effectively. In the learning support department, appropriate support for individual pupils' needs and monitoring of their progress create a stimulating and purposeful learning environment. In some lessons without the presence of learning support assistants, for example in ICT, the least capable students are hampered by difficulty in reading the instructions. Overall, the learning of pupils with special educational needs is good and in line with that of other pupils.
38. Teachers' relationships with students are good in almost all lessons and in all subjects, leading to a high level of co-operation that produces good learning. Teachers are seen to be firm but fair, with a good sense of humour, for example in physical education where students respond very well in terms of effort and in modern foreign languages where the staff set very high standards. Although it is also true of the majority of English lessons, there are some instances where students, uncertain about the teacher's intentions, take too long to complete tasks.
39. Resources are well used in all subjects with good use in modern foreign languages of photographs and audio recorders to assess students' standards. The technicians in science, design and technology and ICT are effective in maintaining and preparing equipment, while the majority of staff work well with learning support assistants. Although the majority of staff have now undergone some training in the use of ICT only English, mathematics and science have guaranteed access to the computers for all classes. The use of ICT in most subjects has not been developed to the extent that it is enhancing education.
40. The assessment and recording of pupils' work is generally accurate and good verbal feedback helps pupils to improve their learning. Effective assessment procedures are found in English, design and technology, science and music. In these areas targets are set for the performance of pupils, which give them some knowledge of their own learning. The marking of pupils' work is generally not being used to give pupils sufficient information as to how to improve their performance.
41. The standard of marking is satisfactory, with a range of practice that is good to poor. Teachers mark work well in English, mathematics and some science lessons. The PE department carries out very reliable assessment using a video camera. There are missed opportunities for self-assessment in mathematics, while in science the marking does not consistently show students how they can improve the detail of their work. Teachers do not have a consistent approach to homework, with none set in ICT while there is regular timetabled homework in other subjects. Where it is set it is usually an effective link between lessons.

Sixth form

42. Teaching is good in the sixth form, resulting in high standards in most subjects. This is an improvement on the situation at the last inspection. In the sixth form physical education teachers give well-planned guidance on skimming and scanning texts to find relevant information quickly. Dynamic teaching and learning was a feature of the economics lessons sampled.

43. In mathematics, students are well motivated and learning is good because teachers' expectations are high. Students achieve well, benefiting in particular from teachers' very good subject knowledge. Teaching in biology sets clear objectives and makes good use of well-prepared resources to provide good challenges for students of different abilities and good questioning strategies. This was seen in a lesson that focused on lifestyle and its effects on health. The students were led by carefully planned questions to build up a good understanding of the links between diet, high blood pressure and the physical condition of the arteries so that a full appreciation of the dangers was gained. The teacher's skilful preparation of resources enabled the students to think scientifically and join previously learned concepts to form logical conclusions. This talent for making good use of the facilities and resources available to build skilfully prepared and challenging lessons was a consistent feature of the sixth form teaching seen.

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

44. The planned curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements in Years 7 - 9 and 10 - 11 and has sufficient breadth and balance. All subjects of the curriculum provide equality of access for all pupils. Some provision is made for low attaining pupils to gain accreditation through Certificates of Achievement. The major shortcomings of the last inspection have been addressed. However, provision is still unsatisfactory for ICT. The Years 10 - 11 curriculum provides a generally suitable range of GCSE courses and includes a work-related programme for a group of Year 11 pupils. This development is a response to a recognised problem of disaffection among some pupils in Key Stage 4. An expansion of this provision is being planned for to meet the needs of a wider group of pupils who are not achieving positive outcomes at the end of Year 11. There is a developing provision for vocational education in Years 10 and 11. All pupils undertake a work experience placement in Year 10 and this is closely linked to the curriculum for personal and social education (PSE). The amount of time given to the curriculum is 25 hours a week. This represents a significant time increase from the time allocation at the last inspection and this has enabled the school to address its curricular deficiencies.
45. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects with the exception of ICT. At the time of the last inspection statutory requirements were not met for the provision of religious education in Years 10 - 11 and in the sixth form. This was also true for ICT in Key Stage 4, coverage of ICT and Drama within English in Years 7 - 9 and there was insufficient physical education for those pupils who study a second modern foreign language. The arrangements for meeting pupils' special educational needs did not comply with all aspects of the code of practice. Almost all of these criticisms have been addressed, with the exception of the provision for ICT. The school curriculum is now satisfactory. The school makes good provision for pupils on the register of special educational needs. All pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational need meets the needs of their statements and these are monitored and reviewed annually. Pupils benefit from appropriate support from a range of external agencies and organisations.
46. Some pupils with special educational needs are well supported in accessing the curriculum by the deployment of learning support assistants. This deployment is targeted at pupils who have a statement of special educational need, but other pupils who do not have a statement benefit incidentally. Many pupils who are on early

stages of the register are supported by learning mentors who work intensively with these pupils. Provision is therefore good.

47. Planning for continuity and progression is a strength in music, English and history. There is still a weakness in ICT where planning does not systematically identify increasingly challenging work as pupils move through the years. The school provides schemes of work for all subjects and these are appropriately monitored and evaluated, which has resulted in subjects gaining more consistency than at the time of the last inspection. The provision for the development of whole-school literacy is good. Its development is under the direction of recently appointed co-ordinator. She is clear-sighted about how the school needs to develop its literacy provision. A recent training day in which several teachers led sessions sharpened the focus of the work of subjects and led to development aims. Monitoring of pupils' numeracy progress is planned. There is a whole-school literacy group but the absence of library representation constrains the effective development of a coherent approach to study and research skills. In Year 7 literacy is being enhanced in registration reading activities. The work of the English department and the learning support area gives a good lead in the development of literacy. The good practice in departments such as history and geography is not shared across the school. There is no whole-school policy to guide and monitor the development of literacy.
48. Provision for extra-curricular activities is a strength in music. The school offers a good range of sporting opportunities. There is a satisfactory range of other activities offered which include field trips, textiles club, science club, foreign visits and theatre trips. The provision for careers advice and impartial advice is satisfactory. The provision for the pupils' personal and social education is good. The PSE course provides opportunities for pupils to consider their own personal and social development including sex education, drugs and health education.
49. The school makes good provision for the personal development of its pupils and it is noticeable how much more mature they become by Year 9. Their moral and social development is well supported across the curriculum, particularly in religious, personal and social education, and there are many opportunities for pupils to broaden their cultural education. Provision for spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory.
50. Religious education is now taught throughout the school, giving more scope for spiritual reflection. During inspection week, Year 9 pupils were expressing their views on the ultimate question of what lies beyond death and Year 10 pupils were revising arguments for and against the existence of God, in preparation for an examination. The introduction of sixth form conferences has provided students with the opportunity to hear and discuss religious teaching on important moral issues. The school's audit of subject contributions to spirituality has heightened teachers' awareness and improved their planning in this area. In a Year 11 science lesson pupils marvelled at the size of the galaxy, whilst a Year 8 geography class reflected on the immensity of Antarctica. Afternoon assemblies do not fulfil the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship but uphold the school's moral values, if lacking spirituality.
51. Moral education is well developed across the curriculum and teachers are good role models in the way they treat pupils and encourage them to be responsible for their actions. There is a clear code of conduct, which is consistently upheld by the pastoral teams. A team of mentors provides valuable support for those pupils who are experiencing problems in conforming to the school's expectations of them. The school's core values of raising self-esteem and respect for others are promoted in the

personal and social education modules on equality and justice. Moral issues are the basis of the religious education course in Years 10 and 11, and are discussed in most subjects. For example, issues of race, relationships and moral dilemmas are raised in the study of literature, and environmental issues are the subject of art projects in Year 7.

52. There is good provision for pupils' social development. Citizenship is a key element of the social education programme in each year, developing pupils' understanding of their rights and responsibilities in a multicultural society. The Community Action scheme is a highly effective exercise in practical citizenship, involving all Year 11 pupils in as many as 15 sessions of community service. Pupils are given the opportunity to express their views on school matters through their representatives on year councils and the school council. In a number of subjects, such as physical education, science, design and technology and music, the ways of working give ample opportunity for pupils to develop their social skills through collaboration. Year 12 students are given the responsibility of organising the annual Year 9 music festival, and they play a leading role in fund-raising for charity.
53. The school does a lot to promote cultural development, both in lessons and through a full programme of extra-curricular activities. Despite the limited sports facilities, the school runs clubs and teams in a range of sports, and makes full use of the assistance offered by local sports clubs. Similarly, music and drama offer a wide variety of instrumental, choral, dance and drama clubs giving opportunities for performance. The music of different cultures, especially those represented in the school, is neither explored sufficiently in the curriculum nor offered as an extra-curricular activity. The school values its multicultural character but does not do enough to celebrate its diversity through shared cultural events and displays. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in visits and exchanges with schools in France, Germany and Russia.

Sixth form

54. There is a very good range of advanced level courses for students in the sixth form. Qualifications at both AS and A levels are offered and plans are well advanced to offer a range of vocational courses. The choice enables students to find appropriate opportunities to build on what they have already achieved and to explore new areas of study if they wish. However, some students who achieved well at GCSE find advanced courses in some subjects very demanding as, for example, in physics. Provision of courses more fully dedicated to sixth form students' widely differing talents could benefit some students who choose to study in the sixth form.
55. The school provides extra breadth and curricular enrichment through a range of lunchtime seminars and activities that include many discussion groups. Provision is made for the development of the key skills of communication and information technology. The lack of computers for sixth form use means that independent use and development of skills are only developing slowly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

56. The school takes good care of its pupils. Health and safety provision is comprehensive. The school has placed high priority on eliminating the problems noted in earlier inspection reports and in minimising others created by the new building work programme. There are appropriate health and safety policies in place. A governor who has relevant expertise has given training to staff on risk assessment

and assessments are now regularly carried out. First aid, accident and emergency evacuation procedures and records are stringently maintained and five members of staff are trained in first aid. Other relevant policies covering matters such as trips out of school are in place. Supervision of pupils in potentially hazardous areas such as corridors and staircases is good. The recorded numbers of accidents are low for both staff and pupils. However, white spirit solvent is not appropriately stored in the art department. Child Protection procedures are good. They comply with local guidelines and national requirements. The school has a significant number of children who are looked after by the local authority or foster parents. Pupils in Years 7 - 9 express concerns about the limited time and lengthy queues at lunchtime.

57. The school liaises closely with primary schools and teachers visit most feeder schools. Year 6 pupils visit the school's different departments prior to moving school. New pupil intakes are balanced, as far as is practicable across classes, for gender, ability, ethnicity and behaviour. Class teachers monitor and record new pupils' progress for one month to confirm primary school reports and when necessary appropriate support is provided. Teachers know pupils well and pastoral care is comprehensive. Personal and social education is a strength of the school. Lessons have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. In Year 10 lessons a local magistrate sets test cases for pupil jurors to consider. In a Year 8 lesson about HIV/AIDS pupils asked searching and mature questions. PSE issues are also covered where these arise in other subjects such as biology or history.
58. Educational and personal support for students in the sixth form is very good. Students relate closely to teachers and are pleased with both the quality of teaching and the support provided. Student planners provide clear pastoral and educational guidance.
59. The school places much importance on promoting good attendance and parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the school. Parents contact the school to confirm authorised absences. Class teachers contact the head of year as soon as concerns arise. Attendance is closely monitored and analysed. Monthly each head of year receives a computer printout of pupils whose attendance has fallen below 80 per cent. Records are scrutinised by the deputy head teacher each term and patterns or trends of absence detected. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who is permanently based in the school, talks to pupils in personal and social education lessons to stress the importance of school attendance. She is currently supported full-time by a colleague who speaks Urdu. Learning mentors who liaise closely with the EWO also give support to parents and pupils where attendance is a concern. The local authority rigorously prosecutes parents who refuse to send pupils to school. Individual pupils' attendance records appear in their Record of Achievement. Pupils who are at risk of exclusion attend the pupil support unit. Pupils' personal development is well supported and monitored.
60. The school's management of behaviour is good. Teachers are good role models and pupils quickly learn what is unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are told about behavioural expectations and anti-bullying strategies at induction lessons. There is also clear guidance in student planners about rewards and punishments, anti-bullying, expectations and the home-school agreement. The school consults pupils to gain their views on issues such as the consistency and value of rewards and discusses these matters at team meetings. For example, Year 10 pupils favour letters to parents or certificates in Records of Achievements as rewards. Where possible internal exclusions are used. Pupils are encouraged to contact staff when any

bullying occurs. The pupil support unit can call on specialist outside assistance such as the Educational Psychologist or the Therapeutic Social Worker. Records are maintained on a behaviour database and in individual behaviour records.

61. Outcomes of assessments and reviews of examination results are effectively used to evaluate and improve long- and medium-term planning in most subjects. This is a strong feature of many departments work where schemes of work are regularly reviewed and monitored in the light of assessments made of pupils' attainment and progress. Whole-school guidance on assessment has improved since the last inspection and tries to focus on details to help teachers make more effective use of the outcomes of assessment. The school analyses examination results in order to celebrate achievement and identify reasons for poor performance.
62. Monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance is satisfactory. Teachers know pupils well and individual Records of Achievement contain detailed information such as homework completion, remaining on task, current attainment and effort, targets to aim for in each subject and teachers' comments. Rewards gained are also recorded. Good use is made of support staff such as learning mentors. The school shows a good level of care and concern for the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The procedures for placing pupils on the special educational needs register are applied consistently and the register is constantly updated and circulated to staff. Individual education plans are developed for all pupils who are at stage two and above on the register. However, the use of them by teachers is inconsistent. Some teachers make good use of them in planning their lessons and addressing individual pupils' needs and the learning support department is working with staff to encourage their more effective use. The learning support department cares effectively for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties. Reports for Years 7 - 9 meet statutory requirements. However, there are some omissions in reports for ICT for Years 10 -11. These reports do not meet statutory requirements.

Sixth Form

63. Procedures for monitoring and supporting sixth form students' academic progress are good. In most subjects students are given secure guidance on their individual progress and the personal support offered to all Year 12 and Year 13 students by the sixth form pastoral staff is good. Students also have concerns about ICT provision, careers advice and Key Skills.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. Just over one out of five parents took the opportunity to express their views of the school through the parents' questionnaire or the parents' meeting. The majority were positive about all aspects of the school.
65. There is close liaison with parents of pupils who have special educational needs and they are properly involved in the reviews of statements. Parents appear to be generally satisfied with the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school's working partnership with parents is good. Parents who replied to the questionnaire or attended the meeting with inspectors are almost all positive about all aspects of the school. In particular, parents believe that their children like school, that the teaching is generally good and that their children make good progress. A small number of parents were critical of the standards of behaviour in the school. Some parents felt the school should keep them better informed. Other parents voiced concerns about homework provision and marking. The inspection

team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents. The inspection team found behaviour during the week of the inspection to be good and found that parents were satisfactorily kept informed.

66. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The prospectus, governors' annual report to parents, newsletters, school magazines and other circulars are both informative and 'user friendly'. Year 7 parents receive a guide and contact point for pupils' personal and social education. Parents can use the excellent pupil planners to explain reasons for absence, acknowledge receipt of governors' annual reports to parents or send and receive messages from school. Planners also contain a copy of the home-school agreement, contact points and other general information. There are numerous opportunities for parents to speak to teachers or senior staff such as at induction visits for new parents and pupils or during consultation evenings. There is also easy access for discussions at other times. The pastoral teams have time built into their programmes to talk to parents. Parents are contacted personally where concerns arise about their children such as attendance, behaviour or progress.
67. The curriculum parental support assistant liaises with parents whose use of English is limited. She speaks a number of Asian languages and reads Arabic. An Educational Welfare Officer also speaks Urdu. Learning mentors liaise with parents and pupils and visit homes where appropriate.
68. The school welcomes parents' involvement in and contributions to the work of the school. Parents are invited to meetings to discuss targeted areas of the curriculum such as ICT or history. Other topics include assessment. At another meeting about 70 parents and a number of teachers searchingly debated educational issues. At a meeting for Year 9 parents and pupils, parents asked in-depth questions about choices of subjects and careers. For consultation evenings the heads of years will transport parents who have difficulty in attending the meeting. Parents help with specific projects such as drama or concerts. Other parents assist staff by filing records or by listening to pupils with special educational needs reading. Links with parents' businesses provide valuable opportunities such as work experience in journalism or visits to a chemical site. Other parents donate books or cards.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

69. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are satisfactory. There is strength in middle management but the lack of collective vision and strategic focus noted in the last report is still evident. The reflection of the school's aims and values in its work is satisfactory, teaching is inclusive and equality of opportunity is secure.
70. Leadership provides satisfactory educational direction overall. The direction given by departmental and pastoral managers is almost always good, except ICT, but there are particular strengths in physical education and music. However, the contribution of staff with middle management responsibilities is limited by the weaknesses in the corporate strategic leadership. This is visible in the shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. This is satisfactory overall with the capacity of heads of department and pastoral staff to maintain and improve provision in their areas generally good. Good work from the senior managers responsible for staff training, where good procedures support newly qualified staff and trainee teachers, contributes to the improvement in teaching since the last inspection. The good teaching and learning seen in the majority of lessons observed during the week of the

inspection is related to the good performance management strategies operated within departments.

71. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling statutory duties is now satisfactory. There are effective curriculum links and the delivery of the statutory curriculum is now secure, as is their role as a critical friend of the school. Further progress has been made with the governors' role in shaping the direction of the school, which with the support of the LEA is now very good. The decision to appoint one of the deputy headteachers as project manager for the new private finance initiative (PFI) building project has been a vital step in securing the educational facilities the school needs for the future. The governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is now good, having improved significantly since the last inspection. They have a good understanding of the major areas of concern and a secure working relationship with the LEA to effect change.
72. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and the effectiveness of action taken has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory, with the significant improvement in teaching the result of good evaluation and development in almost all departments. Curriculum leadership has improved since the last inspection and there is now a clear strategic view of curriculum provision. Departmental leaders have made progress on the use of assessment to inform their planning and the teaching in their departments. Governors and senior managers now provide guidance on curriculum and assessment and, as a consequence, practice has become much more consistent across the school. The school has considerable assessment data and access to good support from the LEA. This is gradually being more effectively analysed and interpreted to bring about improvement.
73. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is satisfactory; the process is secure in almost all departments with clear line manager responsibilities satisfactory. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management working effectively with a wide range of relevant staff, including the committed and hard-working team of learning support assistants. Good administrative arrangements and policies are in place and there is a clear development plan, together with targets for future action. There are good working links with curriculum managers and representatives and good progress is being made towards implementing the revised code of practice for special educational needs.
74. The school does not have anyone with overall responsibility for equal opportunities, although there is a senior management team overview. There is no whole-school equal opportunities policy, although the school has plans to draft one. Some subjects have good policy statements. There is, however, no-one with a responsibility for ensuring policies are put into practice, or to ensure that school documentation, such as the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, meet requirements.
75. Good school priorities for development derived from the post-Ofsted action plan have been kept on target with support from Her Majesty's Inspectors, the governing body and the LEA. All possible health and safety issues identified with the current poor buildings have been addressed in a very thorough programme. The focus on curriculum enhancement has been satisfactory but not enough has been done with the development of GNVQ courses and the use of disapplication to provide a suitable curriculum for all pupils, some 10 per cent of whom drift out of school disaffected. Following the criticism of the school's strategic management in the last report, satisfactory progress has been made by the senior management team and the

governing body. The governors with the support of the LEA have quite correctly identified the need for a new dynamic vision following the retirement of the headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed and he will take up post in September 2002.

76. The strategic use of resources, including specific grant and other funding, is satisfactory overall with very good effort put into securing the best from the new PFI building. Educational priorities are supported through the school's financial planning, the school development plan is properly funded and departmental priorities are funded through this and a linked bidding process. Additional LEA support beyond the delegated budget has been available for senior management team mentoring and training. Specific grants including the standards fund have been used satisfactorily. Good use has been made of the skills of an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) appointed as a head of department to provide support for other middle managers. Good small-scale searching for competitive tenders and the very good governing body led monitoring of the PFI building are examples of the school's very good work on best value.
77. Overall the adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is unsatisfactory because dedicated and talented teachers are working in very difficult circumstances. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology. Attendance, monitored via an information management system is linked to a commercial home call system. However, the use made of an ICT data based assessment information management system is not co-ordinated with sufficient drive and management support and has yet to make sufficient impact on pupils' standards of achievement. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory with some shortages, notably in ICT where it is having an effect on the quality of provision. The current accommodation is unsatisfactory with a number of poor areas. This continues to have a negative impact on the standards achieved in all curriculum areas, particularly ICT. Learning resources are inadequate with limited spending in the last year. The leadership and management of the school has moved forward over the last two years within a difficult physical setting but much remains to be done.

Sixth form

78. The leadership and management of the sixth form are a significant strength of the school. The delegation from the headteacher is good. Governing body supported curriculum developments in the last two years have meant that its responsibilities for the provision of both a religious education course and a key skills course are now appropriately fulfilled. The reflection of the school's aims and values in the work of the sixth form is good. The supportive and inclusive ethos of the sixth form with its commitment to equality of opportunity is a strength of the school.
79. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and the effectiveness of the action taken relative to the sixth form have been good. The result of this is that the breadth and balance of provision and the quality of both teaching and learning are good and often very good.
80. Appraisal and performance management are part of a satisfactory system within the school as a whole, as is the strategic use of resources and grant funding. In the same way the school's good procedures for the professional development of staff contributes to their effectiveness as sixth form teachers. Educational priorities are supported through the school's sound financial planning but the limitations noted in

main school accommodation and resources spending have placed limitations on standards, notably in the provision of ICT courses and facilities.

81. There is very good application of the principles of best value to the planning of the sixth form provision, with appropriate notice taken of the courses and facilities available in the local area. A good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the sixth form curriculum have helped raise standards but staff and students work in poor accommodation with limited resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue to develop and enhance the work of this good school the headteacher and governing body should:

- Take steps to improve as rapidly as possible the unsatisfactory provision in ICT. (Paragraphs 8, 12, 35, 39, 80, 150 – 157, 202 – 212)
- Ensure that the best practice in subject based national curriculum and GCSE based assessment builds on the sound standardised data available in the school to better inform teaching, learning and curriculum planning. (Paragraphs 61, 72)
- Continue to reduce the number of exclusions by identifying the causes of disaffection and planning appropriate curriculum provision for all pupils. (Paragraphs 59, 60, 74)
- Review the resources available to many departments and their ability to have a positive effect on standards in order to mitigate the negative effects of the unsatisfactory accommodation. Build on this resources review an audit of where these new resources will be based before the transfer to the new building. (Paragraphs 77, 80)

Sixth form

- Examine the provision for information and communication technology as a suitable A level course. (Paragraphs 210, 212)
- Review the co-ordination of Key Skills to better map the integration of ICT and numeracy into all students' experience. (Paragraphs 16, 17)
- Develop the resources review required for the main school into the sixth form to mitigate the poor environment students and staff work in and enhance the students' quality of learning. (Paragraphs 77 – 80)

The following minor issue will also be addressed in the schools action plan.

- Conduct a review of the groups of pupils whose attendance needs further improvement and identify the causes. (Paragraphs 59, 60)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7- 11	162
	Sixth form	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		235

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7-11							
Number	2	20	62	36	1	0	0
Percentage	1.2	16	51.2	30.8	0.6	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	4	12	29	5	0	0	0
Percentage	6.5	26.2	57.3	9.8	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1232	196
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	267	N/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	42	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	277	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	206

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	90.6
National comparative data	90.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1
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 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	149	102	251

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	87	103	95
	Girls	68	66	65
	Total	155	169	160
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	62 (61)	67 (63)	64 (52)]
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (26)	46 (44)	33 (29)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	77	99	90
	Girls	59	60	55
	Total	136	159	145
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	55 (44)	64 (70)	58 (61)
	National	65 (64)]	68 (66)]	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (20)	33 (39)	26 (33)
	National	31 (31)	42 (42)	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	134	132	266

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	43	111	120
	Girls	68	122	123
	Total	111	233	243
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	42 (49)	88 (86)	91 (93)
	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	34.5 (34.6)
	National	39 (38)

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	0
	National	N/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	98	109	207

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	19.1	20.1	19.6 (22)	3.5	5	4 (5.5)
National	17.8	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.7)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	11
	National	87

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	0
	National		N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	44
Black – African heritage	12
Black – other	40
Indian	56
Pakistani	113
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	20
White	1067
Any other minority ethnic group	77

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	17	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	4	0
Pakistani	11	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	183	6
Other minority ethnic groups	5	6

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 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	92.26
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	35
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1079

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.1
Key Stage 4	21.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	4,249,419
Total expenditure	4,110,599
Expenditure per pupil	2750
Balance brought forward from previous year	-127,920
Balance carried forward to next year	10,900

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	22
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	23

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	5.28
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

1060

Number of questionnaires returned

217

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	29	60	6	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	35	53	8	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	14	52	14	12	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	53	19	8	1
The teaching is good.	22	62	6	2	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	43	25	8	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	34	51	9	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	44	8	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	15	44	28	7	6
The school is well led and managed.	11	46	17	10	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	59	7	4	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	49	15	6	11

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents were very positive about the school both in their written comments and at the parents evening. Some parents expressed concern about variable behaviour and the schools communication with parents. The inspection team found behaviour satisfactory overall and the quality of the schools communications to be good. Some parents expressed concerns about the use made of homework to support student's education. The inspection team found this to be good in the main school and very good post 16.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Pupils sustain good progress to reach average standards from a below average start.
- The proportion attaining the highest GCSE grades A*/A is well above average.
- Teaching is good, the department is very well led.
- Good pupil attitudes.
- A very well-planned GCSE curriculum.
- Implementation of Literacy Strategy is improving standards in Year 7

Areas for improvement

- More frequent use of target levels, grades and their criteria in lessons and monitoring of progress.
- Challenging tasks for higher attainers in Years 7 – 9.
- Extend relevant features of Literacy Strategy across Years 7 – 9.

82. The pupils enter the school with below average standards, especially in writing. Good teaching and learning help them to make good progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 9 and maintain them during Years 10 and 11.
83. Results were broadly average in the 2001 national tests for 14-year-olds. They were above average when compared with the results of pupils from a similar background. This represents good achievement given the pupils' below average standards on joining the school. Girls did better than boys but not significantly. Test results have been consistently in line with the national average for the period 1998-2001.
84. In the 2001 GCSE English examination the proportion achieving grades A* - C was broadly average for all schools and above average when compared with similar schools. Overall standards as judged by the average grade were in line with the national average. However, the proportion achieving the highest grades of A*/A was well above the national average. Overall the pupils performed as expected in relation to their standards at the start of the course but there was good achievement by higher attaining pupils. The A* - C pass rate was lower than in 1999 and 2000 but in line with that of 1998. The results of boys were significantly lower than those of girls, unlike the previous three years when the boy/girl difference was not significant. Girls tended to do better in English than in their other subjects whereas the boys' results were similar to other subjects.
85. In the 2001 English literature examination the proportion at A* - C was below the national average mainly because of the boys' results. The proportion at the highest grades of A*/A was above the national average. As in English language girls did significantly better than boys. The results fell from 2000 but were close to those gained in 1998 and 1999. The school enters more of its pupils for both the language and literature examinations than most schools.

86. The overall standards of Year 9 pupils are broadly average, matching the national tests. Speaking and listening skills are above average, although a number do not always give elaborate answers and more demand could be made of them. The reading and writing standards of higher-attaining pupils are above average and in a small number of cases well above average. One boy wrote a highly entertaining gossip column about the relationships at Orsino's court in 'Twelfth Night'. His entertaining parody of the genre revealed an in-depth understanding of the text and highly accurate English. Another boy's terse news account of 11 September was a model of concise journalism. Middle-attaining pupils reach average standards in terms of their paragraphing, spelling and use of punctuation but lack the range of vocabulary of higher attainers. Their recall and understanding of events in 'Twelfth Night' are secure.
87. The work of lower attainers ranges from well below average to, in a very small number of cases, very low. Many of these pupils have special educational needs. They have achieved well to understand and recall the main events of the plot in their Shakespeare play. Some write in paragraphs but nearly all make too many mistakes to reach average standards. Those with very low standards have difficulties in reading fluently and writing clearly and accurately. They achieve well through good teaching that focuses on their needs.
88. Standards in Year 11 are broadly average, matching those of the GCSE examination. Standards of speaking and listening are above average overall. In most lessons observed pupils answered confidently and clearly. A few are below average. The reading and writing of the highest attainers are at least well above average and in some cases very high. The best write with flawless accuracy in a range of genres as one boy demonstrated in his story in the style of Runyon. One girl wrote about her work experience with a delightful self-deprecatory tone that she sustained throughout the piece. Such writing was a pleasure to read. Middle attainers produce work of mainly average standard. Their coursework tends to meet the requirements for a C grade on a consistent basis, although some have flaws in the consistent control of precise standard English. Some middle attainers are less assured in focusing their knowledge and understanding of a text to answering the assignment or essay title. Their teachers are rightly placing some emphasis on this learning need to support these pupils in the examination.
89. Some pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well below average and a few even lower. Those who are well below tend to make spelling and grammatical mistakes. Those who are very low find it difficult to write enough of the correct quality. These pupils do well on their Certificate of Achievement course. Poor attendance prevents some students from gaining accreditation at 16.
90. Pupils from ethnic minorities make good progress. In Year 11 many are in the target grade C/D group and benefit from teaching that is tightly focused on their learning needs. In Years 7 - 9 these pupils span the full attainment range in more equal proportions. The department has rightly initiated its own monitoring policy of pupils from differing ethnic groups to evaluate how to make provision even more effective.
91. The overall quality of teaching is good. The standards in lessons observed ranged from very good to satisfactory. The best lessons were characterised by probing questions that really encouraged the pupils' thinking about issues such as the comedic elements in 'Twelfth Night' in a Year 9 class and about the techniques of comparing non-fictional texts in a Year 11 class. A consistent strength is the teachers' subject knowledge that leads to good progress in analysing printed and

moving image material and in organising writing. Planning is also a strength and leads to a strong sense of purpose and direction in most lessons, and allied to good class management, establishes good behaviour. The regular formal assessment tasks in Years 7 - 9 convey high expectations which lead to most producing well-structured extended writing. Marking is good and very good on the GCSE course.

92. There are some development points. During lessons, especially at Year 7 - 9, there was little evidence of methods and tasks being adapted to challenge higher-attaining pupils. There is not always enough clarity about the aims of the lessons or chances for the pupils to say what they know, understand or can do better as a result of a lesson. Some lessons allocated too much time for the tasks and pupils did not do as much as they should have either in terms of quantity or quality.
93. The leadership and management of a very large department are very good and enhanced by delegated responsibilities to other teachers in the department. Throughout the department there is a shared commitment to improving standards. This is confirmed by the strong response to the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy in Year 7, the targeting of borderline C/D pupils in Year 11, and the analysis of past GCSE performance on different papers to discover where the pupils' strengths and weaknesses lie. Provision for ICT is satisfactory. Procedures for assessment are good and effectively support progress. However, they are not always carried out with consistency with regard to explicit target setting and frequent reference to related criteria to support pupils' progress. The more explicit and modelled methods to teaching and learning that are emerging in Year 7 as a result of the National Literacy Strategy need to be further developed in Years 8 - 9.

Drama

94. Standards in the 2001 GCSE examinations were significantly below average as at the time of the last inspection. Standards in the current Year 11 are also significantly below average. Overall achievement, however, is at least satisfactory and for a small number good. Teaching was good in the two lessons observed.
95. The school has increased the amount of timetabled drama in Years 7 - 9 since the previous inspection. However, the overall standards of pupils who opt for GCSE drama remain well below average. Typically, these are the lowest 25 per cent of pupils according to their Year 9 national test results. Their own drama skills are not as advanced as those of pupils in other schools who have more formal drama lessons during Years 7 - 9. This lack of continuity also significantly reduces the number of higher-attaining pupils who opt for drama at GCSE level. Until the school effectively deals with these issues results in GCSE drama will not improve, nor will enough good quality students progress into sixth form drama or theatre arts courses.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Results in national tests at age 14.
- Results in national tests for girls at age 16.
- Teachers have a good subject knowledge, and are committed to ensuring that pupils do their best.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are friendly and constructive.

Areas for improvement

- The systematic and objective monitoring of the standards and progress of different groups of pupils, and, if possible, explanation of any significant differences.
- Continue to develop the information and communication technology provision for pupils as a means of enhancing their mathematics learning, including the purchase of graphing and geometrical software.
- Increase the dissemination of good practice between members of the department, including the development of different teaching styles.

96. Standards in mathematics on entry to the school are broadly in line with the national average. Results in the national tests for 14-year-olds in 2001 were above the national average. Based on the average points score achieved, attainment was statistically above the national average. In comparison with similar schools (with a comparable proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals) the results were well above average. The trend over the last three years, in terms of the average National Curriculum points score, has been broadly in line with the national trend. In 2001 boys' attainment exceeded that of girls, the reverse of the national picture. Since 1999 boys' attainment has increased at a greater rate than girls', also against the national trend. There were no significant differences apparent in the results of other different groups of pupils. In 2001 standards in mathematics were above those in English and science.
97. The proportion of pupils at age 16 achieving A* - C grades in the 2001 GCSE examination was above the national average. This is well above average compared with similar schools. Results for the previous three years were above the national average, but were for a lower proportion of pupils entered for the examination. In 2001 girls achieved higher standards than boys in line with the national trend. However, the margin of this difference is significantly wider, because the proportion of girls achieving the two highest grades A* and A was more than double the national figure. There were no apparent differences found in the results of other different groups of pupils. In 2001 standards attained at GCSE were better in mathematics than in either English or science.
98. Pupils who find GCSE mathematics too great a challenge have the opportunity to enrol for the entry-level certificate in mathematics. Most of these pupils receive a grade. As a matter of policy, if it is thought appropriate, pupils may enter for both the GCSE and the entry-level certificate.
99. The standard of work seen during the inspection was good, in line with the test and examination results. Poor attendance has a negative effect on standards and anecdotal evidence suggests that pupils who attend regularly are almost certain to achieve an A* - G grade at GCSE.

100. An analysis of national test results, in conjunction with the work seen, shows that all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well at age 14. On entry to the school pupils have an overall satisfactory understanding of basic number work and the rudiments of elementary algebra, a result of the National Numeracy Project, adopted in primary schools. These skills are built upon and developed. At age 14, the less able simplify fractions, solve elementary equations but sometimes find working with negative numbers difficult. The more able successfully investigate number sequences, solve equations and calculate probabilities, but can, however, make the odd slip in their algebra. The most able factorise algebraic expressions, investigate sequences, use trigonometry and discuss and identify misleading graphs. At age 14 all pupils use pencil and paper calculations where appropriate. They confidently work with whole numbers and calculations involving money and decimals - sometimes with the aid of a calculator.
101. Achievement at age 16, for all groups of pupils, is good, with pupils building on and developing the mathematics they learnt previously. At age 16, the less able change between simple fractions, decimals and percentages, draw scale diagrams to solve problems and continue number sequences. They occasionally experience difficulty with the recall of number facts involved in mental calculations. The more able confidently use brackets to simplify involved algebraic expressions, use the method of differences to find algebraic expressions which describe complex number patterns, and use trigonometry to calculate lengths and angles in various shapes. Most of their algebraic errors can be traced to slips made in dealing with negative quantities. The most able solve three-dimensional problems involving trigonometry, make neat sketches of algebraic functions, use vectors and solve quadratic equations using a variety of methods. After some initial difficulties they are able to simplify expressions involving algebraic fractions. All pupils can understand and use simple fractions and percentages, draw statistical charts and make generalisations from data originating from numerical investigations.
102. Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject, which, when coupled with good quality teaching, enables them to achieve well. Good relations with teachers create a good working environment, which in many ways compensates for the poor state of the accommodation. In a well-paced Year 7 lesson on algebra a higher-attaining group achieved well as a result of challenging questions which insisted that pupils justify and explain their answers - the actual answer being almost secondary. The lesson encouraged pupils to think about their mathematics rather than merely memorise a 'bag of tricks'. The same group was set a collection of challenges relating to several areas of mathematics.
103. Teaching is good overall. Classes are well managed and lessons well planned. It is interesting to note that the best teaching and learning occurred in lessons in which the textbook played a minor role. Marking is diligent, but could be made more effective by giving more written guidance as to how individuals could improve. Teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good. Good subject knowledge, high teacher expectations and the mutual respect between teachers and pupils results in good quality learning in which pupils achieve well. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is also good and pupils achieve well. In a Year 11 group, for example, pupils were able, over the course of a lesson, to apply their previously learnt skills in using a graphical calculator to investigate the transformation and solution of various quadratic equations with a good measure of success.

104. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress as a result of the support pupils receive both from teachers and learning support assistants who co-operate closely. They are both aware of pupils' particular needs and ensure that they are given work of the appropriate level, whilst at the same time fostering their independence. In an example of this in a Year 8 lesson on fractions the learning support assistant quickly recognised which pupils were experiencing difficulty and provided help quickly and efficiently whilst the teacher was addressing the class. This ensured that these pupils did not miss the experience of whole-class teaching. Equally good support is given on a one-to-one basis when appropriate. Relationships between pupils and support staff are very positive.
105. Pupils who are considered gifted and talented are given the opportunity to take a GCSE in statistics in addition to the mathematics GCSE. Some of the most able mathematicians are encouraged to enter national mathematics competitions and individuals have experienced some commendable success in these.
106. ICT currently plays a greater role in supporting teaching and learning than it did at the time of the last inspection. Time in the computer room is now allocated to all year groups. At present there is a shortage of general mathematics software such as a graph plotter and manipulator or software for geometrical constructions and investigations. A standard spreadsheet program is available and could be used more frequently to support mathematics learning for all pupils. There is no assessment of ICT against the ICT National Curriculum programs of study.
107. There is a departmental literacy policy and teachers generally make a point of insisting on the use of correct mathematical language and spelling. There are also a few opportunities to write up numerical and statistical investigations. Pupils are often asked to explain how they arrive at their answers, and to explain their reasoning to the class, but there are some missed opportunities for pupils to read aloud – even at the level of reading textbook questions to the class.
108. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has recently been a change in management and there are signs that this will result in significant improvements in the future. The commitment to raising standards is very high within the department. This is a very hard-working department.
109. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There is now an increased emphasis on the monitoring of teaching and learning and schemes of work are in the process of being updated, but the sharing of good practice within the department is not as prevalent as it might be. Similarly the monitoring of the progress of different groups and the subsequent analysis to investigate and redress any variations brought to light is an important missing element.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Pupil achievement in Years 7 - 9.
- The emphasis placed on developing pupils' scientific vocabulary and literacy skills.
- Teaching is good.
- The quality of technical support and the effect this has on pupils' progress.

Areas for improvement

- Limited opportunities for pupils to show their scientific enquiry skills.
- Limited access to and use of ICT.
- Barely adequate resourcing.

110. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school is a little below average. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with all schools nationally and above average when compared with similar schools.
111. At GCSE, in comparison to all schools, the performance of pupils is similar to that of pupils in the earlier years. In comparison to similar schools the performance of pupils gaining grades A* - C and A* - G in 2001 is just below average. The results over the past few years in science have fluctuated from above average to below average. In Years 9 and 11 the performance of girls is slightly better than that of boys. A number of factors contribute to this relatively low performance. These are a lower standard of pupils' performance in science on entry to the school, periods of pupil absence, some of which is quite extensive, and problems in recruiting and retaining staff.
112. The achievement of pupils as they move up through the school is good. The work in exercise books confirms this. By the end of Year 9 pupils make satisfactory progress and the most able pupils achieve at levels which are appropriate for their ages. In a year 7 lesson pupils could give a good explanation of the relationship between food chains and webs. They could then go on to draw clear diagrams that indicate this relationship. This knowledge and understanding was then successfully applied in a new range of situations. In a Year 9 lesson on reproduction pupils could give a clear description of the process of fertilisation and the sequence of events in the development of the foetus.
113. The department is very aware of the need to focus on the oracy and literacy skills of the pupils when they enter the school and a range of strategies have been developed to help the pupils' progress in these areas. In the best lessons seen in Years 7 - 9 key words were identified and used to create verbal sentences. As the lesson progressed, pupils became more accurate in their use of appropriate scientific language, for example pitch, frequency and amplitude in a lesson on sound. In other lessons pupils used prepared worksheets with missing words and well-prepared writing structures for investigative work. In a Year 9 lesson, opportunities were created to use the key words, in discussions, about the way in which magnets attract and repel. The attention given to the acquisition of oracy and literacy skills is a key factor in the good rate of progress shown by these pupils.
114. By the end of Year 11 higher-attaining pupils continue to make good progress with many achieving grade C or above in GCSE examinations. In one Year 11 lesson, pupils could give a clear explanation of the difference between different types of disease, such as bacterial caused and inheritance caused disease. In another lesson they showed a good understanding of how a 'Black hole ' is formed and its colour is

derived from the fact that light cannot escape from it. In exercise books diagrams are drawn with accuracy. The general improvement seen overall with literacy skills means that pupils are able to undertake much more detailed independent work. However, there are only limited opportunities for pupils to show their scientific enquiry skills. In a Year 10 lesson on understanding bonding in molecules a discussion about the idea of energy changes in Endo and Exothermic chemical reactions took place. These reactions were then demonstrated to the pupils rather than letting them have the opportunity to experience them for themselves.

115. Some groups and individuals make only limited progress as a result of having unsatisfactory attitudes to learning. In one Year 8 lesson, pupils made no attempt to understand the purpose of the lesson and were more interested in talking about other things. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress due to the careful structuring of lessons by the teachers and the support they receive in lessons.
116. The quality of teaching varies but it is good overall, with over half the lessons seen being judged good or better. In the best lessons teachers gave clear, simple explanations and instructions that were easy to follow. Their plans contained clear learning intentions that were shared with pupils so that they understood what they had to learn. Their planning clearly took into account the present level of literacy skills as well as those for the area of science being studied. The resources for the lesson were well prepared and used. Classroom management of behaviour was good and effective methods of teaching were chosen. In these lessons it was clear that assessment was beginning to guide the planning on a day-to-day basis.
117. Where the teaching was less strong, the learning intentions for the lesson were more generally planned but did not take into account the specific needs of the pupils. These aims were not shared with pupils in a way that they found easy to understand and some of them quickly lost track of the long-term goal for the lesson. The management of behaviour was less effective, which led to a slowing of the pace of the lesson, which in turn led to lower levels of concentration from the pupils. This all led to lower levels of learning taking place. In a significant number of lessons opportunities were missed to practise enquiry skills such as predicting, inferring and evaluation.
118. The science staff work well together and the technicians contribute strongly to the steady progress that the pupils are making. The head of department provides positive and clear leadership. The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements but not enough use is made of ICT. The department realises this and is taking steps to remedy the situation. Despite this the department fulfils its statutory requirements in this area. The present accommodation is inadequate and the level of resourcing is barely adequate. The assessment and recording system of the department gives much information about pupil progress and produces targets for pupil performance. The system is beginning to have an effect on lesson planning but is not yet strongly influencing the range of resources required. A regular system of monitoring and lesson observations that is part of in the culture of the department, is starting to remove inconsistencies in practice. Marking is regularly done and follows the school's marking policy. Good verbal feedback is given to the pupils about their performance but this is not supported by a range of written comments designed to give the pupils information on how they can improve.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are generally positive and they enjoy their work.
- The quality of personal relationships between pupils and teachers.

Areas for improvement

- The course planning for Years 7 - 9 does not reflect the most recent requirements.
- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently related to pupils' progress towards National Curriculum levels.
- The attainment of boys in the GCSE examination.

119. Standards at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were above national expectations on the basis of teachers' assessments. In the 2001 results for the GCSE examination the proportion of pupils gaining A* - C was below the national average. Pupils' performance in art was poorer than in most other subjects because about a third more Year 11 pupils studied art than the national average and an overwhelming number of these were boys who nationally underperform girls. The proportion of girls gaining grades A* - C was close to the national average for girls, while the proportion of boys was well below the national average for boys. The performance of boys had a significant effect on the overall results. However, results have been broadly rising over the past three years. The proportion of pupils gaining the top two grades was close to the national average, as was the proportion of pupils gaining A* - G.
120. Standards of art on entry vary widely, particularly in pupils' drawing skills. They make sound progress as they follow a well-structured course, which addresses the basic skills. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils, because teachers give them good individual support. Drawing and colour theory are systematically taught through Years 7, 8 and 9, so that pupils' skills and knowledge build incrementally. By the end of Year 9 pupils have firmly established skills, especially in drawing and painting. The attainment of girls is higher overall than that of boys. Pupils are able to use card and papier mache to explore ideas in three dimensions. They develop abstracted designs from studies of the internal structures of fruit, for example, and can produce graphic designs and use printmaking. Though sketchbooks are used at home to practise drawing and to complete homework tasks, they are not used well enough to collect images, experiment with media and to record information about artists and specialist terms. Pupils do not use computers to access Internet information or to produce and modify images.
121. In Years 10 and 11 most pupils achieve well, though a significant number of boys do not and a small number do not complete the course. Overall achievement is satisfactory. By the time of the GCSE examination, Year 11 pupils are generally able to work in a sustained way on extended projects. They produce a good quantity of work, where they use drawing from observation and from secondary sources, as well as photography, to explore themes and develop ideas. The study of artists and their work is well integrated into pupils' work. Some pupils use computers well to produce and manipulate images, though this is not yet widely done. However, it is well used to support the studies of a boy with specific learning difficulties where he works with digital images and uses word processing to improve the presentation of his written work. Limitations of space restrict the range and scale of three-dimensional work

produced but it is sometimes used well. A higher-attaining girl produced an effective relief panel in paint and plaster, which she has developed from studies of musical instruments and Picasso's work. Lower-attaining boys generally complete less work than girls. A Year 11 boy has a small quantity of complete work; much of it is derived from photographs of cars. His strongest piece is the result of a field visit to local woodland.

122. Overall, teaching is good. It is better in Years 10 and 11 where only good teaching was seen. In Years 7 - 9 no unsatisfactory teaching was seen and in a quarter of lessons it was good. Work is planned which builds incrementally on previous learning. For example, drawing and colour theory is revisited each year. Well-structured projects are open enough to encourage a range of responses, while supporting lower attainers' learning. Teachers use clear explanations, demonstrations and well-chosen examples of pupils' work. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and learn or consolidate new skills and understanding. Pupils generally have a positive attitude to the subject and their behaviour is good. They use their time well, concentrate on their work and make sound progress during lessons. Where boys make less progress in Years 7 - 9, it is sometimes because unproductive talking goes unchallenged by the teacher. Opportunities to check prior learning and draw pupils into a more active role in discussion are sometimes missed. In Years 10 and 11 pupils listen attentively and respond positively in discussions. Teachers support the efforts of individuals well. They use effective questioning to help pupils clarify their intentions for their work so that pupils are able to work independently, make good use of time and generally make good progress during lessons. For example, in a Year 11 examination preparation lesson the teacher spends time with every pupil, checking progress and offering constructive suggestions. Most pupils are well prepared for the imminent examination.
123. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The sudden illness and long-term absence of the subject head has limited progress in some areas. Though they remain below the national average, standards at GCSE are broadly rising. Investment in computer equipment has enabled its use to be established in Year 10 and above. The appointment of a ceramics specialist and planning for the new building will enable ceramics to be established as a specialist area. Concerns around planning for Years 7 - 9 are still outstanding from the previous report and pupils in these years do not have the opportunity to use ICT in their work. Assessment procedures for Years 7 - 9 remain underdeveloped and coverage of the planned work remains inconsistent. However, the acting subject leader has provided satisfactory leadership and management.
124. Sixth form art was not a focus for inspection. However, two lessons were sampled, students' work was examined and there was discussion with students. The provision for art is good. Standards of work seen were above average. Students produce intelligent and coherent studies, which are well documented and demonstrate good achievement over the course. Teaching is very good. Teachers use their considerable subject knowledge to support the students' studies very well. They have high expectations of the students, who make a significant commitment of additional time to achieve high standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teachers' subject knowledge ensures that students gain a good understanding of the subject.
- Teachers provide good individual support for all students and this enables them to achieve well.
- Good relationships between students and teachers create very good conditions for learning.

Areas for improvement

- Plan more specific work to meet the individual needs of students, particularly those who are gifted and talented.
- More consistent use of the departmental assessment scheme and the National Curriculum level statements across the technology subjects.
- Increase students' involvement in setting their own targets for improvement and monitoring their progress to achieve them.
- Improve the use and provision of ICT, particularly control technology, in order to raise standards further.

125. Standards at the age of Year 9 are in line with the national average. Standards among students joining the school in Year 7 are below average in design and technology and, by the end of Year 9, the learning and achievement of all students including those with special educational needs is good. Students in Years 7 - 9 reach average standards across a range of activities including designing and making products in resistant materials, graphics, food and textiles. Students follow the guidance provided by teachers well and generally respond very well to the information provided in lessons. They develop a very good range of graphic skills and pay good attention to presentation. Information and communication technology is well used at this stage. Students present their work using desktop publishing, use the Internet and digital cameras. Although some students in Year 7 use computer- aided design and manufacture, this is not fully implemented for all students in Years 7 - 9. Resources to do this are also limited across the specialist areas within technology.
126. Achievement over time for students in Years 7 - 9 is good in both designing and making. Students use the design process in all three years. It is less evident, however, in food technology work. In the main, students research their work well and there is good coverage of technical knowledge to underpin their design and make skills. This was seen in a Year 9 textiles lesson where students were designing and making bags and wallets. They researched and covered the knowledge about a variety of bags as well as learning how to construct their products using the correct seams and fastening. However, market research and gaining information on consumer preferences are less well developed with students in Years 7 - 9. As a result, they are inclined to develop a narrow range of ideas.
127. Standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are just above the national average. This is reflected in the 2001 GCSE results, which were slightly above average. Students doing the textiles and resistant materials courses achieved better results than those in other design and technology subjects. Those doing the automotive engineering course achieved less well. Students following the GCSE courses produce coursework of good quality. They use and apply the design process well and combine both designing and planning skills effectively. There is less emphasis, however, on

analysing the information they have researched and showing how the information and ideas have influenced their own design ideas. Practical skills are of a good standard and pupils work confidently to master a good range of skills. This was seen in a Year 11 resistant materials lesson, where students were designing and making a range of products based on producing storage boxes for table-top games. Students showed very good quality design work including detailed production drawings. They demonstrated a good range of construction skills to make their products using both traditional and modern methods of production. For example, they used a variety of joints ranging from simple butt joints to more complex finger and dovetail joints, deciding on which was the most appropriate for the purpose. Students were encouraged to extend their skills; for example, one student in particular designed his own joint based on using the letters in his name and adapting this to form a modified finger joint. Products were of very good quality among all students. Higher-attaining students worked very accurately. Middle and lower-attaining students met the requirements of the courses well.

128. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and some very good lessons were seen. Lessons are well planned. Teachers provide clear objectives to support students in their work and lessons are well structured to guide students in their learning. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject, and students accept their guidance with confidence. In very good lessons, teachers prepared the students with a good foundation of knowledge, which enabled them to test and experiment with a variety of ideas. This helped to increase their understanding of basic principles and students were able to consolidate their knowledge after testing and modifying ideas. This was seen in a Year 11 graphic products lesson where students were working on a range of ideas based on designing models of shop fronts. The teacher encouraged students to use a wide range of modelling materials. They were encouraged to test and modify their designs. As a consequence, students became more familiar with the various graphics techniques, which increased the quality of their development and presentation skills. They also explored a wide variety of designs and their work reflected good knowledge of a wide variety of cultures. This demonstrated a broad range of research and independent designing.
129. All students receive good individual support from teachers in lessons and, as a result, they achieve well. Students develop good skills in literacy. Teachers emphasise the use of the correct technical terms and encourage the accurate use of technical vocabulary associated with the subject. They prepare a good level of resources, which enable students, including those with special educational needs, to produce writing which is well structured. Students are encouraged to use the library for investigation and research. The department provides a good range of books for students to use in the department, although funding to provide full sets of textbooks has been more limited. They develop good skills in numeracy as they design, measure and mark out dimensions onto material. Teachers try to include all students in the learning activities, but some teachers lack a wide enough range of strategies to plan work which is suitably matched to students' individual needs, especially those who are gifted and talented. As a result, they are insufficiently challenged. Although there were good examples of marking which was helpful in showing students how to improve, it was inconsistent across the department. Written feedback is underdeveloped on the progress of examination coursework for students in Years 10 and 11 and the use of National Curriculum levels and statements in years 7 to 9 which describe each level. As a consequence, students are not yet fully involved in setting their own targets for improvement.

130. Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good and they respond very well to teachers. They are enthusiastic and participate well in all classroom activities. They show good levels of concentration in lessons and respond well to the very high expectations of the teachers. There are good relationships between teachers and students, which provide good conditions for learning.
131. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department maintains good working relationships within the department, and staff work hard to maintain high levels of efficiency. Good monitoring of teaching and learning has had a good effect on maintaining standards in the subject. There is now a need for the department to focus on providing sufficient guidance in schemes of work to increase the range of strategies used with gifted and talented students and also to increase students' involvement and monitoring of targets for improvement. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with good improvements in teaching and learning. The department benefits from good technician support. They make a very effective contribution to the efficient running of the department and provide good support to students who need technical support and help with their design work.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress through Years 7 - 9.
- Most pupils achieve well at GCSE.
- Pupils with special needs are well provided for.
- Attitudes and behaviour improve as pupils get older.
- Teaching is good and the department makes a significant contribution to literacy.

Areas for improvement

- The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The use of ICT.
- Precision and consistency of level related assessment and the moderation of pupils work in Years 7 – 9.

132. Standards generally are good. Pupils enter the school with a varied exposure to geography from their primary schools. Aided by a progressive syllabus and regular reinforcement, they make good progress in Years 7 – 9, acquiring knowledge of place and of contrasting environments. This is achieved through the use of case studies, understanding, for example, of river processes, map and atlas skills and the ability to synthesise information and to make and justify opinions. Their attainment at the end of Year 9 is above national expectations and enquiry exercises have given a few the opportunity to access the highest levels.
133. Slightly less than half the pupils opt to continue the subject into GCSE but the profile of pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 suggests that the subject attracts a higher proportion of lower-attaining pupils who make good progress and generally achieve well. Recent results in GCSE geography have been broadly in line with national averages as in the two previous reports. Only one of the 94 candidates in 2001 failed to obtain a grade but, on average, pupils did less well in geography than in the other subjects they were entered for. The difference between the attainment of boys and girls was twice as wide as in the national picture. Both these anomalies are largely explained by the underachievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds who

made up almost a fifth of the entry. No such pupils did well in geography in comparison with their results in other subjects. Some two-thirds of these pupils achieved their lowest grade in geography. Pupils of similar ability and cultural background in the current Year 11 have no real difficulty in understanding the geographical language but most are limited in the way they use it. Their answers are simplistic and description lacks precision so that they too are likely to underperform in GCSE geography, an examination which requires more depth in writing than they are currently producing.

134. The percentage of girls gaining A*, the highest grade, was above the national average, suggesting that some gifted pupils, now identified by the department, are benefiting from the increasing use of strategies to extend their learning. The standards achieved by pupils with special educational needs are good in all years. They are well served by tiered exercises and support staff because their needs, although not subject specific, are well understood. There is only a small entry for the Certificate of Achievement at the end of Year 11 and most pupils with special needs are rewarded with a GCSE pass.
135. In Years 7 - 9 pupils are taught in mixed ability classes. The range of prior attainment is particularly wide in Year 7 where significant numbers of pupils in some classes display poor social skills. They are impolite, restless and chatty, easily distracted and lack concentration and independence, calling out and seeking help too readily. In one class observed, this had an effect on others, so that the learning overall was less effective than it might have been. Patient and well-planned teaching is equal to the challenge and the attitude and behaviour of pupils improves noticeably. Pupils' approach to work matures too so that, by Year 9, pupils are generally attentive, contribute to question and answer sessions and are able to accept some responsibility for research as in project work which is attractively presented and brightens the walls of many classrooms.
136. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are well behaved, courteous and generally committed to their work. They find the subject interesting and remain on task. They share ideas and work productively, participating actively in lessons.
137. Overall, the quality of teaching in geography is good and wholly in the hands of experienced specialist teachers who know their subject well. Teaching is alert to what it can do to promote understanding of the multi-ethnic diversity of the school and is most successful when it challenges wide variation in pupil need, for example in a year 7 lesson on the causes of flooding, chose Bangladesh as its example. It was an excellent lesson because all pupils in a mixed ability group were interested, involved and motivated. Careful planning and the use of textbooks, video and ICT gave structure and pace to the lesson. Levelled worksheets supported and prompted lower attainers and extension tasks extended higher attainers. The teacher's high expectations were repaid with productive and independent learning. These pupils were eager to contribute, capable of writing their own explanations and enthusiastically prepared to write an account of living through a flood, a homework assignment which would strengthen literacy as well as, through empathy, convey understanding about life and culture in Bangladesh.
138. Another very good lesson used a filmstrip and an Ordnance Survey extract of Snowdonia to give Year 11 pupils not only practice in map skills and the chance to draw an annotated sketch map. They were encouraged to develop their ability to identify features of upland glaciation in a real context and to relate their location to the movement of ice from cwms along valleys, to see where the glacial advance came to

a halt and how the landscape has subsequently been modified. The lesson had a very positive effect on learning because pupils were made to think for themselves. Well challenged and well supported, they worked independently and made good progress. Teaching, although never unsatisfactory, was less successful where it relied heavily on the textbook so that, especially for higher attainers, challenge was compromised and the concentration of pupils less well sustained.

139. The department is ably led by an enthusiastic and committed teacher and works energetically as a team. The quality of teaching is formally monitored and development planning increasingly recognises key areas that will raise standards. Considerable progress has been made since the previous inspection on the use of levelling and tracking in setting and reviewing targets and in moderating the standards being achieved between groups in Years 7 - 9 and these are areas to be further addressed in forthcoming non-contact days. Although ICT is increasingly used to enhance teaching, some members of the department continue to lack confidence in the new technology. GCSE coursework, in particular, only involves word processing and spreadsheets where individual pupils have the necessary expertise and inclination. Lesson objectives are much clearer and are now shared with pupils at the outset of lessons. The department is well resourced. Despite the large size of year groups, fieldwork features throughout and is a strength of the department. The school campus is well used for this purpose in Years 7 - 9 and generates project work of a high standard.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Standards in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form exceed the national averages.
- Pupils can achieve the highest grades in the GCSE examination.
- Good leadership and management.
- Good teaching and good relationships make for good lessons, which appeal to the imagination of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The provision of ICT supported lessons is underdeveloped.
- Aspects of the written schemes of work are underdeveloped.

140. In 2001 GCSE results for grades A* - C which were above the national average and an improvement on the last two years, and results for grades A* - G were in line with the national average. The percentage of A and A* grades was well above the national average, with girls performing particularly well and boys being in line with the average. In 2001 the results of teacher assessments for pupils in Year 9 show their attainment to be in line with national expectations. When considered in the light of their previous attainment on entry, this represents satisfactory attainment.
141. Throughout the school gifted and talented pupils and pupils with special educational needs attain standards appropriate to their ages and abilities and make clear progress with the help of modified materials, support in class and a style of teaching which fosters imaginative work in history.
142. Pupils in Years 7 - 9 are well behaved and interested in history because of the good teaching they receive and their overall achievement is satisfactory. They make good progress in source evaluation and good progress in the imaginative reconstruction of

life in the trenches of the First World War or in the armies of the Civil War. Roleplay is a strength of the teaching and learning situation.

143. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 demonstrate good achievement, particularly in terms of source evaluation and developing examination techniques. They produce impressive folders for coursework on a local history topic and they develop a good knowledge and understanding of medicine over several centuries. Source evaluation is a strength of the departments work.
144. The department has a good policy for improving the literacy skills and vocabulary acquisition of all pupils in each key stage. This includes an impressive emphasis on providing lists of historical fiction. Mechanisms for fostering numeracy are less effective and the provision for information and communication technology is relatively weak.
145. All teaching was good and some was very good. It was characterised by the good pupil teacher relationships, good subject knowledge, brisk pace, and good questioning techniques. A variety of teaching styles and resources were used, staff used their own individual talents and interests to produce effective and interesting lessons. An example of this is a very good lesson with Year 8 pupils in which a very enthusiastic teacher conducted a lesson which caught the imagination of the pupils by using not only role-play, overhead projectors and videos, with graphic detail of Civil War tactics but also an outside re-enactment of the battle of Edgehill, to the enjoyment of all. Similar motivation was evident in a lesson with Year 9 where the use of gruesome graphic detail of the horrors of trench warfare made the knowledge and understanding more vivid and more memorable. This appeal to the imagination and to empathy is one of the reasons that history is liked by the pupils and why pupils with special educational needs achieve well in it.
146. The best teaching in Years 10 and 11 was concerned with developing good examination techniques and an increased ability to handle source evaluation. The pupils were carefully guided towards a greater independence which can be seen in the production of impressive coursework on the topic of Saltaire.
147. All lessons took place in rooms which, though adjacent, were not in themselves attractive enough to be conducive to a good learning atmosphere without the good displays on the walls.
148. The good and improving standards, the good and very good teaching, the good relationships and the effective use of less than impressive accommodation are the result of good leadership and management. The head of department has the personal qualities to enthuse and to foster very good relationships as well as the industry to revise all the schemes of work and departmental policies. There is more to be done in terms of written policies on some aspects of the work but the two areas which need some improvement in the near future are concerned with linking the schemes of work more closely with National Curriculum key elements and levels, and the building into them of precise contributions from and to information and communication technology.
149. There have been some good improvements since the last inspection. Standards which were in line with national averages in all three key stages are now above them in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The good teaching is, if anything, better now. Teaching is now concentrated into fewer and more specialist hands. The leadership and management is still good. The two weaknesses of accommodation and

information and communication technology remain but it is recognised that the completion of the new buildings will give the opportunity to remedy these also.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **poor**.

Strengths

- The recent appointment of a new head of department has brought about improvement in departmental vision and capacity to improve teaching and learning.
- Teachers in all departments are now able to use ICT in their subjects.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of pupils at all ages are below national expectation.
- Use of ICT across the curriculum in Years 9 and 11 does not develop pupils' ICT capability.
- There is weak progression throughout Years 7 to 11 as a result of lack of continuity in the course provision.
- The extent to which ICT is being taught and assessed has not been monitored.
- Assessment is insufficient and inaccurate in that the extent to which pupils can work independently is not taken into consideration.
- Assessment of pupils' work is not analysed to help teachers to plan their lessons or to improve the course.

150. Standards in Year 9 and Year 11 are below national expectation. Pupils in these year groups have access to ICT only when they use it in other subjects, almost all of which is wordprocessing at lower levels than is expected of both year groups. The assessments at the end of Year 9 are based on attainment in ICT lessons during Year 8, and are higher than the standard of work seen during the inspection. The department does not print pupils' work and so all of the evidence comes from work seen in lessons or on the network.

151. Work found on the network shows that a few of the most able pupils in Year 11 are working at high standards in their application of spreadsheets and multimedia to their subjects. This is not a general picture as they are not all being given the same experience. Knowledge, skills and understanding of the principles behind use of ICT are not being thoroughly taught to all. The folders of the majority show only a small amount of word-processed documents, mainly in English and in the modern foreign language that they are studying. The majority of pupils have used spreadsheets to perform simple calculations, but with a great deal of guidance. They do not show evidence of being able to use them independently to design solutions to problems. In addition, they can, again with guidance, use data logging equipment in science to measure physical variables, and can comment on the resulting graphs. Pupils seen in Year 10 are designing web pages using Word, with some attention to good design, but their work is highly directed so that the standards of thinking are lower than that of which the majority are capable.

152. The ICT standards of most pupils on entry to the school are well below national expectation, because of their low level of experience in most of the feeder junior schools. Teachers therefore train pupils in basic procedures but do not have enough lesson time to give appropriate opportunities to use their independent judgement. Standards therefore remain at lower than expected levels in ICT lessons throughout Years 7 and 8. Pupils need close guidance to produce high quality word-processed

or desktop published documents. In similar circumstances they can produce multimedia pages using a range of effects. They do not show real understanding by applying the principles at the same standard to the work they do in other subjects. Pupils seen who speak English as an additional language and those with statements of special educational need have very little support from classroom assistants in ICT lessons and so even with considerable individual help from teachers, they work slowly and without showing evidence that they understand the basic principles. Girls throughout Years 7 - 10 work more steadily than boys, with greater care, and so produce work of a higher standard. Achievement in ICT by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is therefore below that of the same pupils in their other subjects. There are, however, some very keen boys who are working both in and out of school at high standards, for example the boys designing the school web site with some teacher assistance.

153. Teaching was always at least satisfactory, leading to satisfactory learning of procedures used in communication and data handling during lessons. Teachers have good relationships with pupils throughout the school. They plan their lessons to meet their objectives, using teaching methods that are well adapted to the problems of teaching in computer rooms. Their demonstrations are clear so that pupils can follow them easily, but they do not engage the pupils fully in working out what they should do and why they should be doing so. They have a good balance of demonstration and practical work that maintains pupils' interest. They give good support to individual pupils during practical sessions. The low level of attainment is the result of having too little time for ICT rather than the pupils' experience during lessons, although teachers do not demand a high level of involvement from pupils during demonstrations. Instead of challenging them by asking them to suggest solutions to the issues involved in the demonstrations teachers mainly ask them merely to recall facts. There is almost no homework in ICT.
154. Teachers do not assess standards in ICT accurately. Assessments are based on tasks experienced under close guidance, and do not reflect the capacity of pupils to make independent decisions. The department has no records of prior experience or attainment on entry to the school, so cannot plan to move the pupils on from their starting point. The pupils' work is commented on orally but not printed out or marked. Teachers of English, mathematics and science who have time in computer rooms with Years 9 and 11 do not assess standards in the ICT for those who have no other ICT experience. Staff therefore do not record standards or use assessment to plan for work in the future, and the school has no accurate knowledge of the standards attained in ICT.
155. The department teach to meet the needs of middle ability pupils, not planning to meet the needs of the lowest attainers, nor do they give enough challenge to the most capable. The rate at which each of these groups learns is therefore too slow. The small amount of teaching time in each week makes it difficult for teachers to cover the necessary basic procedures and then to allow pupils to work at nationally expected levels of independence. Pupils co-operate well on the whole. The least able pupils are not confident in their use of ICT, but other more capable pupils often help them when they cannot gain the attention of the teacher. The most able pupils complete the work quickly but do not feel that they are gaining in knowledge or skills. They feel that their work on their own is of more value. Some have used ICT at high levels in a range of circumstances at home, but are working in class well below the levels of which they are capable.

156. The curriculum is still unsatisfactory, although it now meets statutory requirements. The new head of ICT has a clear view of what needs to be done. He has re-planned the ICT curriculum in an attempt to improve standards, but is prevented by the existing low allocation of time from meeting the full National Curriculum requirements in sufficient depth. Some of the coverage, for example in control technology, is very thin. There is no compliance with the school's stated policy of teaching ICT in English, mathematics and science during Years 9 and 11. Time allocation, even in years when pupils study ICT, is not enough to allow pupils to apply their learning in different contexts, and so they forget what they have learned. This lowers the level at which they work in all year groups. In Year 10 there is only one hour of ICT each week for half of the year, and there is none in Year 11. Use of ICT across the curriculum has improved since the last inspection, but still is not enough for subjects to meet their obligation to use ICT. The science and design and technology departments provide some work in data logging and control technology, but English and mathematics, who have time in ICT rooms in Years 9 and 11, contribute very little extra to pupils' experience of ICT. Spreadsheets are underused in mathematics. The physical education department, however, make very good use of ICT, especially in assisting their monitoring of pupils' performance.
157. The department has insufficient support in their wish to meet the requirements for ICT. In many ways the potential for improvement is already present. The new head of department has good experience of the successful provision of ICT and is already making positive moves such as mapping provision across the curriculum. Almost all staff have now undergone some training in the use of ICT in their subjects, so there has been a good improvement in teachers' ICT capability. Subjects across the curriculum are now more ready than at the last inspection to meet their statutory obligation to use ICT. There has been a good improvement in the number of computers and computer rooms, to the extent that the ratio of computers to pupils almost meets the national average. The departments responsible for ICT in Years 9 and 11, however, are not clear about their obligation to teach ICT, and some of their staff are not even taking up their bookings in ICT rooms. Most other departments have not yet responded to the new head of department's request to record the pupils' present experience in their subjects. Other than in English, mathematics, science and business studies they are constrained by lack of ICT facilities. The school therefore does not provide continuity of experience or equality of access to ICT for all pupils.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the provision for modern foreign languages is **good**.

Strengths

- The good teaching and versatility of staff.
- The very good curriculum choice.
- The emphasis on the use of ICT.
- The excellent extra-curricular provision.

Areas for improvement

- To redress the slight imbalance in numbers of girls and boys in some classes.
- To increase numbers taking two modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11.
- To persuade more students to opt for languages in the sixth form.

158. In the main school, average standards almost exactly match national norms. These averages, however, conceal considerable variations in attainment among groups of pupils. Pupils in Year 7 are taught French or German in mixed-ability groups until Christmas, after which they are placed in four or five sets per language. From this point onwards standards begin to diverge substantially. Higher-attaining pupils by the end of Year 9 have a sound grasp of basic grammar, which teachers are not afraid to come to grips with, and can understand relevant speech in the foreign language, ask questions and produce simple answers, read appropriate texts and write with increasing accuracy. From Year 8 all pupils take up a second language: French, German, Russian or Urdu. Pupils who choose Russian as their second language in Year 8 rapidly master the Cyrillic alphabet and produce neat and accurate work. Urdu is taught to pupils whose home language it is. For many of these the need, which the school meets well, is to progress from mothertongue oral fluency to an ability to read and write. Standards in the second language taken are level with those in the first language by the end of Year 9 and standards in top sets at this stage point towards higher grades at GCSE. Standards in all languages for lower-attaining groups in Year 9 are limited.
159. The same wide variation in standards is seen in Years 10 and 11, with top sets in all languages attaining well and likely to obtain very high grades in the GCSE exams. Such pupils speak well, listen accurately to native speech at natural speed, read well for gist and detail and are capable of extended writing on a range of basic topics. Some lower-attaining pupils, while they have a grasp of basic grammar, find it difficult to apply this in practice. Results in GCSE exams have varied over the years and from year to year in the individual languages. In general results have matched those in the school at large. Although almost all pupils have continued the study of two languages up to the end of Year 9, numbers electing to continue both into Years 10 and 11, though rising slowly, remain disappointing.
160. Standards of teaching are high. The staff are all competent and confident in the languages they teach, and use the target language to an appropriate extent in the classroom. A high degree of versatility within the department allows many colleagues to turn their hand to two or even three languages. The presence of French and German foreign language assistants is an added strength and this support is well used. Teachers are universally well prepared and tie their work in sensibly to course materials. Tape recorders and audio-visual aids are used appropriately. No sub-standard teaching was seen and the majority of lessons seen were judged to be good or better in this respect.
161. The high standards of teaching and learning can be demonstrated by a Year 8 Russian lesson, although similar examples could be drawn from elsewhere. In a short space of time these pupils had mastered substantial vocabulary and were writing in the Cyrillic script in an exemplary fashion. The teacher held the attention of the class with a mixture of old-fashioned discipline and good humour. Pupils responded well and demonstrated skill at repeating the vocabulary they had learned. The teacher was not afraid to talk about the complexities of Russian grammar, and pupils were beginning to understand the notions of cases and inflexions. By the end of the lesson pupils were able to undertake a listening test of some complexity.
162. Attitudes and behaviour are generally good throughout the school. There are good relationships within classes and pupils show respect for their teachers, as well as liking. No inclusion issues were identified and slow pupils, within lower academic sets, are well taught. Pupils arrive at lessons on time, equipped and ready to work. Higher-attaining groups are very well disposed towards languages and, when this

good attitude is fired by good teaching, notable learning takes place. Some lower-attaining groups, from Year 7 to Year 11, are less well motivated and make heavy demands on their teachers. Generally, staff meet these challenges with skill and good humour, although the 60-minute lesson, long for modern foreign languages, is hard work for pupils and teachers alike.

163. The school organises an extremely good programme of visits to target-language countries, including an exchange with a school in Russia. A Russian language choir makes a further contribution, and Latin is taught in twilight hours to an enthusiastic group of Year 7 pupils. This is a large department, with a new, young head of department, who is capable of teaching all three offered European languages. There is a good collegial feel to the department and colleagues, in turn, express appreciation of the support given by the headteacher. The last inspection was complimentary to the department and only minor weaknesses were then identified. Since that time the department has continued to thrive. On all issues covered last time, standards remain at least satisfactory, and are often good.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The excellent leadership and management of the subject .
- The very good teaching; teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic musicians .
- The department offers a very good range of musical opportunities which enhance pupils personal development.
- The high numbers of pupils studying music in years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- The lack of sufficient ICT equipment for individual study in the upper school.
- The lack of opportunities for pupils to experience music from non-western cultures within lessons.
- The low level of funding for the subject.

164. Teacher assessments for 2001 show that, by the end of Year 9, the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with national expectations. In GCSE examinations for 2001 and 2000 the proportion of pupils achieving the higher A* - C grades was above average. AS and A level students continue to show good levels of achievement even though the course is substantially different from the GCSE course. Results are consistently above average. The average point scores are higher than the national figures.
165. The observation of lessons and of other work during the inspection confirmed that standards are average in Year 9 and above average at GCSE. There are no significant variations in the standards attained by boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic groups. The music department has a good record of examination results, which have been above the national average for the last three years.
166. Pupils in Year 9 work co-operatively in small groups combining musical elements appropriately to compose descriptive music using electronic keyboards. They have a good vocabulary of technical musical language which allows them to accurately appraise the music they hear. In one lesson two girls created a piece of music portraying a creature from a distant world. They skilfully incorporated complex musical devices such as ostinato, octave imitation and minor chords. Using

appropriate musical terminology they carefully explained the structure of their piece. Lower ability pupils can create simple melodic lines and notate them graphically. They cannot always maintain their own part accurately within group performances. There is only limited access to computer equipment for pupils in Years 7 - 9 and this prevents them from manipulating and developing their own compositions. There is not enough music from non-western cultures, including those represented within the school, in planning and practice. There is also a shortage of multicultural classroom instruments.

167. There is a wide variation in pupils' previous musical knowledge when they enter the school. However, the majority have below average musical ability. By the age of 14 they have achieved well because the scheme of work they are presented with is varied and well planned. Contributions to literacy skills are improving and attention is given to the use of key words and musical vocabulary in every lesson. However, numeracy skills are less well developed. Attainment in instrumental lessons is generally good. In one clarinet lesson it was very good, with both pupils making significant progress.
168. In Year 11, attainment is above the national average. The subject is increasing in popularity with the number of pupils currently studying music at GCSE being well above the national average. GCSE students are supportive of each other and work productively at a very good pace. They are good independent learners. Higher ability pupils are very good instrumentalists. They understand the key components of melody and harmony and how to apply them to their compositions. They can follow traditional notation and understand how to notate their own music. Musically talented pupils are targeted for additional support with their performance skills through funding from the Gifted and Talented strand of Excellence in Cities. As a result, some Year 11 pupils are reaching very high standards in performing and composing. Pupils compose well-structured and coherent pieces. One Year 11 boy created an extended piece for string quartet featuring syncopated melodic lines, imitation, modulation, and metre changes. He refined the piece further by manipulating it with music computer software before printing out the finished score. Less musical pupils can create imaginative compositions but lack the more detailed musical knowledge to develop and refine their ideas. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the well-differentiated activities and good quality support they receive from the learning support assistants, as was seen in one Year 11 lesson.
169. The level of musical ability within the sixth form is above average. Students are encouraged to utilise their vocal skills within the classroom and this results in high levels of performance and a deeper musical understanding of their work. In one Year 13 lesson the whole class sang 'Knights in Shining Armour' by Williamson in two parts to show the contrast in text and melodic structure. Year 12 students can successfully identify musical devices such as suspensions, cadences, sequences, imitation, and 'hemiola' (a complex rhythmic device). Compositions are generally of a very high standard and incorporate sophisticated musical devices. Students can follow musical scores, for example when studying the structure of 'Peter Grimes' by Britten. Because of the very high quality teaching they receive Year 12 and 13 students are confident with all aspects of the examination syllabus. They are enthusiastic and highly motivated about the music they study and perform. There are several students who perform to a very high standard on their chosen instruments, as was demonstrated by one boy accompanying the school choir expertly on the piano. They make a very positive contribution to the musical groups in the school. Several Year 12 students give up their free time to direct Year 9 pupils in preparation for

forthcoming festivals. They also visit partner primary schools to give concerts and support with science projects dealing with sound and vibration.

170. Pupils learn well because the teaching is good overall. It is frequently very good. Teachers are very enthusiastic skilled musicians and have excellent knowledge of their subject, which they effectively pass on to their pupils. Planning is very good and learning outcomes are clear and appropriate, ensuring that the full range of abilities are catered for. Speaking and listening skills are taught well and lessons are always highly musical. Where teaching is very good there are a well-planned variety of activities delivered at a good pace, which ensures that pupils are challenged and make progress. Lessons start with sharing the learning objectives and end with a plenary to reinforce learning. In a Year 11 lesson some good questioning helped students to consolidate previous work and to deepen their understanding of the structure of their compositions. Classroom performances are regularly recorded to provide evidence of progress in performing and composing. Occasionally practical tasks are overlong and result in pupils becoming restless as the pace of the lesson drops.
171. The leadership and management of music is excellent. The department is very well organised which results in music provision being effective for all its pupils. The inspirational leadership and clear vision of the head of department, who is an advanced skills teacher, ensures that the music department has a very positive effect on the ethos of the school. The assessment procedures are very good and ensure that pupils make good progress through regular monitoring and target setting. The staff work well together and have a shared vision for the future of the department. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored within the department but the quality of the provision from the visiting instrumental teachers is not formally monitored. There is not enough funding for the department to purchase the necessary equipment to address some areas requiring improvement.
172. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Instrumental teaching from the Leeds Music Service continues to provide good value for money. The quality of singing has improved as a result of a successful project with the British Federation of Youth Choirs. Marking procedures are now regularly monitored to ensure consistency throughout the department. There is a satisfactory range of music textbooks within the department but the school library is underused as a resource for learning because there are not enough up-to-date musical books and CD-ROMs to enhance pupils' independent study. The shortage of suitable ICT resources, particularly for the large number of Year 11 pupils, remains a frustration.
173. The contribution music makes to the life of all pupils is very good. Large numbers of pupils choose to be involved in the wide menu of high quality musical extra-curricular activities. These activities enhance the personal development of pupils throughout the school. In a lunchtime rehearsal, the 'stairwell choir' made up of pupils from Year 7 to Year 13, gave a spirited performance in four-part harmony of 'Bohemian Rhapsody' by Freddie Mercury. The quality of the singing and the expert choral training by the teacher ensured that very good progress was made. There are many musical activities throughout the year including annual musicals, Christmas concerts and a Year 9 Music Festival. The music department recognises that the disciplines, challenges and rewards involved in music can bring extraordinary achievements to pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching, especially the range of styles and strategies used.
- Pupils' and students' attitudes to physical education.
- Assessment strategies, especially the quality of the immediate feedback pupils and students receive and the link to the learning objectives first identified at the planning level.
- The quality of the development planning to ensure increased progress, attainment and learning takes place.
- Monitoring and review systems for development plans, curriculum provision and teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Increase time allocation in Years 10 and 11 for all pupils.
- Ensure that GCSE is introduced as planned for 2003
- Review the grouping of pupils and students to raise standards further
- Make better use of assessment level data to track pupils' and students' progress from year to year and key stage to key stage

174. Attainment in years 7 to 11 is in line with national expectations. Pupils enter the school from a large number of feeder primary schools with a variety of experiences and with differing degrees of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. Attainment on entry is judged by the school as being slightly below the national expectation in some areas of physical education and in line in other areas. The school quickly builds on pupils' previous experiences giving good opportunities for them to acquire new skills and consolidate those they already know. Standards for boys in Year 9 are highest with pupils achieving above expectations in games activities. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving standards in line with expectations due to the programme of teaching and learning they receive.

175. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are in line with expectations and by the end of Year 9 the percentage of pupils achieving National Curriculum Level 5 is slightly higher than the national figure. In Year 7 dance, boys and girls show good body management and control. They know what a motif is and how to build these into their dances. Their work shows increasing quality in performance. They are able to select ideas from a wide range of movements already known. In Year 7 netball, girls are achieving standards that would be expected for their year group. Their throwing, catching and footwork skills are at least satisfactory and often good. However, dodging into a space, creating space and holding a space all need to be improved. In Year 8 rugby, boys demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the principles of attack and defence when playing their modified indoor game. Their handling skills are satisfactory. By Year 9 pupils in dance are able to select a range of ideas from previous work to create a group composition. They know and understand the language associated with dance. Standards in dance at this level need to be improved by teaching performing skills and providing guidelines to pupils on what quality work looks like. Girls in Year 9 have just started learning football; they can already demonstrate satisfactory dribbling, stopping and passing skills. They use their knowledge and understanding of the principles of other invasion games that they have played to good effect in the small games of football that they play. In Year 9 indoor hockey, boys show a greater knowledge and understanding of the principles of invasion games; they are able to demonstrate good attacking and defensive play, good stick-work skills and knowledge and understanding of the rules of the game.

They are successful in transferring the skills and concepts learned in the skills section of the lesson to the game they play later.

176. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are also broadly in line with the national expectation, although this is judged on only two lessons seen during the inspection week. In Year 10 basketball, girls show good ball-handling skills and satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the principles of invasion games. They practise hard to improve known skills further and show an excellent commitment to the work set for them. In Year 11 squash, boys and girls show satisfactory standards of play for the stage of their learning. They are all able to keep the game going, can score and know the format of the game. Their racquet skills are satisfactory. Footwork and movement around the court is also satisfactory for the amount of time spent on the activity so far. A small group of students are already showing better levels of tactical awareness and also have the skills to be able to use it effectively in the games they play.
177. In all lessons pupils get the opportunity to evaluate their own and others' work; they are able to observe accurately and make judgements about the quality of work and suggest how it might be improved. The high level of good or very good teaching brings about these standards. Planning at all levels and for all groups of pupils is very good. Learning objectives are always clearly explained at the beginning of lessons and linked to previous work, leading to pupils knowing what is expected of them over time. Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subject. They accurately observe what pupils do and give high quality feedback to help them to improve. Health and safety matters are well taught and strictly adhered to. Teachers know their pupils well and their achievements both in school and beyond. Relationships are very good and teachers are able to set high expectations which pupils respond to and respect.
178. The vast majority of pupils are very well behaved; they work well together, are co-operative and helpful and show empathy for one another's achievements and efforts. They answer questions confidently and cope well when left to work independently. Participation rates are high; pupils like physical education.
179. The head of department and the second in the department manage and lead the department at all levels very well. They complement one another's abilities and qualities and share a strong vision for where they expect the subject to be in the future. Department development planning, reviewing and monitoring is very good. Day-to-day management is very good. The curriculum in Years 7 - 9 is broad and balanced and fulfils statutory requirements. The Years 10 and 11 curriculum offers a range of activities, with Year 11 pupils opting for activities both on and off the school site. This link to the local leisure facilities is a good way of introducing students to activities beyond school. The time allocation in Years 10 and 11 is low, only one hour per week, though the school does plan to introduce the Junior Sports Leader Award and GCSE physical education in the future to enhance opportunity and provision. The opportunities for all pupils and students to take part in extended and extra-curricular activities are good. The links with outside agencies and clubs are very good and provide a route for pupils and students to extend their physical education and sport.
180. Strategies for assessing the effect of the curriculum and teaching on pupils' learning and progress are very good. More use now needs to be made of the information recorded about pupils' and students' attainment. Teachers do not analyse end of year and end of key stage levels to determine what needs to be done to improve individuals' and particular groups' attainment. Good use is made of new technologies to record work in lessons. Use of the Digicam by teachers and pupils and students is good.

181. The progress that this department has made since the last inspection has been exceptional. The department has tackled every issue with great determination to improve; monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and are effective, sources of evidence have been built up to back up all their key issues. The documentation in the department is now of a high quality.
182. With the impending move into their purpose-built sports facility in the new school in 2003 it is a very exciting time for them; development plans are already indicating the review of the curriculum and the introduction of GCSE physical education. The subject is very well placed to continue its improvement and to raise its profile even further in the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in Religious Education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Courses are well planned and now include the valuable addition of sixth form day conferences.
- Good progress is being made on assessment procedures in Years 7 - 9.
- All pupils have the opportunity to gain a qualification in the subject at GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- Provide more challenging tasks for higher-attaining pupils in mixed-ability classes.
- Improve the pace and variety of learning activities in lessons.
- Develop further the use of ICT to support pupils' learning.
- Improve the achievement of boys in Years 10 and 11.

183. Standards in religious education are average by national comparison at ages 14 and 16. The current Year 11 pupils will be the first cohort to be entered for the GCSE short course examination in RE, and the results of their mock examinations showed average attainment at this stage in the course.
184. At age 14 pupils' standards are average overall, which represents satisfactory achievement over the key stage. Pupils have gained an adequate knowledge and understanding of some of the main beliefs and practices of five major faiths represented in Britain. Year 9 pupils show good understanding of how different religions mark important stages in the journey of life. In a test on death rites most pupils knew the facts about different rituals and the majority were able to give reasons for what they believe about life after death. Pupils can identify some similarities and differences between faiths, helped by the thematic approach to learning, but higher attaining pupils are not asked to make sufficiently searching comparisons.
185. Pupils' writing in the subject reaches satisfactory standards by age 14, as pupils express their views on religious beliefs and practices, but there are not enough opportunities to express their ideas at length in a range of styles. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 respond well to exercises requiring them to produce modern versions of Bible narratives and stories based on the teaching of other faiths. Similarly, an opening assignment on rites of passage in Year 9 gave pupils the opportunity to write about important events in their own lives. Much of the work in some classes is based on comprehension exercises, which limits the scope for reflective and creative writing.

Projects such as the Year 8 investigation of faith in action and the current Year 9 project on the importance of Jerusalem for three religions are equipping pupils with the ability to select and organise relevant material from books and the Internet. They have a clear focus and give pupils sufficient guidance to aid their enquiry.

186. In work seen, standards on the GCSE short course are average overall in Year 11 and pupils are making satisfactory progress. The teachers' structured organisation of the course and provision of appropriate revision booklets has helped motivated pupils to reach the required standard in the recent mock examinations. Pupils have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of moral issues and relevant religious teaching from Christianity and Islam. In a lesson on sources of morality, able pupils were able to explain the influence of Christianity on society's laws and make the distinction between absolute and relative moral positions over issues such as abortion. Lower-attaining pupils are also learning through discussion to understand the rights and wrongs of moral choices. They find the philosophical section of the course on arguments for and against the existence of God more difficult to understand. Pupils' progress in examination technique is unsatisfactory, as practice questions are left until revision time, rather than being an integral part of the course, developed through homework.
187. Attitudes towards the subject are fairly positive in Years 7 - 9, with most pupils finding the subject interesting and relevant to their lives. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory, pupils working well together and showing respect for other faiths. In some classes there is a small number of pupils who lack the self-discipline to cope with activities that require some initiative, and stray off task. Two thirds of pupils on the GCSE course in Year 11 have shown sufficient commitment to be entered for the examination, which is creditable, since this year group did not study the subject in Year 9 and continuity of learning is a problem for them this year. There is some underachievement among boys, more of whom have failed to meet the department's minimum requirements for examination entry. Sixth form students appreciate the one day conferences and have made constructive criticisms about how they could be improved.
188. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good command of their subject and put it across to pupils in a clear and interesting manner. They manage their pupils well and organise their learning efficiently. In some lessons the pace slows, which means that planned learning is not completed and there is not enough variety of pupil activity. More active participation is needed to engage pupils fully in their learning and carefully structured to keep pupils on task and teach them the skills of independent learning. A successful Year 9 project lesson on pilgrimage to Jerusalem struck the right balance between giving pupils some responsibility for their learning and mapping out what they had to accomplish in the available time. Opportunities for using ICT in the subject have been identified but development of its use is still at an early stage, not helped by limited access to the computer rooms.
189. There is a tendency to teach to the middle in the mixed-ability classes, giving extra help to lower-attaining pupils but not enough challenging work for more capable pupils. More prior planning with learning support assistants is needed to further improve the provision for pupils with learning difficulties. There is good practice in testing and reviewing learning at the end of modules, setting pupils targets for improvement. Homework is used effectively in Years 7 - 9 but its absence in Years 10 and 11 restricts the opportunity for essay work in the subject. Revision lessons and materials compensate to some extent, preparing pupils for the knowledge and techniques needed in examinations.

190. Good leadership and management, plus commitment on the part of the teachers, are having a salutary effect on standards. There is a clear vision for the development of the subject and efficient documentation of policies and schemes of work for all courses, ensuring a good balance between Christianity and the other faiths represented in this multicultural school. Good links have been established with faith communities and visitors enrich the curriculum, particularly in Year 8. The school has responded to the previous report and increased the time for the subject, so that it is now taught in all years and to examination standard. However, time allocation in Year 11 is only half what is recommended and its organisation in half-year blocks adversely affects the continuity of pupils' learning. Sixth form students are now receiving their entitlement to religious education through a series of well-planned conferences. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, putting the subject on a similar footing to other humanities subjects.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, nine subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	26	100	89	58	44	7.15	5.8
Biology	26	96	88	73	51	7.5	5.25
Computer Studies	13	62	86	8	39	2.9	4.6
Sport studies	11	100	90	18	22	5.27	5.09
Psychology	14	95	/	46	44	/	/
Law	17	93	/	43	41	/	/
English Literature	29	100	90	45	40	6.2	5.8
French	4	100	88	75	41	9	5.59
Sociology	14	86	89	28	41	5.14	5.32

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics

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

The inspection covered AS, and A level mathematics courses, together with the Key Skill Application of Number.

Strengths

- The students are well motivated and achieve well because teaching is good and expectations are high.
- Standards are well above the national average.
- Students achieve well, benefiting in particular from teachers' very good subject knowledge.

Areas for improvement

- Increased opportunities for using information and communication technology to support mathematics.
- Procedures to monitor the progress of different groups of students and the effective use of this information.

191. The GCE A level results in 2001 were well above the national average, both in terms of the mean points score and the proportion of students gaining the higher grades, A and B. Females' level of attainment was greater than males' and was in fact far above expected standards. Standards in 2000 were also well above the national average, but with males achieving a higher standard than females. Standards have always been at least average over the last four years. The difference in attainment between males and females does not follow a trend and varies in 'direction' year by year. There are no significant differences in either attainment or progress between students of different ethnic groups.
192. Students completed the first AS examinations in 2001. Unfortunately, module results were not aggregated, as is the school's prerogative, so comparison with national figures is not possible. Nevertheless, examination of workbooks for this group and the raw module scores suggest standards of attainment at least above average. In 2001 a group of 25 students retook GCSE mathematics. Of these 24 per cent gained an A* - C grade and 92 per cent an A* - G grade.
193. All sixth form students are offered the chance of taking the Key Skills course *Application of Number* and this is satisfactory but it is not fully intergrated into students other post 16 courses. Assessment is by the submission of a portfolio, some of which comprises work from students' other courses. In addition, there is, in some cases, an examination. Most students are expected to attain Level 2 or Level 3. Teachers make every effort to motivate students and students take the course seriously, but they feel that it is of limited value as few universities recognise it as having admission offer points value.
194. Statistical analysis of A level results in conjunction with their GCSE results two years previously show that students make good progress during the sixth form. There is no objective analysis of the performance of minority ethnic group results, but lesson observation and scrutiny of work suggests that these students attain as well as their peers. Further mathematics results are above the national average, although this small entry group needs treating with some caution. However, virtually all students attain significantly higher results than would be expected from their prior GCSE performance.
195. Students make good progress throughout the sixth form. Students' achievement as seen in their work, in discussion and in lessons is above expectations and reflects well above average attainment as measured at GCE A level. Progress in acquiring new knowledge, understanding and skills is good because teaching is effective and all students have good attitudes both to learning and to the subject. Lower-attaining AS students sometimes initially encounter difficulties with calculus, mainly because of relatively simple algebraic slips. Students are confident enough to politely interrupt a lesson should they not understand a particular aspect of the lesson. Most students find the pure mathematics more demanding than the probability. Teachers recognise this and provide extra support with the algebra involved.
196. In Year 13 higher-attaining further mathematics students are able, by 'guided discovery', to find an expression for the numerical solution of simple differential equations. Lower-attaining students in Year 13 successfully apply their knowledge of calculus to integrate complex algebraic expressions with few errors – showing good achievement in their algebraic skills.

197. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are very well prepared, and subject knowledge is very good. It is well used to encourage students to overcome difficulties and to avoid basic errors. Marking is diligent and helpful. Full solutions are given and sometimes the work is annotated with helpful comments. Homework is set and marked regularly. Knowledge and understanding of curricular and examination requirements are very good. Students' progress is monitored by regular assessment.
198. There is a very good level of individual support in addition to the timetabled lessons. However, although there is use of graphical calculators, the use of ICT to support learning in mathematics is not fully developed; for example, modern graphing software would give students a fruitful perspective on functions and on calculus. The use of presentation software by both students and teachers would also have a positive effect on students' learning experiences.
199. Mathematics is one of the most popular sixth form subjects. Very few students fail to complete courses. Students know beforehand what to expect from the course and fully realise the challenges it may provide; the majority enjoy the subject and its challenge. The new management of the department is satisfactory and should have a greater impact with the passage of time. The team works well together and planning is very good, which is essential as some modules are dependent on others so the sequencing of some pieces of content is crucial. High standards are promoted and the department is committed to raising standards. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Resources are satisfactory, but suffered in 2001 from problems as a result of some texts not being available from the publishers on schedule.

Science

Students' attainment post-16 has been well above average over the past few years. The only exception to this is the A-level physics results for 2001 which were below the national average. In science the focus was on biology.

Overall, the quality of provision is **very good**.

Strengths

- The results are well above average when compared with national results and are at a higher level than could be expected given students prior attainment.
- Present students have a good grasp of concepts, apply them well in answering questions and are making good progress.
- Teaching is good with some very strong features.
- Students share ideas and show very good levels of concentration.
- The subject is well led and has an adequate range of resources.

Areas for improvement

- Greater use of ICT and practical tasks by students.
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment to ensure that students know what they have to do to improve.

200. The GCE A level examination results are above the national average. Nearly all the students who took the exam in 2001 gained a pass grade but the proportion gaining the highest grades A and B was well above average. The results show that female students did better than male students. This is mainly because female students started their course having gained slightly higher levels at GCSE. The results for AS

level show a similar pattern to that of A level. Very few students did not complete the course.

201. The standards of work of current students are above average. In year 13, students are achieving well in relation to the predictions based on their GCSE results. In lessons seen they are making good progress and this is due to the good teaching they receive. Lessons are carefully planned, use resources well and run smoothly. In one lesson on reflexes students were able to apply previous knowledge of the function of the sheathing to work out the relative speed of nerve impulses. Most students recall knowledge well and apply it, but their written work does not always show the same confidence as their verbal replies to questions.
202. Students in Year 12 are also making good progress and are achieving well. They show a good understanding of replication and transcription in protein synthesis and can give a range of causes for mutations. Students present their work well and are always willing to answer teachers' questions. Work in students' files shows that comparatively little use is made of ICT.
203. Teaching is good overall, and students learn well as a result. The principal features of the teaching are clear objectives, good use of and well-prepared resources, good challenges for students of levels of attainment and good questioning strategies. This was seen in a lesson that focused on lifestyle and its effects on health. The students were led by carefully planned questions to build up a good understanding of the links between diet, high blood pressure and the physical condition of the arteries so that a full appreciation of the dangers was gained. The teacher's skilful preparation of resources enabled the students to think scientifically and join previously learned concepts to form logical conclusions.
204. Much of the written work demanded of the students takes the form of structured notes that effectively follows up the work in lessons. Marking is always done and verbal feedback on performance is given to students. This, however, is not reinforced by written comments that show students how they can improve their work.
205. Students learn well. They are very attentive, work very productively and respond well to the teaching they receive. Behaviour in lessons is always excellent and students listen to each other very well. Year 13 students working on motor and sensory neurones showed great interest in what they were doing, discussing ideas in a very mature way, which led to significant learning. All students benefit from discussions in lessons and this, combined with sustained levels of concentration, leads to good progress being made.
206. Independent work is encouraged and many students are confident researchers using texts to extract information, make their own notes and find new ways of presenting information in easy to understand ways. However, the number of opportunities to use ICT resources are limited.
207. The good teaching and learning result from the work in the subject being well led and managed. The recently reviewed scheme of work effectively reflects the subject's requirements and identifies general approaches that encourage learning. A good range of support material has been developed. The performance of students in tests is closely monitored and this information is used to predict future grades as well as having an influence on the way the subject is taught. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development and has started to identify the good and effective practice within the department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers' subject expertise is good.
- The subject is well resourced.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment at AS and A level are below national average and below that of the students in their other subjects.
- The AS and A level curriculum does not meet the needs of the students opting for IT.
- There is insufficient regular assessment of students' work and feedback to students on how they can improve.

208. Standards of attainment in the sixth form at present are well below national average both in AS and A level, in line with the previous results. Students' performance over the last three years has been consistently well below the results of the same students in their other subjects, and the results obtained by other subjects in the sixth form. This year, a lower proportion of students are studying at A2 level after AS than in other subjects.
209. A level students seen in lessons are not working at levels of understanding expected of the year group. In their revision of previous work on data applications there is insufficient depth of explanation of their ideas. They needed considerable help in the lesson seen when defining basic terms and explaining their significance. In the practical lesson seen they were working at a range of levels, with the higher-attaining showing good understanding of the requirements of the coursework, having selected the issue with regard to challenge, and having good knowledge and understanding of the procedures needed for implementation. The majority are unambitious in relation to the selected task and need considerable support about aspects of the work as they arise. For example, in the lesson seen, the majority were struggling with the means of validation. Students in Year 12 are also working below expected levels, although one is working towards a high grade at AS level. In the coursework task they are being very closely guided. They struggle when they have to find their own solutions to procedures in Excel. This is also borne out in their theory lesson, where most were struggling with the application of the "if" command in spreadsheets, and they did not transfer knowledge of absolute referencing from an earlier to a later question. Following the same pattern as in previous years, there are very few girls in Year 12 and none in Year 13, but the results obtained by girls are usually good in relation to those of the boys. Students who speak English as an additional language are working at lower levels than those of other students.
210. Students entering the sixth form from the main school have very low levels of attainment in ICT as a result of earlier teaching that is both insufficient and unchallenging. They therefore underestimate the standards that they need to attain. This is a major cause of their unsatisfactory performance in external examinations.
211. Teaching is satisfactory in most lessons. Teachers have good knowledge of the aspects of computing that are needed in the course, and plan their lessons to meet them. They give clear demonstrations of procedures but without involving the students in thinking by asking them to suggest solutions to problems. Almost all their

questions require students to remember computing terms or procedures learned previously. Students' responses are therefore brief and superficial, so that teachers checking full understanding have to lead them by asking supplementary questions. When students are working individually teachers give good support, and they manage individual work well. In one lesson seen the teacher approached one problem in a past paper by giving a little guidance then using the work of those students who had grasped the next stage to build additional challenge and support, so that everyone eventually understood how to answer the question. In coursework lessons students are less clear about how to improve, although the teacher looks for areas in which students are struggling and deals with them in whole-class sessions. Insufficient close supervision means that students do not have a sense of urgency in such lessons, with a high proportion preferring to work on their coursework at home. Several of the students were unable to show the current version of their coursework as they do not hold it on the school network. The teachers give good oral feedback on the students' work, but they do not set sufficient homework to build on work in lessons. Neither do they mark the tasks, with the exception of tests, to let students know clearly how well they are doing or where they need to improve. Although students were initially involved in working out their target grades, they have not been kept fully informed about the progress that they are making towards them. The result is that students are not aware of the standards at which they are working.

212. The course followed by the students is unsatisfactory. It is unpopular with girls, who rarely choose to study it. As a result of insufficient teaching in the lower school, students come to it ill prepared for the difficulty of its theory. Many students who follow the AS course give up the subject before the Year 13 A level, either because they find the work difficult to understand or because it is not what they expected when they selected it. Such students lack confidence and lose interest, often appearing not to be working hard in lessons. Their AS coursework is therefore very closely guided by examples clearly related to the problem that they have to solve, so that the necessary independence of the AS level coursework causes difficulties for the majority. There are a few very keen programmers, especially in Year 13, who find the work challenging and fulfilling, but in their independent approach they are in danger of failing to meet the criteria for success in the assessment. The selected course therefore does not meet the needs of many of the students. The new head of department is consulting about possible change. The department is well equipped to meet the students' needs. All A level and AS students have relevant textbooks. Students have ample access to computers and relevant software, but their standards were held down last year when they had four rather than five hours teaching weekly. This has been put right in the present academic year.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

Art was not a focus for inspection. However, two lessons were sampled, students' work was examined and there was discussion with students. The provision for art is good. Standards of work seen were above average. Students produce intelligent and coherent studies, which are well documented and demonstrate good achievement over the course. Teaching is very good. Teachers use their considerable subject knowledge to support the students' studies very well. They have high expectations of the students, who make a significant commitment of additional time to achieve high standards.

Physical Education

Overall the quality of provision is **excellent**.

Strengths

- Attainment is in line with national averages.
- Students achieve well in lessons; they have a good knowledge and understanding of the work covered
- Teaching of AS and A-level sports studies is excellent; expectations are very high and a range of appropriate learning activities are used to challenge students' thinking.
- Very good relationships are established between students and their teachers leading to a mature outcome to lessons.

Areas for improvement.

- None feasible until the new PFI facilities are complete.

213. AS and A Level sports studies are relatively new courses for the school. The year 2000 saw the first ever set of A level results with all students obtaining a pass grade. In the year 2001 again all students gained a pass grade with more than half achieving A - C grades. Out of ten students on this course, eight have gone on to study degree courses in sport related areas. All students achieved A - C grades in last year's AS level and all have elected to pursue the A2 course this year. Standards of attainment are in line with national averages.
214. The quality of students' class work is of a high standard. The presentation of work and contributions to discussions during lessons were of a very good standard, with students generally being confident in their speaking skills. Year 12 students in a psychology lesson demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of different learning theories and their relationship to performance; they successfully related these theories to real experiences that they knew. Year 12 students were able to apply their knowledge and understanding to a discussion about local authority provision for sport. They were able to relate their own sporting preferences to the topic and had a good knowledge of opportunities available in their own locality. In Year 13 students were revising 'Force.' They showed clear knowledge and understanding of the topic. They discussed and shared their answers from a short test revealing they had understood and consolidated their learning in this area. Year 13 students also presented their findings on national organisations of sport to one another. They did this extremely well, showing a good level of knowledge and understanding of the topic.
215. Attitudes to learning in the sixth form are excellent. Students work well together when asked and have excellent relationships with each other and their teachers. They show a mature and sensible approach to discussions and answer questions confidently.
216. Teaching in the sixth form is very good and some of it is excellent. The subject knowledge and expertise of the three teachers delivering the syllabus is excellent. This leads to students who are always clear about what they have to learn, and acquire knowledge and understanding as a result of their teachers' expertise. Teachers have excellent relationships with their students and know their students' abilities and strengths, being able to adapt teaching approaches and methods to the learning preferences of different individuals and groups. Teachers give very good immediate feedback to students about how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. All teachers demonstrate very good use of ICT to deliver the information to students.
217. Leadership of the subject in the sixth form is excellent. Planning for the AS and A level courses is excellent, with resources and planning files in existence. Very good procedures and systems are in place for assessing and tracking students' attainment

and progress. Time allocation is good, and the timetabling of the three highly specialist members of staff is effective to match the needs of the syllabus and the students.

218. Students not taking part in examination level physical education have opportunities to take part in the sixth form enrichment programme which includes aspects of sport and physical education. The shared 'schools sports co-ordinator' has arranged for students to take part in the Community Sports Leader Award (CSLA), where children from the local primary schools come into school to take part in activities with the students taking their award. Extra-curricular activities are very good with some students taking an increased level of responsibility for their teams and activities.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on Psychology, Law and Sociology.

219. Geography lessons were sampled and provision was found to be good. A level results in 2001 were outstanding. Standards currently being achieved are good. Attainment is average in national terms and broadly in line with results in AS last year and in A level in other recent years. Most students complete the course. Teaching, as judged from three lessons and analysis of coursework, is good overall and students have mature attitudes to the subject. Opportunities for independent learning and fieldwork are strengths.
220. History provision was also sampled. The work of students in the sixth form was lightly sampled in this inspection and it was found to be good. They gain good knowledge and understanding of the Russian Revolution and they can argue persuasively for and against the significance of Lenin's contribution to it. Year 13 students are able to handle such sophisticated philosophical discussions as whether Britain's dismantling of its Empire was due "more to moral considerations than military realities.
221. Religious Education provision was sampled, a detailed scrutiny of work was conducted and two lessons were seen. Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is good.
222. Economics provision was sampled; a detailed work scrutiny and four lesson observations found provision to be very good. Teaching was very good with particular strengths in inclusive questioning.

Law

The focus of the inspection was the AS/A2 level law courses. The GCSE courses were sampled.

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

Strengths

- Quality of teaching.
- Increased variety of learning resources.
- Wide range of prison and court visits.
- Value added in relation to prior attainment.
- Student participation in lessons

Areas for Improvement

- Completion of homework tasks.
- Literacy and numeracy skills to extend learning experiences.
- Punctuality and submission of work.
- Internet research to support student-led seminars.

223. Standards of work seen in law are above average. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good. Students' knowledge of legal reasoning causes the quality of their learning to be good. Most students can discuss leading cases, legal rules and conventions with confidence. As a result, students' attainments overall, in relation to their standards when they began in Year 12, are in line with, or above, expectations. There is value added in students' attainments compared to their level in Year 7, aged 11. A majority of students do better than their indicated potential.
224. Examination results at the end of Year 12 and Year 13 vary over time but are always above national averages for the top grades. The results obtained each year represent value added given the students' level of ability assessed in Year 7, aged 11, and on entry to Year 12. On this basis the awards are very good when compared with earlier assessments. Female students outperform male students as they have been predicted to do. Students show an interest in legal argument and have a positive attitude to their subject. All students listen attentively to their teacher and to each other. They answer questions willingly using the specific language of lawyers. For example, students were able to recall previous knowledge on the advantages and disadvantages of the jury system. The majority of work presented by female students is written neatly with a clear focus on accuracy of terms and legal reasoning. Praise is given for appropriate comment. Male students can manage the legal arguments as well as female students but much of their work lacks organisation. Students know how to access the most current cases via the Internet. Most students show initiative in their research; they can plan and organise their use of all electronic sources to search for cases.
225. Standards in Year 13 are above average. Students demonstrate a greater depth and breadth of legal knowledge much of which is current. Most learners can make use of relevant sources, citations and cases to reinforce a legal argument. The teacher attaches importance to the essential elements of correct legal language in order to help students to recognise the truth of legal propositions. Writing improves in Year 13 from both male and female students. Some of the lower-attaining students continue to struggle with spelling, grammar and punctuation. Such errors are important in legal work. Good use is made of electronic sources to select up-to-date cases by students.

The higher-attaining students can appreciate the importance of precedence in law and show good skills in building their arguments. These students fully understand how to search for a ruling and how it commenced. Year 13 students can engage in debate and argument on a particular aspect of law and the majority of students are able to support their legal reasoning with case law. All students are gaining an insight into the many social, moral, ethical aspects of law, rules and procedures. In this way law is an inclusive study. For example, students are aware of the plethora of laws made in the last ten years to ensure that the UK is a more just society. Legal arguments and the demand for reasons are effectively developing communication skills.

226. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher plans well, sets demanding tasks and creates a positive and intellectually stimulating working environment in which students are involved. As a result of this good teaching the quality of learning is good. The teacher has good subject knowledge that helps them explain new legal concepts clearly and develop students' skills and understanding. The teacher makes good, if limited, use of computers to develop students' ICT skills and to support learning in lessons. Questioning of students is good. Effective use is made of homework to build upon students' learning; however, not all the work set is returned on time in completed form. Marking of students' work is consistent.
227. Leadership and management are very good. Detailed schemes of work ensure progression for all groups of students. More attention to the key skills of computing and literacy would raise standards even higher. A formal approach to the monitoring of teaching is in place and is having an effect on improving standards in law. Arrangements for assessing students' attainments are good. The results are used well to encourage students' progress as they move from year to year.
228. Improvements over time have raised standards. Good use is made of assessment information when planning work. The tracking of students' progress has improved. Day-to-day marking is diligently executed and shows ways in which students can improve. There is greater use of ICT and a wide range of prison visits and to local courts. During these court visits there is an interactive session with judges. The most significant improvement has been the continued examination success with students meeting or exceeding personal targets.

Psychology

Overall, the quality of provision in psychology is **very good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching.
- Schemes of work.
- Relationships between staff and students.
- Collaborative learning styles and the teaching of research methods.
- Examination success is based on value added in relation to prior attainment.

Areas for improvement

- Identification of Key Skills elements within the course.
- Punctuality of completed work.
- Use of specialist vocabulary.
- Greater integration of ICT into lessons.

229. Standards of work seen in psychology were above average. Examination results at the end of Year 12 were well above national averages as they were at the end of Year 13. There is, however, a long tail of results to U. Female students have performed better over time than male students and significantly so. The results for the A - B grades have been, over time, well above average. There is value added at the end of both Years 12 and 13 in relation to standards achieved on entry to the course. Each year high grades are achieved by students. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good. Students' knowledge of psychology causes the quality of their learning to be good. As a result students' attainments overall, in relation to their standards when they started in the sixth form, are very good.
230. Standards in Year 12 are above average. Students are gaining an understanding of such psychology terms as conformity, and obedience. They demonstrate an understanding of a range of psychological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods. The teacher shows them how to design studies and analyse data. The higher-attaining students can write well, particularly female students, and they can produce accurate descriptions of a piece of research into human behaviour. A few students of average attainment occasionally limit their writing because the correct explanations elude them. These students receive the support they need. Both genders perform equally well in class.
231. Standards in Year 13 are above average. Students are learning more complex material and they are making progress. For example, they apply scientific methods to their learning about human behaviour. They are able to measure more accurately. In the context of social, moral and ethical learning students can argue about such matters as the developmental gender, and socio-cultural factors in health and care. Students were observed preparing an essay on schizophrenia at an advanced and appropriate standard. Most students can make clear observations and using electronic means support their observations with facts to win their argument. In Year 13 students are learning to construct a theory to account for a psychological fact or a set of facts and then generate expectations (hypotheses) from the theory. Students are developing synoptic skills at a good level. This is an advance on Year 12 work. Male and female students are equally competent to collect data to test their expectations. Females are better at spelling, punctuation and grammar. Most students can write clearly about cognitive psychology and evaluate a range of psychological theories. The higher-attaining students communicate their knowledge precisely with an appropriate use of specialist terms. The more average students find the use of scientific terms daunting.
232. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher of psychology shows an appropriate interest in the core areas of cognitive, social development, individual differences and physiological psychology. Lessons are planned effectively to develop an understanding of psychology as a scientific study of behaviour and experience. Difficult topics such as abnormality, schizophrenia, autism and phobias are carefully explained. Students are taught that psychology is not about commonsense but it is about science and the collection of verifiable facts, objectivity, and that it constructs empirically based theories. The teacher helps all students to understand the logic in psychology as a science. There is good use of the Internet to collect data. Students are encouraged to share information and to argue their point of view. The strength of teaching is the informed commentary and thorough analysis of relevant psychological studies. By such teaching students are learning to respect all individuality and the integrity of all human beings.

233. Leadership and management are very good. The support and environment created enables students to feel confident, valued and well placed to make the most of their opportunities in the sixth form. Psychology has clear aims and these are relevant to their stated purpose. Students are enabled to learn and helped to achieve their fullest potential regardless of their academic ability.
234. Satisfactory improvement, over time, has been made to the provision of psychology. Students are provided with a sound basis of factual knowledge through the use of electronic sources. Students are well supported to thoroughly learn their material. Memory is improved by the organisation of learning. The quality of written communication is assessed accurately. More key skills development and homework completed are needed to help to raise standards even higher. This needs to be planned through the generation of portfolio evidence and the production of an integrated study guide for psychology.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good and improving**.

Strengths

- The ambience of the subject room enthuses and the subject is lively.
- Teaching is enthusiastic and authoritative.

Areas for improvement

- More specific, rigorous demands should be made on students, especially in Year 13, for homework.
- Students should learn more thoroughly.

235. Standards in sociology are satisfactory. In 2001, of the candidates who entered the A level examination the percentage of passes was above the national average. In the AS examination, taken for the first time in 2001, of the candidates who sat the examination the pass rate was above the national average. Standards of work seen during the inspection were satisfactory. In class, students show understanding of the topics studied. But in too many cases students rely on the skilful questioning of the teacher to remind them of key concepts or of theories. More thorough, hard learning is needed so that recall of work they have understood is much quicker. Students are having much practice in picking out key points from texts or sociological articles, but this is still a general weakness.
236. A strength of the department is in the quality of its teaching. All lessons observed were carefully structured and the objectives made clear to the students. The teacher of sociology, who heads the department of social sciences, has a belief in the value of the subject for the young. Her enthusiasm is infectious. The pace of lessons is brisk. Evidence from the inspection showed both the good breadth and depth of the work being taught. The sole teacher of sociology was new to the school this academic year and she is demanding more involvement from the students, for instance with the Past Angles project by which students prepare a ten minute presentation on a given topic. After the presentation, students give photocopied notes and diagrams to other members of the class. Students agreed that this project is very hard work but they are learning much from it. More specific, rigorous demands need to be made on students in preparation for individual lessons.

237. The teacher of sociology has developed an essay pro forma which shows in detail under section headings how an individual student can improve his or her essay writing. Students agree this is very helpful. The March Review procedure follows from the January examinations. It involves teacher-student discussion and student self-evaluation and shows students exactly where they stand.
238. Students are largely engaged by the topics studied. They find statistical and other evidence of crime and deviance does not always back up popular conceptions. They find that the reasons for differential achievement of different groups in the education system cannot be isolated to one factor. They maintain their concentration extremely well in lessons where learning is good. Working in pairs or in small groups is well developed and students listen carefully to each other. Some students are reticent in class oral work. More participation would help them to improve their performance.
239. Curricular provision in the subject is good and improving. Many cross-curricular themes are appropriately incorporated. The head of department gives varied learning opportunities to students; for example, Year 12 students have attended a Bradford skills seminar and Year 13 students will go to a Revision day in Manchester. Suitable web sites are recommended for research. Moral and ethical issues are continually examined in a course whose focus is contemporary society. Students are helped to develop skills which will encourage participation in adult community life.
240. The management of the subject is efficient and effective. The head of department leads energetically and innovatively. She is keen to extend co-operation between the four sole teachers of subjects within the department to share good practice. In the sociology room are very attractive displays of high quality, including students' work. The ambiance can only enthuse. The department was not included in the previous inspection. It contributes positively to the wider educational aims of the school.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English literature but one English language and literature lesson was also sampled. The teaching and learning were very good and standards were above average. Students received constructive advice on the development of their transformation assignments.

English Literature

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average.
- Very good teaching and excellent marking.
- Students make very good progress in developing independent learning skills
- Excellent student attitudes

Areas for improvement

- Use of assessment information to set targets and track progress; more rigorous monitoring and support of progress

241. The 2001 GCE A level results were well above average. All students obtained a pass grade. The proportion at grades A- B was above average. Overall achievement was very good. Male students did a little better than female but over time there is no

significant difference between their results. In the 2001 AS examination more than 75 percent of the candidates obtained the higher grades A -B. This is a very high proportion. All students obtained a pass grade. The average grade was a B: a very high performance.

242. The standards of the current Year 13 students match their AS results. They are achieving very well in relation to their earlier GCSE results. Their response to the very challenging teaching they receive is excellent. They continue to make very good progress in writing highly analytical work. Most students are assured in the higher grade skills of evaluating the impact on meaning of an author's use of language. They develop a style that is consistently evaluative. They demonstrate the effect of a wide range of literary techniques. Their penchant for personal response confirms their enthusiasm and their progress in forming independent judgements. At the same time they support their views with detailed reference to the texts. Only a small number do not consistently show these qualities, but even their work shows a secure understanding of the themes in the texts they study.
243. Year 12 students have adjusted well to the increasing rigour of analysis required. The best write extremely detailed analyses of the emerging relationships in 'Othello'. During a lesson on 'The Homecoming' the students successfully explored the complexities of the relationship between Lenny and Ruth. Responding to the teacher's subtle prompting - and each other's responses - they carefully unpicked the range of interpretations appropriate to the scene. The sensitive and intelligent reading of two of the students signposted effectively the manipulative nature of Ruth's approach to Lenny. In addition, the students made links with other scenes in the text. This was very good teaching and learning. Only the reticence of a minority prevented all demonstrating very high standards.
244. Teaching is very good overall. In one lesson it was excellent. The teachers' subject expertise is also excellent. They know the texts well, have a sharp understanding of the skills the students need to improve, and also the requirements of the examination course. Their marking is excellent. Students rightly cite this as one of their teachers' most significant strengths. A lesson on the Gothic novel crystallised the department's challenging teaching. Each student had been asked to read one example of the genre and to make a short presentation on its principal features. Their fellow students quizzed them about their research. The teacher supported them by providing key features to explore but the onus was on the students to enlighten and enthuse their colleagues, which each contributor did. The students themselves found this task challenging and it had a significant effect on extending both their knowledge and their communication skills. Their enthusiasm was a graphic confirmation of the inspirational and aspirational teaching they had experienced.
245. A strong feature of the lessons is the focused analytical attention given to texts. During a lesson on 'The Remains of the Day' the students peeled away the significances of an extract. The insight of the most perceptive into the contrasting symbolism of the author's use of settings was of the highest quality. By contrasting the light of the summer house with the foggy day outside they conveyed the representational power of the location in conveying the essence of the principal character's lost opportunities in his personal relationships.
246. Students learn very well. They work very hard. They complete a lot of assignments and carry out a lot of independent research using web sites and critics. They are highly conscientious in annotating texts and making notes. A few tend to be passive in lessons and require more direct challenge to draw them in to help overcome a lack

of confidence in open discussion. Overall, students work well together, supporting and challenging each other in equal measure.

247. The leadership and management of sixth form English literature are very good. The course's two teachers work in a genuine partnership, supporting each other in the development of learning materials and methods and the assessment of work. They have high aspirations for their students and a creative approach to learning. The students were highly enthusiastic about the engagement of a professional actor to take them through a series of practical sessions on 'Othello' and 'The Tempest'. This provision increased their enthusiasm and understanding. Consistent use of grades and very specific marking give the students very good guidance about their standards and how to improve. However, they do not start the course with the most informed knowledge about a 'should get' and 'could get' target grade. More use could be made of prior attainment information to set these. Although progress is monitored, the present system is not sufficiently systematic and focused on specific aspects of performance and study skills.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The focus of the inspection was on French although German was also sampled.

French

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

Strengths

- The excellent results in French in 2001.
- By the end of Year 13, students have a good grasp of the essentials of target language grammar, and are beginning to be fluent in speech.
- Teaching is good in both languages, and staff are beginning to adapt to the new demands of AS and A2 exams.

Areas for improvement

- There is a very sharp difficulty gradient moving from the less demanding GCSE examination to the rigorous work of AS and A2.
- Numbers taking French and German are small.

248. In 2001 examination results in French at A level were exceptionally good, with three out of the four candidates gaining a grade A pass. This result is the best for several years, although great care must be taken when analysing results from such a small number of candidates. German results in 2001 were more evenly spread among the grades and, in both languages, there has been considerable fluctuation from year to year. Results in French have been generally more satisfactory than those in German.
249. Current provision in both languages is good, although there is no German in Year 12 and, of the five candidates in the Year 12 French class, only one intends to pursue the course to A2 level. This new facility to drop a language after AS level places the viability of groups in the balance. Russian is also offered, but finds no candidates as yet. There are very occasional candidates in community languages. Effective teaching, mostly conducted in the target language, makes serious demands on students and they respond well, often making great efforts to construct lengthier passages in French or German. In one lesson students were faced with some very

rapid French, via the tape recorder, and made a good job of eliciting the information contained in it.

250. GCSE examinations make relatively slender grammatical demands on candidates, whose confidence is often severely tested by the AS and A2 syllabuses, which require a comprehensive knowledge of the grammar of the foreign language. Candidates in both languages reported difficulty in mastering the complexities of their chosen subject, and scrutiny of work showed that there are still some weaknesses.
251. A major strength is the quality of teaching. Some teachers are native speakers of the target language and are able to use it with great fluency, but not at such a speed as to make their students despair. Over a period of time students become used to native speech and students in Year 13 are markedly more able to cope with rapid French than those in Year 12. Those teachers who are not native speakers nevertheless use the language fluently and are at pains to assist students experiencing difficulty.
252. The leadership and management of the subject is good and the new shape of sixth form studies gives opportunity to more students to pursue their language learning beyond the relatively simple demands of GCSE. However, this may deter all but the most dedicated linguists from taking the full two-year course. Improving standards in the main school may well, in the near future, feed through into higher numbers in the sixth form.