

INSPECTION REPORT

**THE KING'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SCHOOL**

Tettenhall, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 131547

Principal: Mr T Gallagher

Reporting inspector: Dr P Crumpton
2784

Dates of inspection: 29 January – 2 February 2001

Inspection number: 230038

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Regis Road Tettenhall Wolverhampton West Midlands
Postcode:	WV6 8XG
Telephone number:	01902 558333
Fax number:	01902 558334
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T P Moore

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Philip Crumpton [2784]	Registered inspector		The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Shirley Elomari [11072]	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?
Hilda Roxborough [1931]	Team inspector		How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
Chris Morris [12568]	Team inspector	English	
Kathy MacFarlane [3472]	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Christine Thompson [14913]	Team inspector	Science	
Ian Thompson [12271]	Team inspector	Art and design	
Malcolm McGregor [18854]	Team inspector	Design and technology	
Trevor James [1523]	Team inspector	Geography	
Judith Dunning [14521]	Team inspector	History	
Monica Christian [4689]	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
Peter Hall [4493]	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
Gary Spruce [30297]	Team inspector	Music	
Tim Legge [4517]	Team inspector	Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form	
Suraj Masson [4335]	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
Vinod Hallan [8425]	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	
Linda Evans	Team inspector	Special educational needs	

[19453]			
---------	--	--	--

The inspection contractor was:

Staffordshire and Midlands Consortium

Mr I H Jones
Kingston Centre
Fairway
Stafford
ST16 3TW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	18
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	26
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	28
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	29
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	35
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	37
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	43

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a Church of England comprehensive for 11 to 18 year olds. With 677 pupils on roll, it is a smaller than average secondary school. It opened in 1998 as a Fresh Start school in partnership with St. Peter's Collegiate School, a nearby school in Wolverhampton. The two schools form the Lichfield Foundation. The school started with the buildings and many of the pupils and staff of the former Regis School, which had run into significant difficulties. The school's numbers have increased and, in 2000, it was over-subscribed in Year 7. The school achieved Visual Arts College status in September 2000.

It serves a socio-economically diverse community. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. There are 96 pupils on the register for special educational needs and this proportion is broadly in line with the national average. Nine pupils have statements, which is below the national average. Over half the school's population are from ethnic minorities, mainly Asian and African-Caribbean and the number of pupils with English as an additional language is very high. Pupils' prior attainment on entry, based on their scores in national tests at age 11, is significantly below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school which is growing in popularity. Pupils are achieving well compared to their prior attainment, the quality of teaching is good and the school is excellently led. Effective leadership and management have created a clear commitment to improvement. Staff, pupils and parents perceive the school to be a good community to belong to. It is a successful school, already providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- A very committed staff is providing good teaching and enabling good learning in all years.
- The personal development and the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils are very good.
- A very caring staff is providing good support for pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Relationships, including those between pupils from different cultures, are very good throughout the school.
- The Principal and senior staff manage the school very well and are providing excellent leadership.
- There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- Relations with parents are very good.
- A rich cultural and religious diversity is fostered and celebrated.

What could be improved

- Using assessment more effectively to help pupils make progress and improve standards of work.
- Meeting the needs of a range of ability within classes more systematically.
- Developing pupils' literacy skills to help their learning across the curriculum.
- Using the process of teachers' observations of each other's classes to further improve the overall quality of teaching.
- Meeting all pupils' entitlement to a course in information and communication technology for 14 to 16 year olds.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the school's first inspection since it opened as a Fresh Start school. Standards are higher than they were in the former Regis School. Compared with the findings of the last inspection of the Regis School, there have been improvements in teaching, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, curriculum, staff development, school development planning, and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. In addition, attendance has significantly improved, and there is improved accommodation. This is clearly an improving school. The confidence of parents and primary schools has been won back.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	n/a	D	E	C	
A-levels/AS-levels	n/a	E	E		

Standards in national tests and public examinations were well below average in 2000, at ages 14, 16 and in the Sixth Form. However, pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. This was reflected in the standards seen during the inspection and in the generally good progress made by pupils.

For 14 year olds, results in statutory assessments in 2000 were close to the national average in art. They were below the national averages in all other subjects. However, results have improved since 1999 in art, mathematics, science, history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and music. They have declined in English, design and technology, geography and

physical education.

For 16 year olds, there has been a steady improvement in the number of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades in GCSE since 1998. The percentage of pupils achieving an A*-C grade was significantly above the national average in art and above national averages in science. It was close to the national average in design and technology. It was below national averages in modern foreign languages, business studies, English, English Literature, geography, history, mathematics and music. However, in 1999 and 2000 pupils have made sound progress in relation to their prior attainment. Standards are broadly in line with the average for similar schools.

In the Sixth Form, A-level attainment in 2000 was well below average but it has risen steadily since 1998 and this was reflected in the standards of work seen during the inspection. Standards are high in General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ).

Pupils, including those with English as an additional language, are making steady progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because of the quality of support.

Standards of literacy are low. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory in relation to pupils' abilities in mathematics but pupils' skills are generally under-developed in other subjects.

The school is setting realistic GCSE targets based on pupils' prior attainment and in 2000, it exceeded them for the number of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades and for the school's average points score. It fell short of its target for pupils achieving at least one A*-G grade.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good and a strength of the school. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school and proud of it.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The school is an orderly community and behaviour is very good. Pupils are sometimes noisy when moving about the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good and a strength of the school. Relationships are very good. There is a very high degree of racial harmony.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. It has improved significantly since 1997.

The very positive attitudes to learning contribute significantly to pupils' achievement and progress. Teachers' empathy with learners and pupils' responses result in a significant proportion of lessons where behaviour is very good. It was unsatisfactory in only 4 of 158 lessons observed. The very good relationships contribute to the school's caring ethos.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

The quality of teaching is generally good. During the inspection, in 98 per cent of the 158 lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory; it was good or better in 67 per cent of lessons. In only four lessons was teaching unsatisfactory.

Generally, teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects. They use a variety of teaching methods and have high expectations of pupils. Lessons are well prepared and generally have a good pace. Teachers exercise very good classroom management and forge very good relationships with their pupils.

Teachers' marking is often positive and encouraging but it rarely tells pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Teachers are not fully meeting the needs of pupils of differing abilities within classes. Homework is generally satisfactory but it is insufficiently used to extend pupils' knowledge and skills.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is unsatisfactory. The school has not yet developed a whole-school approach to these aspects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enriched by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. There is a good range of vocational courses. The school is not meeting all pupils' entitlement to a course in information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is satisfactory provision, with in-class support, small group work and individual tuition. Support is concentrated in Key Stage 3 because of the small number of staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The large number of pupils with English as an additional language are satisfactorily provided for. Pupils are targeted and given in-class support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This provision is a strength of the school. Many opportunities are provided for pupils' personal development, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils. Pastoral care is a strength of the school and educational support is good. Assessment is not being

	used effectively to help pupils' progress.
--	--

The curriculum is relevant and appropriate. Cultural and religious diversity is recognised and celebrated. A good programme of personal and social education effectively reflects the ethos of the school. There is a good range of subject choice beyond age 14. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the whole curriculum. Pupils' welfare, health and safety are well looked after and child protection is very good. The school works well with parents. Careers education and guidance are unsatisfactory. Assessment is not contributing sufficiently to teachers' planning or to pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is excellently led and very well managed. There is a strong commitment to high standards of academic and personal development, and to maintaining a rich, cultural diversity.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and committed to the progress of the school. They are effectively carrying out their responsibilities, particularly that of 'critical friend'.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is usefully analysing its examination results, pupils' attendance and behaviour and classroom teaching. It is not systematically checking the implementation of its policies.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used effectively and in a well-planned manner, although in many subjects they are only just adequate.

The Principal and senior management team have clear vision and sense of direction. There are very good relations between governors, senior managers and staff. Middle managers are working effectively. Principles of Best Value are applied well. There is a good match of staff to the demands of the curriculum, except for the lack of special educational needs teachers. Resources and accommodation are adequate. However, the provision of library resources is inadequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations. • Pupils' opinions of school. • Good leadership and management. • The good progress of pupils. • The approachability of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount and consistency of homework. • Information about pupils' progress. • Quality of teaching.

Findings from the inspection support all the positive views of parents. Inspectors also judged that the quality of teaching within the school was good. Homework was found to be generally satisfactory, although there was some inconsistency between teachers.

The inspection evidence endorses the view of those parents regarding the reporting of pupils'

progress. There is some variation in the quality of reports. Pupils' progress is not always clearly communicated.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Overall, pupils' attainment in tests and examinations is well below the standard expected nationally for pupils of this age range. However, attainment is broadly in line with the average for those schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals (deemed 'similar schools').
2. By the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 and 2000, overall attainment in the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, was well below average in National Curriculum tests. However, although it is too early to reliably identify a trend in results, overall attainment has risen steadily since 1998 and it is now higher than it was in the former Regis School. The same upward trend is visible in the results from teachers' end-of-key stage assessments of their pupils' attainment. In 2000, the test results were better than previously when compared to similar schools but they remained below the overall average for those schools.
3. In English, test results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 were below the national average. Test results since 1998 have been extremely volatile. A significant rise in the number of pupils achieving the benchmark Level 5 or better in 1999, with English results the best of the core subjects, was followed by an equally significant fall in 2000, taking results below what they were in 1998 in the former Regis School. This was largely due to the poor performance of boys; the percentage of boys achieving Level 5 or above was well below the national average and significantly worse than 1999. Results in 2000 were also below the national average and significantly worse than in 1999, when pupils were assessed by their teachers. However, English results were broadly in line with the average for similar schools. Generally, girls are achieving better than boys.
4. In mathematics in 2000, test results at the end of Key Stage 3 were well below the national average. However, results have consistently improved since 1998. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, but the rise in results in 2000 was largely due to an improved performance by girls. The improvement in results in 2000 was higher than the improvement nationally. The end-of-key stage assessments made by teachers were consistent with test results. Compared with similar schools, results were below average.
5. In science, test results at the end of Key Stage 3 were well below national averages in 1999 and 2000. However, there was an improvement in 2000 and attainment was higher than it was in 1998 in the former Regis School. Teachers' end-of-key stage assessments were consistent with test results. Girls are achieving slightly better than boys; their results improved in 2000, but boys' results fell. Overall results were well below the average for similar schools.
6. In the other subjects of the National Curriculum in 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving

Level 5 and above was close to the national average in art. It was below national averages in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. There was an improvement on 1999 results in art, history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and music. There was a decline in results in design and technology, geography and physical education.

7. The very low prior attainment of pupils with special educational needs is inevitably reflected in their National Curriculum assessments. Many pupils in the lower ability groups in Years 7 to 9 are working at levels below those expected for pupils in their age group. Their lack of proficiency in literacy and numeracy skills limits their attainment in all areas of the curriculum, particularly when it is measured under test conditions.
8. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 2000, overall attainment in GCSE examinations, using pupils' average points scores, was well below the national averages for both girls and boys, although girls achieved more highly than boys. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades was well below the national average. Results were slightly lower than in 1999 for both boys and girls. However, the number of pupils achieving these higher grades was higher than it was in 1998 in the former Regis School. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A*-G in 2000 was also well below the national average. In 1999, the number of five or more A*-C grades was below and the number of five or more A*-G grades in line with, the average for the local education authority. Compared with similar schools, the overall attainment and the percentage of five or more A*-C grades were close to the average, but the proportion of five or more A*-G grades was below the average.
9. The percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in 2000, was significantly above the national average in art and design, above the national average in science, and close to the national average in design and technology. It was below the national average in French and significantly below in business studies, English, English Literature, geography, German, history, mathematics and music. The small numbers of pupils entered for Punjabi and Urdu all achieved grades A*-C. Comparing pupils' results in separate subjects with their overall average across all their subjects, these pupils were achieving well in art and design, design and technology, double science, drama and religious education.
10. In the Sixth Form, attainment was well below the national averages in 1999 and 2000 for those students entered for two or more GCE A-level examinations. Results in 2000 were well below the national averages for both boys and girls, with no significant difference in their performances. The proportion of students achieving the higher grades A-B, was low in 1999 and 2000. However, the percentage of grades A and B has risen above what it was in 1998 in the former Regis School. The proportion of students achieving grades A-E has improved from 62 per cent in 1998 to 81 per cent in 2000.
11. Although the percentage of students securing an Advanced or Intermediate GNVQ was higher in 1999 than in 2000, using students' average points scores, results improved in 2000 (there were fewer entries in 1999). Standards in vocational education are good when

related to students' prior performance.

12. Although pupils' attainment is very low when compared to national standards, pupils are achieving well when the standards they are reaching are compared with their prior attainment. By this measure, GCSE results in 1999 and 2000 were similar. Pupils' overall standards in those years when related to their results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1997 and 1998, indicate that they had made sound progress between the ages of 14 and 16. The results of the current Year 10 pupils in National Curriculum tests in 2000, when compared with their performance in tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1997, show that they had made good progress between the ages of 11 and 14.
13. The steady progress that pupils are making, when their prior attainment is taken into account, was reflected in their achievement in lessons observed during the inspection. Generally, pupils were achieving more highly than test and examination results would suggest, although standards were still below what is expected nationally for pupils of this age range.
14. Overall, standards were judged to be close to what is typical nationally in 62 per cent of lessons observed. They were higher than national expectations in 21 per cent of lessons. Attainment compared with national expectations for pupils of the same age improved with the age of the pupils; it was better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 and was highest in the Sixth Form where it was judged to be better than expected in 40 per cent of lessons observed (54 per cent in Year 13). Standards were lowest in Year 9 where pupils were reaching the expected standards in only 36 per cent of the lessons observed. This improvement on the standards indicated by recent test and examination results was clearly evident in lessons in science, history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and music. In art, standards were higher than those expected in 70 per cent of the lessons observed. Standards of attainment in vocational courses were significantly above national expectations.
15. The difference between the standards observed during the week of the inspection and those reached recently under national test and examination conditions, is largely accounted for by the good quality of teaching seen across all key stages. This is characterised particularly by teachers' empathy for learners and their effective support, and by the very good attitudes and behaviour in lessons of pupils generally, the majority of whom share the school's aspirations for their success. Pupils were observed to be learning effectively in almost all lessons and to be making good progress in a high proportion of these. In only a very small number of lessons was pupils' learning judged to be unsatisfactory.
16. Pupils with special educational needs who receive additional support were seen to be making good progress in basic skills, particularly in reading and spelling where a range of provision combines to help pupils meet targets defined in their individual education plans (IEPs). Evidence for this emerges from IEP reviews and from a careful monitoring of phonic skills, key word knowledge and spelling programme scores. In some cases, improvement was clearly seen in the quality of work in exercise books and folders.
17. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because they are provided with individual support in a secure working environment, where their efforts are recognised

and rewarded. In addition, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They enjoy the individual attention, are well-focused and co-operative, and understand the purpose of the extra help they receive. Whenever lessons are effectively organised and presented in a lively way, pupils are well-motivated, achieve a high level of participation and progress well. However, because of the number of staff available, the support for pupils with special educational needs is not available for pupils older than 14.

18. The school effectively analyses its results to monitor the performance of the very high number of pupils with English as an additional language. These pupils are integrated well and overall, their attainment follows the school pattern. They need more support to develop their language competence. However, they receive little systematic, structured help to improve their competence in English. Thus, despite sensitive and supportive teaching by their subject teachers, their attainment is less than it could be.
19. As HMI reported following a short inspection in 2000, standards of literacy and numeracy in the school are low. The senior management team have not yet implemented a whole-school strategy to improve pupils' below average literacy skills. In consequence, there is too little attention being paid to the development of pupils' reading and writing in all the subjects of the curriculum. During the inspection, there was very little evidence of a focus on literacy in teachers' planning or in lessons. In addition, the National Literacy Strategy's literacy hour has been ineffectively introduced in English; it is resulting in a narrowing of the curriculum and a lack of challenge for pupils. Pupils' numeracy skills are also generally below average and, during the inspection, there were very few examples of numeracy being developed in lessons other than in mathematics.
20. In 2000, the school's GCSE results exceeded its targets for the number of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades and for their average points score. They fell short of the target for one or more A*-G grades. In deciding its targets, the school takes into consideration pupils' prior attainment. Based upon this, its targets for 2001 and 2002 are realistic and challenging.
21. The views of the large majority of those parents who completed the questionnaire, that the school is improving and that pupils are making good progress, are confirmed by the findings from the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

22. The very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are a major strength of the school. Almost all pupils have a very positive attitude towards school and are also enthusiastic about the range of extra-curricular activities offered to them. They are proud of their school. Older pupils speak highly of the changes and improvements over recent years.
23. Pupils throughout the school show very good levels of interest in their work, even on those occasions when the tasks lack appropriate challenge. Most pupils are diligent in lessons and work hard to complete the tasks they are given. This contributes well to their achievement and progress in lessons. Of the 158 lessons observed during the inspection, behaviour was

unsatisfactory in only four. In over three-quarters of the lessons observed in Years 7 to 9, behaviour was good or better and in Years 10 and 11 it was good or better in almost two thirds of lessons. However, there were occasions when, although behaviour was good, the noise levels in classrooms were very high. The proportion of very good and excellent behaviour observed in lessons was high. In both Key Stages 3 and 4, behaviour in about a third of the lessons seen was very good or exemplary and in the Sixth Form this rose to over half. In these lessons, pupils were very attentive, well motivated and keen to succeed. Large numbers of pupils choose to participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs available to them. The school provides many such opportunities during lunchtimes, so that pupils who travel by bus are able to take part.

24. The majority of pupils take a pride in their work and try hard to present it neatly. Pupils often enjoy their work, especially when it is suitably challenging and when they are working in small groups. Almost all pupils concentrate well and persevere to complete the set tasks. When pupils are offered the opportunity to work in small groups they co-operate very well together and work effectively, supporting one another sensitively. They almost always listen attentively to the teacher and to one another. When using equipment, they co-operate sensibly. In design and technology and science they use tools and equipment safely. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language share these positive attitudes. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and different faiths work together harmoniously.
25. Pupils respond well and enthusiastically when given the responsibility for their own learning, for example, through investigative work, research or decision making exercises. In some subjects, for example, in art, drama, design and technology, music and GNVQ, a good range of opportunities are provided for them to work independently. However, the limited provision of books in the school library and restricted access to information and communication technology within subject areas curtail the opportunities for such work. This hampers the development of independent learning skills.
26. Standards of behaviour around the school are very good. The school functions as a very orderly community, despite the high levels of noise. This noisiness is due in part to the acoustically poor environment in parts of the building, particularly the corridors and dining hall. Some confusion is caused at busy times by the significant number of pupils who do not consistently obey the rule to walk on the right. Although there is some boisterous behaviour out of lessons, there is no evidence of aggression and pupils are generally good humoured. The corridors are lightly patrolled by staff, many of whom use this as an opportunity to talk informally to pupils. The pupils are pleasant, polite and courteous. They show very high levels of respect to staff and to their peers. They talk willingly to adults, often showing thoughtfulness and maturity in their comments. They treat their own, other pupils' and the school's property with due respect. The programme of extra-curricular activities, which is particularly strong in sport and music, has a positive impact on the personal development of the many pupils who choose to take part. Many pupils speak highly of the programme of personal, social and moral education, which offers them opportunities to discuss a wide range of issues.

27. There is a clearly defined system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils in all years value the commendations and certificates they receive. These link into the house system and, together with the wide range of house activities, generate a good spirit of friendly competition. Appropriate sanctions are in place and are understood by pupils. Pupils who misbehave are helped to understand the reasons for, and the effect of, their behaviour. Pupils feel that teachers deal with incidents fairly and efficiently. The rate of exclusions has fallen in recent years and the school has set itself the target of a further 15 per cent reduction by the end of 2001. There were three permanent exclusions in the last academic year but none have occurred to date in the current year. The number of fixed term exclusions was lower in the autumn term of 2000 than in the same term the previous year, although pupil numbers have risen considerably. Exclusion records are appropriately kept and are effectively monitored. Parents' views that behaviour in the school is generally good and has improved significantly over recent years, were borne out during the inspection.
28. The very good quality of relationships is a major strength of the school. Pupils forge extremely good relationships with one another, teachers and other adults. They respond well to the very positive role models provided by all staff. Almost all pupils appreciate the high levels of concern and care shown by the staff and respond very positively to it. They treat others with courtesy and consideration and display extremely good levels of respect for the values, feelings and beliefs of others. There is a very high degree of racial harmony throughout the school. The house system very effectively fosters relationships across the year groups and develops a sense of responsibility in older pupils towards younger ones. The very good relationships promote a positive working atmosphere in most lessons. Year 10 pupils are encouraged to act as mentors to Year 7 form groups and younger pupils appreciate this input very much. Pupils report that bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour are rare. They are adamant that the school takes a strong line on bullying and state that any incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively when they are identified.
29. The house system provides a good range of opportunities for pupils in all years to take responsibility, for example, helping to organise activities such as sports and small games competitions and collating house points. All pupils are expected to show care for others. There is an active school council that enables pupils' ideas and views to be heard. Through the council, for example, pupils were involved in choosing the new uniform. Sixth Form students have the opportunity to serve as prefects. Pupils in all years undertake a considerable amount of fund raising for a wide variety of charitable causes. Some of this arises from individual pupils' initiatives while other activities are more formally organised.
30. Attendance in the school is satisfactory and is in line with the national average for secondary schools. This represents a very significant improvement, with the level of attendance rising from 76 per cent in 1997 - 1998 to 92 per cent in 1999 - 2000. The level of unauthorised absence has fallen significantly but remains slightly above the national average. The school is justly proud of the improvement it has achieved but continues to work hard to increase attendance still higher. The late arrival of the buses causes a significant amount of lateness on some mornings but the majority of pupils are punctual. Almost all lessons begin on time but at the end of lunchtime those pupils who are last in the dining room queue may arrive late for afternoon registration.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

31. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons. It was good or better in 67 per cent of lessons. In only four lessons (approximately 2 per cent) was teaching unsatisfactory.
32. At Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons; good in 46 per cent and very good or better in 19 per cent. The quality of teaching was less than satisfactory in only three lessons and it was never poor. The quality of teaching was very good in art and design and technology. It was good in physical education, information and communication technology, geography, modern foreign languages mathematics and music. It was satisfactory in all other subjects.
33. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons. It was good in 54 per cent and very good in 18 per cent. The quality of teaching was very good in art, and good in design and technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education and science. It was satisfactory in all other subjects.
34. In the Sixth Form, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons. It was good in 24 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 41 per cent. Teaching was very good in art. It was good in mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, music, modern foreign languages and physical education. It was satisfactory in English, geography and history.
35. Overall, in lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of learning was good and never less than satisfactory. In all years, pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their prior attainment. They show a keen interest in the work they are undertaking, concentrate well and work at a good pace. The majority of pupils have a good knowledge of their learning. This was seen particularly through their personal and social education folders and homework planners where each term pupils review their achievements and set targets for the forthcoming term. Where learning lags slightly behind the quality of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 4, it is because some pupils with learning difficulties do not have appropriate specialist support in lessons and do not make the progress which it is possible for them to make through the learning opportunities offered.
36. Overall the teaching of literacy skills in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory and does not fully support pupils' progress. The current teaching of the literacy hour in Key Stage 3 is weak. The school does not have a literacy policy but has appropriate plans to address the teaching of literacy across the curriculum. In art there is very good teaching of basic literacy skills with appropriate attention paid to vocabulary through the correct use of terms. Also reading is encouraged for research. In Years 11 to 14, students taking GNVQ courses and all Sixth Form students have lessons which focus on the key skill of communication.
37. The teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory in mathematics. It is good in Years 11 to 14 for students taking GNVQ courses and for all Sixth Form students. It is weak, however, in

most other subjects as few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop these skills. Appropriate opportunities to develop numeracy skills are used in science.

38. Some teachers make effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning on a regular basis, but this is not the case in all subjects. In Years 11 to 14, pupils taking GNVQ courses and all Sixth Form students have lessons in the key skill of information and communication technology. Coursework for GCSE, AS-level and GNVQ subjects is often word processed and pupils make use of the Internet to develop research skills in GNVQ and art. Lessons are not, however, routinely used as learning opportunities to develop pupils' skills of information and communication technology.
39. One of the strengths of teaching is that specialist teachers generally have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject. This enables them to give effective demonstrations, for example, in art and design and technology, and informative presentations which ensure that pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding in lessons. Teachers have a confident approach in the classroom, which helps promote pupils' confidence in the teachers and gives them a secure foundation for their learning.
40. Relationships between pupils and teachers in the majority of lessons are very good. Teachers know their pupils well. They are sensitive to the needs of pupils as learners and give them appropriate additional personal help and support throughout lessons. This creates a positive approach to learning because pupils feel confident to use their creative efforts in a supportive atmosphere.
41. Lesson preparation and organisation are good. Teachers are ambitious for the pupils and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons. They frequently stress the requirement for high standards. This encourages pupils to concentrate and give of their best. The management and discipline of pupils in lessons is very good and promotes pupils' ability to settle to the task in hand. As a result of this, pupils' behaviour is very good. Teachers generally deal sensitively with problems. The majority of teachers use an appropriate variety of methods to ensure that pupils behave well and concentrate, so that they get the most out of lessons. The use of praise is good.
42. The pace of lessons is generally good and this has a positive impact on learning. This was seen frequently in mathematics lessons where pupils were regularly given a time target in which to complete the task. Pupils consequently worked both independently and in groups at a good pace and produced an appropriate amount of work in the time available. They concentrated well and made good gains in their learning.
43. In effective lessons teachers clearly identify and explain the learning objectives to pupils so that they understand what is expected of them. In some lessons, for example, in GNVQ and science, lesson objectives are put onto the board at the beginning. In good lessons, these learning objectives are reinforced regularly during the lesson to remind pupils what they are trying to achieve, and at the end of the lesson, they are used to review the learning which has taken place. In many lessons, however, the teachers do not clearly identify the learning outcomes and this is hindering the achievement of the learning objectives.

44. Overall the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound. There is a positive attitude among teaching staff in general, towards pupils with special educational needs. They are aware of the Code of Practice; and regularly-reviewed individual education plans (IEPs) are used to inform them of pupils' difficulties and their learning needs. The writing of IEPs is still developing in terms of describing specific, measurable targets for literacy and behaviour and IEPs generally lack subject-specific criteria. This limits subject teachers' use of them in their lesson planning. Subject-departmental planning does not always consider sufficiently how to support pupils with special educational needs.
45. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in small-group sessions and in the subject lessons taught by specialist special educational needs staff, is often very good. Teachers demonstrate expertise in providing work at an appropriate level so that pupils are challenged but still able to succeed. Lessons are well structured and tailored to meet pupils' individual needs. Good use is made of information and communication technology, particularly with the *Success Maker* program which facilitates individualised work. In one small group session, careful planning ensured that each pupil followed an individualised programme with clear objectives and completed a range of tasks appropriate to their learning needs. The teaching was skilfully managed to maintain pace and give each pupil some responsibility for his/her own learning, while also affording some quality one-to-one tutoring.
46. Although subject teachers' expertise in meeting pupils' learning needs across the curriculum varies, pupils make satisfactory gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. In some cases, staff have worked very hard to produce appropriate materials and adopt strategies which engage pupils and keep them interested and on task. In one history lesson with a Year 9 group, the teacher had carefully prepared a sorting/sequencing activity which successfully engaged all pupils, allowing them to demonstrate previous knowledge while also absorbing new information. Throughout the lesson, pupils worked purposefully, aware of the learning objectives and exactly what was expected of them. The teacher explained things in simple terms and constantly checked pupils' understanding. In science lessons, pupils have regular opportunities to engage in the sort of practical work which is highly motivating and allows them to learn by 'doing'. Written recording of experiments is constructed in a way which minimises the time taken up with writing and drawing, allowing pupils and teacher to concentrate on the main purpose of the lesson in terms of carrying out experiments, observing what happens and discussing findings.
47. In general, however, there is little planned differentiation of lesson content or materials used, either within or between groups and in some cases teachers make insufficient provision for checking pupils' understanding and consolidating what is being learned. There is little opportunity for less able readers to practise reading, except in withdrawal groups, and to hear good models of expressive, fluent reading. Opportunities for any sort of extended writing are very limited.
48. Where classroom support for pupils with special educational needs is provided, it is effective in keeping pupils on task and enhances the quality of learning for all pupils in the group. A limited amount of liaison between subject teachers and support teachers is conducted on an

ad-hoc basis; but planning is not sufficient for support teachers to make a carefully considered approach to pupils' learning needs.

49. The quality of teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory and these pupils are making satisfactory gains in learning in lessons. Where practice is good, key vocabulary is taught explicitly, a framework for writing is provided, pupils are engaged in discussion and language for written work is obtained from pupils. However, in general, staff lack specific expertise in developing pupils' language competence.
50. The quality of marking varies across the school and is generally unsatisfactory. Comments are usually positive but rarely tell the pupils what they have specifically achieved and what they need to do to improve. The criteria against which the work is to be marked are not explicitly linked to the lesson's learning objectives and hence marking lacks focus. This does not help teachers to evaluate pupils' learning or the quality of their teaching. Pupils are not always given clear targets following the completion of a piece of work as to what they need to do next to improve their standards.
51. Day-to-day assessment, although a strong feature in some areas of the curriculum such as art, is not consistently used to support learning. Teachers make insufficient use of the information gained from assessing pupils' work. Knowledge about pupils' prior attainment is not sufficiently used to inform lesson planning nor is it used to make judgements about pupils' progress. Consequently, in most lessons, work is not matched to the full range of pupils' abilities and the more able pupils are not challenged to achieve higher standards. In Years 10 and 11, in particular, where teaching groups are mostly of mixed ability, teachers are also not always matching the work to the needs of the least able in the class. In these lessons pupils' learning is not being maximised.
52. The use of homework is generally satisfactory but this is variable across subjects. In Years 10 to 14, work done at home makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning but there is a lack of variety in the homework tasks set. Homework mainly consists of finishing off class-work, learning for tests or carrying out tasks similar to those in the lesson. Homework is rarely an opportunity to apply knowledge and understanding to new situations and thus extend and develop pupils' skills. Although there is a school policy for homework there are no guidelines for teachers on the range and types of work to be set. The setting and quality of homework are not rigorously monitored by middle or senior managers. A few parents reported that there is inconsistency in the setting of homework and the amount given. Findings from the inspection agree that this is the case.

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

53. Overall the quality and range of learning opportunities provided are good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and, apart from the provision for information and communication technology for pupils in Years 10 and 11, meets statutory requirements. It contains all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education. The length of the teaching week is in line with the model for comprehensive

schools nationally for Years 7 to 9 and for the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) recommended time for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

54. In Years 10 and 11 there is a sound core curriculum followed by all pupils, with two further option choices. GNVQ courses in health and social care, art and design and business studies are part of the options and provide very good opportunities for pupils to prepare for a range of courses in the Sixth Form. However, pupils who are not taking an information and communication course or a GNVQ course do not have sufficient information and communication technology as part of their curriculum to meet statutory requirements.
55. In the Sixth Form there is a good range of AS-level courses; Advanced and Intermediate GNVQ courses in business studies, art and design, and health and social care are also offered. All students in the Sixth Form undertake studies in the key skills of information and communication technology, application of number and communication. The school has a newly formed Sixth Form partnership with Aldersley School and Smestow School. This allows a wide range of option choices to be available to the students at the three schools.
56. The breadth of Sixth Form provision is realistic in relation to the size of the Sixth Form and is not made at the expense of other key stages. The expansion of the provision into three vocational areas has provided good opportunities for students who previously were not able to access the Sixth Form. The range of vocational courses is good, offering three areas relevant to the need of students across the ability levels and having direct progression from GNVQ Part 1 provision in Years 10 and 11. Vocational courses have improved students' aspirations and motivation in that significant numbers of students are planning to progress to higher education who would not have previously done so.
57. The school has developed its provision for special educational needs on all fronts, since its inception two years ago. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has worked hard to establish the Code of Practice and a register of pupils with special educational needs, and is developing a documentation system of a high standard. Statutory requirements are being met with respect to the following of advice in statements and the conducting of annual reviews. There is a written (draft) policy which sets out the responsibility for pupils with special educational needs as shared by all departments, and staff throughout the school demonstrate a keen awareness of the difficulties experienced by individual pupils. The school employs a range of effective support strategies:- in-class support, small group work and individual tuition. Because of limited staffing, structured additional support is concentrated in Key Stage 3. All pupils have access to the whole curriculum, with withdrawal sessions planned to avoid undue disruption of the pupils' normal programme.
58. The school does not have effective strategies in action for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. There is currently no corporate approach to the development of these skills across the curriculum. There are, however, appropriate plans to introduce the literacy and numeracy strategies in September 2001.
59. The school makes available an excellent range of extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils'

experiences. The activities are accessible to all pupils and play a major part in pupils' personal and social development. There are regular inter-house competitions such as sports, quizzes and small games, which allow all pupils to take part. There is a thriving Duke of Edinburgh Award group and Young Enterprise scheme. The wide range of sporting activities includes swimming and fitness as well as a large number of teams which compete against other schools. Many departments offer clubs, revision days and weekends, activities such as a Maths Challenge, educational visits as well as residential trips abroad. The inspection team do not support the views of some parents that there are insufficient out of lesson activities.

60. Pupils from ethnic minorities are well integrated into the school and take an active part in all aspects of school life. There is good equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils, except in Years 10 and 11 where some pupils are unable to study a modern European language if they study Urdu or Punjabi. All pupils have good access to the full range of extra-curricular activities. The senior management team have made a thorough analysis of the performance data for all ethnic origin groups of pupils in the school to determine their performance and progress. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. A few members of staff have had specialist training in multi-cultural education which supports the teaching of English for these pupils. The few pupils who have significant difficulties are given in-class support. Two members of the staff hold a useful lunchtime club four days a week to help pupils in Years 10 and 11 to complete their written coursework assignments. This extra-curricular provision plays a key role in helping to raise the standards of pupils needing specific support with their English.
61. The scheme of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is generally good and includes appropriate provision for drugs education, sex education and skills for life. There are regular visitors to the school such as the police, careers service, a nurse and crime prevention officers who provide effective input for this aspect of the curriculum. The teaching of PSHE lessons is satisfactory and often good. Heads of house have monitored some of these lessons by form tutors; but a full evaluation to ensure that the programme provides for progression and continuity has not yet been undertaken.
62. The provision for careers education and guidance is unsatisfactory, particularly in Years 7 to 9 and in the Sixth Form. Through the existing contract, the Careers Service provides one-to-one career guidance interviews with only those pupils selected by the school. This, together with the lack of appropriate careers education and guidance, has resulted in some students and pupils being unable to make informed choices about their future career pathways as they have not been provided with the necessary information and guidance. The curriculum in Year 10 includes the opportunity for all pupils to have work experience with careful preparation but there is inadequate work carried out following the experience to ensure that pupils gain the maximum benefit. The GNVQ courses in Years 10 to 14 provide good work-related opportunities. In PSHE in Year 9, the careers officer provides useful support for some lessons. The newly appointed careers co-ordinator is fully aware of the shortcomings of the careers education and guidance programme and has the necessary skills, plans and enthusiasm to implement appropriate changes and provide equal opportunities for all pupils.

63. The school has very good links with the community and other schools and is actively involved with the local community. The school is a member of the local residents' association; and pupils took a very active part in the local millennium celebrations by supporting the planning and execution of the millennium project. Each year pupils hold a local senior citizens' party and donate harvest festival goods to the local needy. The Arts Millennium Executive Committee (made up of local officials) oversees the implementation of the Arts College business plan in relation to its use for educational and non-educational purposes.
64. Links with local business and industry are good and play a key role in some subjects (particularly PSHE and GNVQ courses). For example, a local bank contributes regularly to the business studies courses in Years 10 to 14. Through the Young Enterprise project, an aspect of food technology was enhanced through the work of a local chef helping pupils to develop their catering skills, leading to two whole-school initiatives: a Medieval banquet and a Victorian tea party. There are regular artists in residence providing good curriculum support. For example, in a resistant materials design and technology lesson, a local sculptress, as part of her professional portfolio, was working with a Year 9 class using beaten metal to create leaves as part of a group sculpture. Local industry is also supportive in providing suitable work placements for Year 10 pupils for work experience and for those taking GNVQ courses.
65. The school has very good relationships with its partner schools. A newly formed Sixth Form partnership with Aldersley School and Smestow School allows further option choices to be available to the students at the three schools. There are also effective arrangements for ensuring that pupils from primary schools settle quickly and easily on transition. Good curriculum links with local primary schools exist in several subjects such as art, information and communication technology, physical education and English. For example, in art, teachers from the school have taken fine art lessons in a primary school and the resulting work, together with work from all contributory primary schools, has been displayed at the school in a joint exhibition. In information and communication technology, there is a fibre-optic link between the school and its nearest primary school neighbour. This gives primary school pupils access to the school's server, teaching staff, technicians and software bought by the school specifically for this link. These links are having a positive effect on pupils' progress when they enter the secondary school. There are also good relationships with further and higher education.
66. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. Many opportunities are provided for pupils' all-round personal development.
67. The provision for spiritual development is very good. A wide range of opportunities is provided for pupils to reflect on their experiences in a way which develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. For example, pupils regularly review their overall progress and identify for themselves their needs and targets. 'Circle time' is provided by form tutors which helps pupils to reflect on their own actions, thoughts and values. All pupils in Year 7

attend a Welcome Service at the local church and pupils in Years 7 to 9 and their parents join together for celebrations of religious festivals. Parents praised these events. The school has a unique faith centre which has been developed with the agreement of all stakeholders including pupils, staff, parents, governors, local residents and the local faith communities. Its purpose is to support the move forward as a recently established church school using Christian values with all the faith communities in the school and those yet to find a faith. It is used by pupils from all faith communities throughout the year. For example, during the week of Ramadan, daily prayers were held for Muslim pupils.

68. The quality of assemblies observed during the inspection was generally good. The school has a structured plan of a theme for each week and a thought for each day. The intention is that all form tutors give pupils a purposeful time for quiet reflection on beliefs or on their experiences. Some tutors give this priority but there is inconsistency in the way this is carried out. In those instances where it was effective, a candle was lit and used as the focus for reflection on the thought for the day. Music was played quietly and pupils were then given sufficient time to reflect purposefully. Some departments provide very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. For example, the art department uses the school as a gallery for the pupils' work which provides a rich visual experience for all pupils as they move around the school. In art lessons there are many opportunities for reflection and expression of thoughts and feelings in the work pupils are doing.
69. There is a very strong moral emphasis in the school. The school's values are firmly grounded in the religious beliefs of love, joy, peace, truth, forgiveness and honesty. Staff are very good role models in their care for individuals and in their commitment and hard work. All staff expect civilised behaviour from their pupils and all make clear the difference between right and wrong. School rules are displayed throughout the school. Pupils are expected to respect other people's views and to listen to each other in all classes. Aspects of citizenship are taught well in personal and social education. Issues with moral dimensions such as drugs, rights and responsibilities, runaway children and cloning are discussed in PSHE, drama and science lessons. In information and communication technology lessons, pupils clearly understand that they must not access the Internet for unsuitable materials or use the e-mail inappropriately. They know that they do not alter passwords or access other people's files or tamper with equipment. In geography, pupils are guided to understand that human activity can have a positive or negative impact at the same time and they are helped to recognise the importance of resolving these dilemmas.
70. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The majority of pupils take an active part in the many extra-curricular activities on offer. The work which pupils carry out in the community contributes significantly to their social development. Pupils have an excellent record in raising money for charity on a regular basis for organisations such as Doctor Barnardo's and Compton Hospice. They spontaneously organise sponsorships and fund raising. For example, during the week of the inspection, several form groups started to raise funds for the people of India after the devastating earthquake. Pupils are regularly encouraged to collaborate and discuss positively in lessons such as English, physical education, design and technology, information and communication technology, science, mathematics and music. They are interested in what others are doing and willingly give and

receive help from each other. When using equipment they wait their turn patiently. Many pupils clearly take responsibility for their own learning and in some subjects, such as information and communication technology, conscientiously keep a record of their progress.

71. Much care is taken to give pupils a rich experience of the diverse cultures in the school. Departments across the school, such as art, English, history, science, physical education and design and technology, include aspects of multi-cultural education in their curriculum. For example, in information and communication technology pupils search the Internet for information about the rain forests and world religions. In English in Year 11 the teacher took the opportunity to compare Asian and English funerals as part of a poetry lesson. In dance, culturally diverse music is used as a stimulus for the pupils' compositions. In food technology there is recognition of the diversity of cultures in the range of food pupils are encouraged to prepare. Multi-cultural displays in public areas of the school contribute to pupils' awareness and appreciation of the range of cultures within the school. The art department makes a strong contribution to cultural development. Educational visits abroad to France as part of modern foreign languages extra-curricular provision in Years 7 and 8 also contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

72. The school cares very well for its pupils. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, including arrangements for child protection and first aid, are very good. The arrangements for dealing with child protection issues are clear and all staff are aware of them. The child protection officer has had up-to-date training. The procedures for first aid and the administration of medicines in school are very good. The school has good numbers of staff trained in first aid and ensures that all certificates are kept up-to-date. The recording of accidents and first aid attention is consistent and appropriate. Parents are routinely informed whenever their child has received such help. There are appropriate policies in place for health and safety and regular, documented health and safety checks are carried out. The school is aware of a range of health and safety issues associated with its accommodation and equipment. Many of these are being addressed as part of the planned refurbishment and new building projects. Others have been appropriately prioritised and are being systematically addressed as money becomes available.
73. The systems in place for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. Form teachers and heads of house know their pupils very well and use this knowledge sensitively to guide and support pupils. Form tutors teach the programme of personal and social education and this enables them to monitor the ongoing personal development of pupils informally. The personal and social education programme is well structured and well taught and includes some innovative work, such as the use of dance to complement the work on bullying. The pupils value it. The school benefits from the services of a school counsellor and three community workers, all of whom have a high profile within school and are available to offer one-to-one support to pupils. The counselling system is responding particularly well to the needs of African-Caribbean pupils. However, there are weaknesses in the school's arrangements for careers education and guidance.

74. The school has very good measures in place to monitor attendance and punctuality and has achieved an impressive improvement of 16 per cent in the level of attendance since summer 1998. Attendance has a high profile with all pupils and is well publicised throughout the school. The houses compete for the best attendance figures each half term and pupils are appropriately rewarded for 100 per cent attendance and for significant improvements in their attendance. The school analyses absence carefully and, as a result, has improved its procedures for dealing with applications for holiday leave. The school routinely makes contact with home on the first day of absence. All unexplained absences are rigorously followed up. Lateness is effectively monitored and those who are late three times in a week are given a detention. However, the levels of lateness are linked, in the main, to transport problems beyond pupils' control.
75. The school has very clear and effective systems in place to monitor pupils' behaviour. Pupils are well motivated by the commendations and certificates and enjoy the friendly competition engendered between the houses. The report system for unacceptable behaviour is well understood by pupils and implemented with a good level of consistency by teachers. Comprehensive records are kept that enable staff to monitor behaviour very well, over time. Parents are actively involved at an early stage in cases of serious or persistent poor behaviour and are involved in individually designed strategies aimed at avoiding exclusion. The school has a well-established inclusion unit where pupils in danger of exclusion and those returning from a period of exclusion are supported. The unit is also used to support pupils returning after a prolonged absence. The school is firmly committed to avoiding permanent exclusion whenever possible and has set itself the target of reducing fixed term exclusion by 15 per cent this year. The school is in the process of revising its anti-bullying policy, which is now in the consultation phase. Pupils report that bullying is infrequent and that it is very firmly and effectively dealt with when it does occur. They feel safe in school and are confident that there is always an adult to turn to in times of need.
76. Generally, the educational support for pupils is good. Teachers treat pupils as individuals and work hard to enable them to make progress. There are appropriate systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The IEPs for pupils with special educational needs are of good quality and they provide a firm basis for progress. However, the levels of support available in classrooms are not always sufficient to enable pupils to make good progress and in some lessons the work is not appropriately matched to the needs of pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language are satisfactorily supported.
77. Generally, the school's assessment procedures meet statutory requirements. However, the school's policies for assessment and for the marking of pupils' work are both overdue for review. The existing policies are not being effectively implemented because, although they make the requirements clear, they supply too little guidance on how to achieve them. As a result, the information gained from assessment is not used as effectively as possible when teachers plan for the next stages of pupils' learning. There is considerable variation in practice between departments in the quality and use of assessment. For example, in art, day-to-day assessment is used very well to guide pupils' learning and pupils have appropriate targets for improvement, whereas in English, marking does not effectively and

consistently enable pupils to understand what they have to do to improve the standard of their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

78. Overall, the school works very well with parents. Those parents and carers who attended the parents' meeting with inspectors or completed the inspection questionnaire were very supportive of the school. Parents are confident that the school is well led and managed and that it has shown very significant improvement over the last two years. Almost all parents state that their child likes school and is happy there, is expected to work hard and is making good progress. They believe that the school is helping their child to become mature and responsible. Almost all parents would feel comfortable in approaching the school if they had concerns. However, a significant number of those who completed the questionnaire stated that the school did not provide the right amount of homework and a similar number felt they were not well informed about the progress their child was making. A smaller number had concerns that the teaching was not good and that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.
79. Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views of the school. However, there is also evidence to bear out parents' concerns that homework is not consistently well used throughout the school. The inconsistent quality of the reporting of progress means that those parents who do not contact school informally may not always have sufficient, clear information about their child's progress. However, inspection evidence does not bear out parents' concerns about the quality of teaching, nor does it support those critical of the extra-curricular provision. In an attempt to ensure that all pupils have access to the wide range of extra-curricular activities, the school organises much of it during lunchtime. Pupils are enthusiastic about the clubs and activities and high numbers are involved on a regular basis.
80. The school provides a wide variety of information for parents. The prospectus is well presented and contains the full range of information required. The annual report of governors is full, informative and complies with statutory requirements. The monthly newsletters are very professionally presented and provide advance notice of events as well as a celebration of pupils' achievements. Effective systems are in place to ensure that parents are kept informed by telephone or letter of any concerns about attendance, attitude or behaviour. All pupils have a homework planner and this provides a wide range of useful information for them and their parents. However, it is not well developed as a channel of communication between parents and staff.
81. Parents have one formal opportunity a year to consult with their child's teachers but are welcome to contact staff by telephone or to make an appointment to discuss their child's progress at any time. One full progress report is provided each year, together with a clear interim report. The report format is very clear and used for all subjects. However, reports do not fully meet requirements as personal and social education is not formally reported, nor is work experience in Year 10. There is some variation in the quality of reports, both between subjects and between teachers. In general, they provide a clear indication of

attainment in all subjects but the reporting of progress is less consistent. At times it is unsatisfactory and comments are not sufficiently related to specific progress made in skills, knowledge and understanding for each subject. Most reports identify strengths and weaknesses well. Targets for improvement are set in each subject and in some cases are well focused. However, they are not always sufficiently precise to guide future progress effectively.

82. The school has worked hard and with considerable success to involve parents actively in their child's education. An appropriate home school agreement is in place. Curriculum meetings are held twice a year and parents of pupils with special educational needs have an additional consultation evening annually. All parents are encouraged to contact the school whenever they have any concerns about their child's work, progress or behaviour. The school contacts parents at an early stage when concerns arise and works with parents to find a solution; this strategy has been effective in reducing the number of exclusions. A small number of parents help in school. They are well supported and make a positive contribution.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

83. The school, along with St. Peter's Collegiate School, join together to make up the Lichfield Foundation. The Director of the Foundation acts as a mentor to the Principal. Although the Principal has only been in post for two years and the current senior management team in place since 2000, the school is very well led and managed. Both leadership and management are having a significant impact on its progress. This is clearly demonstrated by the existence of high aspirations within the school, the considerable extent of improvement since it began as a Fresh Start school in 1998, and its growing reputation in the community. The marked growth in confidence amongst parents about what the school provides for its pupils, demonstrated by its growing numbers on roll, is clearly justified by the findings of the inspection.
84. The school's considerable advances in its first two years have been made possible by the excellent quality of its leadership. The Principal has a clear vision of the school's future and he is passionately committed to making the school a centre of excellence, fostering the highest standards of academic and personal development. Included amongst its aims, is the establishment of a strong ethos built upon spiritual and moral values, as well as respect for all races and religions. This vision is particularly appropriate for a school which has a religious character and considerable cultural diversity amongst its population. In practice, the commitment of leadership to celebrating the school's rich cultural and religious diversity, shared by both teaching and non-teaching staff, is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development and, in particular, the education of pupils from ethnic minorities. These aims and aspirations are shared by all those responsible for running the school and, as a result, the senior managers and governors are providing the school with a clear sense of direction.
85. The high aspirations of the school's leaders are well known to staff, pupils and parents. The staff positively support the direction in which the school is going. Pupils are unusually aware

of what the school is striving for and clearly expressed to inspectors their appreciation of its aims and values. The Principal's claim in the latest school prospectus that the school is driven by a shared sense of purpose and positive attitudes is borne out by the evidence from the inspection. As a result, the aims of the school are clearly guiding its policies and practices. The improving standards, the very good behaviour in lessons, the caring attitudes and very good relationships throughout, along with the very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, all attest to the school's success in realising its vision to strive for excellence within a community based on Christian and other religious values.

86. Within this strong ethos, staff have confidence in the Principal and morale is high. There is a strong team spirit with very good relationships between staff, non-teaching staff and pupils. Individuals generally feel valued and supported and non-teaching staff feel very much a part of the school community. The Principal, in his commitment, management style and caring attitudes to pupils and staff, is leading by example in his endeavour to realise the school's aims and values.
87. The Director of the Lichfield Foundation has played a key role in the development and progress of the school. He spends a significant amount of time on the premises and is very effectively carrying out his role as professional mentor to the Principal, supporting him in a range of leadership functions. These functions have included the formulation of a sense of direction for the school, a rationale for planning, building up processes for monitoring and evaluation, and curriculum development. The Principal and the Foundation Director work very well together and they have successfully forged the collaborative relationship demanded by the Foundation. The success of their relationship has made a significant contribution to the quality of leadership. It has been very instrumental in enabling the school to make a successful Fresh Start.
88. In this very positive context, the Principal has put together a senior management team that usefully reflects the nature of the school with its distinctive environment as a Visual Arts College and as a Church School. The teaching experience of the two Vice Principals (science, technology and religious education) complements the aesthetic, artistic background of the Visual Arts College Director and the Senior Teacher.
89. There is a comprehensive programme of meetings. The weekly senior management team and the half-termly extended senior staff forum meetings play a central role in school review. These, along with line management meetings and whole staff meetings, give all staff the opportunity to contribute to the success of the school. The dissemination of information through the meeting structure, weekly bulletins and daily briefings is excellent, keeping everyone well informed. These arrangements to involve the whole school in developments and progress, are making an important contribution to the management of change. An example of this is the climate of self-review that is developing within the school, in particular the shared aspirations and the generally positive attitudes of staff towards having their teaching observed and evaluated. HMI, in their report of October 2000, judged that the school was developing good systems for analysing and using data to track pupils' progress, set targets and evaluate effectiveness. It has continued to develop its systems and is building up a clear picture of pupils' attainment on entry, gender performance, and the achievements

of different ethnic groups. This practice is extending into departments and is contributing to teachers' efforts to improve pupils' attainment. For example, in science, pupils' average points scores at the end of Key Stage 2 are being used to help teachers predict how pupils should achieve at the end of Key Stage 3.

90. The management of the school is very good and it is making an important contribution to the school's progress. The members of the senior management team are working well together and are functioning very effectively. They have a very clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are effectively organising measures to address the latter. There has been clear improvement in management since the visit of HMI in 2000. The individual members of the senior management team are benefiting considerably from the expertise of the Principal and the Director of the Foundation. They are being supported by regular meetings with the Director. He has provided valuable advice on, for example, exercising a whole-school role, managing and chairing meetings, data analysis and its presentation to governors. There is now an efficient line management structure, with clearly defined roles, with staff valuing the ease of access to senior managers. The line management of middle managers, described by HMI as 'embryonic', has now been strengthened by the attachment of members of the senior management team to individual departments. Generally, the quality of middle management is good. Almost all departments are well led, with a clear sense of direction, and efficiently managed. The management of vocational education – a school priority – music and art is particularly strong. However, there are at least four lines of management for the various elements of Sixth Form education and it is not clearly apparent how the separate strands are brought cohesively together.
91. The quality of the school's development planning has improved since the visit of HMI in 2000. There is a plan for the longer term which effectively indicates the vision and clear direction of the school. It includes action plans efficiently identifying success criteria, staff responsibilities, timings, monitoring arrangements, and estimated costings. The school has already had considerable success in achieving its goals, for example: the attitudes of pupils, curriculum provision, the development of a Faith Centre and communication with parents are all elements now contributing to the success of the school.
92. However, the findings from the inspection agree with the judgement in the HMI report that the school's annual development plan is an unsatisfactory mechanism for guiding improvement. The large number of identified targets adversely affects both the quality and precision of prioritising. In addition, there is some lack of clarity between identified 'targets' and 'tasks' so that it is not always clear what specifically has to be done to achieve a target.
93. The school has very effectively rectified these deficiencies in its *Organisational Plan*, a revised version of its original plan. This includes a useful description of the context of the plan, more sharply focused targets including the crucial areas of attainment, behaviour, teaching and learning and management, and a clearer relationship between targets and required actions. As a result, the school has an effective planning process for converting its broad aims into clearly defined targets and specific actions for achieving improvement. However, links between the school's and individual departments' development plans are still not sharp enough to ensure consistent success in carrying out the planned improvements.

94. That the senior management team is clearly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses is again demonstrated by the fact that its planning includes all the areas for improvement identified during the inspection. This awareness includes the area of monitoring and review. As part of its aspirations for improvement, the senior management team has organised a comprehensive programme for evaluating progress. There are effective processes for monitoring attendance, behaviour, curriculum, guidance, support and care for pupils, and staff development. Heads of department monitor their areas by observations of lessons, scrutiny of books and the checking of lesson planning; this process is overseen by the senior management team which now has clearly identified line management of departments. Heads of house monitor form tutors and the pastoral system, and are overseen by the school's Guidance and Support Group. The senior management team is very committed to the programme and several middle managers have received training by the local education authority in monitoring and evaluation.
95. However, monitoring and evaluation are not yet sufficiently rigorous and effective. HMI, in 2000, judged that current management processes do not ensure that school policies are consistently implemented. Both the Principal and the Director acknowledge the need to develop a more structured approach to checking how consistently and effectively school policies are carried out.
96. The senior management team recognises the importance of observing lessons in order to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It has introduced a systematic programme of lesson observation as part of its Performance Management Policy, including the use of a proforma for judging the effectiveness of teaching, accompanied by guidance notes. The senior management team considers the improvement of teaching and learning to be of paramount importance. Consultants from the University of Wolverhampton have been used to raise the quality of teaching and learning and heads of department have received training from the local education authority in lesson observation and feeding back to teachers.
97. The school is not yet deriving the full benefit from its programme of lesson observations. The process is generally operating, although it is not fully in place for GNVQ courses, special educational needs support and history. There is some indication that it is making a useful contribution to the improvement of teaching that is taking place within the school, particularly in modern foreign languages and design and technology. However, the process is confined by the requirements of the Performance Management system and only the minimum of one full lesson observation a year is being required. This, along with some evidence of lack of expertise amongst those observing teaching, is limiting the effects of the programme. Consequently, the system does not allow for the findings from lesson observations to be co-ordinated and used to improve teaching and learning across the whole school. Nor does it permit the evaluation of teaching to be reported to the governing body. In practice each teacher is only observed teaching one lesson a year, and findings are largely confidential between observer and observed.
98. The school is effectively placed to implement national requirements for Performance

Management of teachers in this current term. It consulted all its staff in formulating its policy, line management arrangements have been made and objectives have been set. The governors have agreed performance targets for the Principal.

99. The governing body is strongly supportive of the Principal and senior management and is very committed to the progress of the school. It is effectively carrying out its responsibilities. As HMI indicated in 2000, it contains an appropriate range of expertise and, in line with the cultural diversity within the school, it has representation from ethnic minority communities, which plays an important role in informing governors and in decision-making. Governors play a useful part in setting the direction of the school through their participation in drawing up the school's development plans. They do not simply rubber-stamp the school's policies and practices but collectively function well as a 'critical friend' to the school, for example, in deciding the admissions policy, meeting reporting requirements for special educational needs, abolishing charges for music tuition. They receive written reports from individual departments but, concerned about the quality of these, they have arranged for such reports in future to have consistency of content and quality of reflection.
100. The governing body, through its committee structure and through the knowledge and experience of its members, has the means to hold the school to account. However, it is not yet being fully effective in carrying out this responsibility. Governors are not yet in a position where they can systematically and completely monitor the school's performance – a deficiency identified by HMI in 2000 - nor do they yet receive sufficient information to ensure the quality of its provision in all areas. They lack focused information derived from a systematic monitoring of the implementation and impact of the school's policies and from the observation of lessons.
101. The routine management and administration of the school are very good. Financial control is efficient, with spending effectively monitored by the school's finance manager, who attends all meetings of the governors' finance committee. Complete financial records are kept and the school's funding is fully used for its intended purposes. Finance has been effectively directed at the school's priorities. Financial expertise and the careful control of spending have made an important contribution to school improvement. Having been successful in its bid for DfEE funding and having recently received Fresh Start funding, the school is now in a position to repay its licensed financial deficit and set a balanced budget. All the recommendations of the latest auditors' report have been carried out.
102. Currently the school is appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the curriculum, although there is some deficiency for pupils with special educational needs limited specialist support to Key Stage 3. When it opened, many staff doubled up on responsibilities until finances allowed crucial appointments to be made. Most subjects are taught by specialists and there is a good balance of very experienced and more recently qualified teachers. However, there is some lack of expertise in developing the language competence of pupils with English as an additional language. The provision of support staff is good. They are appropriately trained and make a valuable contribution to the school. All staff are committed to the school and its pupils and feel part of the team, whatever their role. New staff are well supported when they join the school. The arrangements for staff development and training are good. They

are well managed, with training linked to the school and department development plans.

103. The school is involved in a major accommodation improvement programme. There are currently shortcomings but the accommodation is adequate overall to deliver the curriculum. It is well used and within the tight financial constraints that prevail the school endeavours to keep up with repairs and maintenance. Accommodation that has been refurbished already is conducive to the school's aspirations for its pupils and the quality of experience it wishes to provide. The refurbished rooms now provide good learning environments.
104. The resources for learning are adequate overall although there are some variations in the provision. However, the bidding system has already benefited some areas such as mathematics. Library resources are inadequate and often out of date limiting the opportunities for pupils to develop their research skills and their ability to become independent learners.
105. The school applies well the principles of Best Value. It is analysing its performance and comparing its results with those of other schools. The school is effectively utilising its partnership with St. Peter's School with joint staff training days, for example, on target setting and on Performance Management, staff exchanges, which have taken place in design and technology and physical education, and joint teaching appointments, for example, in geography and music. In addition, combined contracts, as with the re-furbishment of the food technology room, have brought better value for money. The school is collaborating with two other schools in provision for the Sixth Form. The appointment of a Property and Contracts Manager who arranges competitive tendering is making a good contribution to Best Value and the school regularly takes pupils' and parents' views into account when decisions are pending.
106. Currently, the school is spending more on the Sixth Form than it receives but the breadth of the Sixth Form provision is not being achieved at a significant expense to Key Stages 3 or 4.
107. The school is an effective one. Since its opening, it has had some success in raising standards, pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. The quality of teaching is good, management is very good and leadership is excellent. There have been significant improvements in attendance, pupils' behaviour, the curriculum, staff development and in the ethos of the school. Despite its high unit costs, the school is already providing satisfactory value for money.
108. The findings from the inspection confirm that parents' high opinion of the school's leadership and management is fully justified.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

109. The school governors, in conjunction with the Principal and staff, should take the following actions to raise standards by:

Improving the contribution of assessment to pupils' attainment and progress by:

- * ensuring that teachers' marking identifies pupils' specific achievements and what

is needed for improvement, so that pupils receive effective feedback and so that judgements about pupils' progress are based firmly on their prior attainments and needs;

- * enabling teachers to develop clear marking strategies so that marking is both effective and manageable;
- * ensuring that assessment of pupils' work is closely linked to sharply focused learning objectives to enable the extent of pupils' learning to be evaluated.
[50, 51, 77, 121, 136, 137, 151, 170, 180, 201]

Improving the extent to which the learning needs of pupils across the range of ability within classes are met by:

- * ensuring that tasks set commonly for the whole class have the scope to challenge the full range of ability;
- * ensuring that teachers' intervention and support is effectively targeted at those pupils who are in need of it;
- * ensuring that specific information from assessment is used to inform teachers' subsequent planning.
[46, 47, 48, 51, 133, 180, 189]

Developing pupils' literacy skills by:

- * setting up a whole-school working group to develop and co-ordinate literacy across the curriculum;
- * ensuring that teachers' planning includes a focus on literacy;
- * developing strategies to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the literacy hour and other approaches to literacy development.
[7, 18, 19, 36, 58, 116, 117, 125, 144, 183, 186, 188]

Further improving the quality of teaching in the school by:

- * further developing and formalising the existing process of classroom observation and building it into the school calendar;
- * co-ordinating the findings from the process in order to evaluate the quality of teaching and address identified weaknesses through the staff development programme.
[96, 97, 100, 192, 222]

Ensuring that statutory requirements are met for information and communication technology at Key Stage 4.

[38, 54, 197, 202]

Other areas of improvement

- Improving the provision for the library as a central resource of the curriculum.
[25, 105]
- Ensuring that learning objectives and pupils’ targets are precise and based upon pupils’ prior attainment.
[43, 121, 133, 235]
- Increasing opportunities to develop pupils’ numeracy skills in the subjects of the curriculum.
[7, 19, 130]
- Increasing staffing to provide in-class support for pupils with special educational needs beyond age 14.
[17, 35, 57, 103]
- Devising procedures to monitor and evaluate the implementation of school policies.
[95, 100]
- Developing an effective programme of careers education and guidance for pupils.
[62, 73]
- Meeting statutory requirements to effectively report pupils’ progress to parents annually.
[79, 81]

The numbers in brackets refer to the main paragraph(s) in the full report where these issues are mentioned.

111. PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

158

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

73

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2%	22%	43%	31%	3%	0%	0%

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school’s pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	566	111
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	139	18

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	72	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	294

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	54
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	45

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8
National comparative data	0.4

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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	44	44	88

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	19	23	15
	Girls	23	25	16
	Total	42	48	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	48 (72)	55 (48)	35 (29)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	16 (20)	26 (20)	9 (5)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	23	25	21
	Girls	28	28	16
	Total	51	53	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58 (70)	60 (52)	42 (30)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18 (20)	26 (30)	6 (10)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	45	53	98

GCSE/GNVQ 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	11	39	42
	Girls	22	45	45
	Total	33	84	87
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	34 (36)	86 (91)	89 (94)
	National	47 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE/GNVQ results		GCSE/GNVQ point score
Average point score per pupil	School	32.5
	National	38.4

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	22	77
	National	n/a	n/a

Attainment at the end of the Sixth Form

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	16	26	42

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	11.3	11.4	11.3	6.0	5.0	5.1
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	14
Black – African heritage	41
Black – other	60
Indian	250
Pakistani	60
Bangladeshi	14
Chinese	0
White	220
Any other minority ethnic group	18

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	6	0
Black – African heritage	2	0
Black – other	7	0
Indian	8	1
Pakistani	3	1
Bangladeshi	1	0
Chinese	0	0
White	14	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	44.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	248

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77%
---	-----

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	19
Key Stage 4	17

Financial information

Financial year	99/2000
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	1811051
Total expenditure	1837301
Expenditure per pupil	2912
Balance brought forward from previous year	-145032
Balance carried forward to next year	-171282

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	677
Number of questionnaires returned	62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50.0	47.0	3.0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35.0	56.0	3.0	3.0	2.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	28.0	51.0	13.0	2.0	7.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19.0	53.0	23.0	3.0	2.0
The teaching is good.	24.0	48.0	19.0	2.0	6.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26.0	47.0	24.0	3.0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53.0	40.0	5.0	2.0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50.0	48.0	2.0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29.0	55.0	16.0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	35.0	52.0	6.0	2.0	5.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27.0	63.0	5.0	3.0	2.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23.0	61.0	10.0	2.0	5.0

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

ENGLISH

112. Overall standards of attainment in English are lower than those expected nationally. Test results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 were below the national average. Test results since 1998 have been extremely volatile. A significant rise in the number of pupils achieving Level 5 or better in 1999, with English results the best of the core subjects, was followed by an equally significant fall in 2000, taking results below what they were in 1998 in the former Regis School. This was largely due to the poor performance of boys; the percentage of boys achieving Level 5 or above was well below the national average and significantly worse than 1999. Results in 2000 were also below the national average and significantly worse than in 1999, when pupils were assessed by their teachers. However, English results were broadly in line with the average for similar schools. Generally, girls are achieving better than boys.
113. At the end of Key Stage 4, in 2000, the percentages of pupils gaining A*-C grades in GCSE English and in English Literature were well below national averages and, again, were lower than in 1999. Girls generally performed better than boys but results for both boys and girls were lower than national averages. The percentage of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*-C in drama in 2000 was also well below the national average. However, comparing their results with their overall averages across all their subjects, pupils achieved well in drama. In contrast, their English Literature results were significantly below their averages across other subjects. Standards observed during the inspection in lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work reflected the pattern of most recent examination results.
114. A-level results in 1999 and 2000 were below national averages but work seen during the inspection was close to the national average.
115. In speaking and listening, by the end of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils talk confidently, use appropriate vocabulary, ask questions to develop ideas and make contributions that take account of the views of others. The lowest attaining pupils are less able to adapt what they say according to context. At Key Stage 4, the highest attaining pupils use emphasis and intonation for effect, match their talk to context and critically evaluate the views of others. In a Year 10 drama lesson, pupils planning a presentation arrived at a consensus of how to proceed by careful discussion and evaluation of the strengths of each others' ideas.
116. In reading, by the end of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils are able to identify meaning beyond the literal, refer closely to the text when justifying opinions and bring inference and deduction to their reading. However, a large number of pupils at the end of the key stage still demonstrate no more than superficial understanding of what they read and do not move beyond immediate personal response. The highest attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 understand the author's technique and intentions and are able to comment on the effect of the vocabulary used. The weakest pupils merely identify main events and narrative.

117. In writing, the highest attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are able to vary sentence structure, organise and structure work coherently and write in a range of styles for a variety of purposes. The lowest attaining pupils experience serious grammatical and technical difficulties in their writing and are less competent at adapting a style appropriate to task. By the end of Key Stage 4, the highest attaining pupils make increasing use of literacy techniques they have encountered in their reading whilst low attaining pupils still have a limited repertoire of styles and registers.
118. Students in the small number of A-level lessons observed demonstrated an increasing realisation that a variety of interpretations of a text are possible and the highest attaining pupils made sophisticated textual references to justify their arguments. As a result their oral contributions were of a level of attainment in line with national averages.
119. Overall, progress is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with standards of attainment well below the national average. The pupils who make the least comparative progress are those whose standards are slightly below the national average. Standards of behaviour and attitudes of pupils in lessons are very good and contribute significantly to pupils' progress. Pupils are always attentive and remain on task throughout lessons. Most are keen to participate in activities and to answer questions. They listen well to each other and good, supportive paired work is a feature of many lessons.
120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and was good or better in about half of the lessons seen. All teaching seen was characterised by excellent relationships with pupils and a very supportive ethos in lessons. Classroom management and organisation are very good. Teachers engage a large proportion of pupils in individual dialogue. In a Year 11 lesson where pupils were analysing *A Crabbit Old Woman* by Phyllis McCormack, once they had started on the task, the teacher managed to speak to all the pairs of pupils and focus on their particular weaknesses. Subject knowledge is good and most lessons contain an appropriate plenary session where salient points are reinforced. Where teachers have high expectations, levels of learning, achievement and attainment are all noticeably higher than in other lessons. In a Year 7 class where the pupils were reading *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* the teacher constantly refused to accept pupils' first answers and contributions and rigorously asked for more thought. As a result, pupils produced work of a good standard.
121. The setting of objectives, although attempted in most lessons, often confuses the tasks to be done with what is to be learned. Marking is inconsistent and a weakness in the department. At its best it provides guidance for future improvement but on many occasions is limited to positive comments. In too many cases it is infrequent and on occasions incorrect work is cursorily marked as correct. Such weaknesses in marking almost certainly contributed to a deterioration of test and examination results in 2000.
122. Another major area to be addressed in order to raise attainment is the nature and content of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Too much of the curriculum (particularly in Years 7 and 8) consists of isolated exercises and the copying of rules and definitions. This is particularly so in the recently introduced weekly literacy hour where activities and sentence level exercises are rarely set in the context of whole-text work. As a result, much of the content and

expectation is of a lower level than pupils would have experienced in Year 6 in primary schools.

123. The head of department has taken a lead in establishing the very supportive ethos and also in promoting the importance of addressing the social, moral and cultural, development of pupils which is a strength of the department.
124. Drama makes a significant contribution to pupils' language development. The teaching of drama in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form provides very good opportunities for collaborative work, initiative and independence. The response of pupils and their good levels of achievement are a reflection of the quality of the teaching.
125. Standards of literacy in other curriculum areas are low. Although there are good opportunities for literacy development in some subjects, provision for the development of literacy in different subjects is varied and there is no corporate approach. Pupils generally perform more successfully in speaking and listening than in the other language modes. Good achievement in speaking and listening occurs in modern foreign languages and in art. Pupils listen carefully to the views of others. They use geographical terminology with confidence, but in history opportunities are not taken to develop more sustained oral work. In reading, the range of tasks is generally limited but in modern foreign languages, the skills of skimming, scanning and predicting are targeted. Background research is encouraged in art in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form. Generally, there is less provision for the development of reading in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4. In some subjects teachers are providing good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills alongside their subject specific skills and knowledge. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson, pupils had to write a story called 'The Pursuit' in which they had to demonstrate their skills of story telling, their knowledge of predator/prey relationships and explain how the animals and plants in their story were adapted to enable them to survive. Opportunities for writing in music are very good throughout the school with writing tasks carefully integrated into listening and performing activities. In modern foreign languages, pupils are given frames for writing and there is a focus on structural sentences and paragraphs. There is little overt attention to the development of pupils' writing in other subjects and weaknesses in writing hinder progress in history and geography. Students on GNVQ courses and all Sixth Form students give presentations to others, take part in role play and 'hot seating' where they take a standpoint and are questioned by others. These lessons play a positive role in the teaching of literacy skills to older pupils.

MATHEMATICS

126. Overall, standards in mathematics are well below national expectations but they have improved over the last two years. At the end of Key Stage 3, results in the statutory tests in 2000 were still well below national figures although they were higher than in 1999. This improvement in both tests and teacher assessment in 2000 was higher than the national improvement. When compared with similar schools, the results are below average but not by a large amount. There is no significant difference between boys and girls, as is the case nationally, at this level.

127. By the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results in 1999 and 2000 were broadly similar and below national figures. In 2000, pupils' results were just less than half a grade lower than their total average in all other subjects. Although results were lower than teachers' estimates in 2000 the amount of data now used within the department has made setting challenging targets for 2001 and 2002 more accurate. Sixth Form results in 2000 were weaker than those in 1999 and poorer than those found nationally for a variety of reasons that have been accurately identified by the school, including staffing difficulties.
128. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their attainment based on the statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 2, is well below average in mathematics. However, pupils do make good progress through the key stages and their achievement in lessons is satisfactory and sometimes good.
129. Pupils' achievements in all lessons observed were generally in line with those expected for the pupils' age and ability. Pupils at Key Stage 3 are continually challenged to improve their basic mathematical skills in a variety of fun ways. At Key Stage 4, the process continues but includes further areas of mathematics particularly algebra. Oral and mental work is a positive feature of most lessons and impacts positively on standards. Pupils who have special educational needs are given high levels of support from their teachers and support staff (when available) which increases their confidence and helps them to attain higher levels. The more able pupils at Key Stage 4 are given opportunities outside the normal day to extend their knowledge and understanding of a range of higher level work. Extra support is also provided through weekend residential activities in Years 8 and 11. These are much appreciated and enjoyed by the pupils and contribute to raising the standards of achievement of the participants. The good progress made by these and other pupils over time can clearly be seen from their written work.
130. The introduction of the numeracy strategy is beginning to impact positively on pupils' skills in mathematics lessons, particularly at Key Stage 3. However, although pupils make good progress in numeracy skills in their mathematics lessons, standards of numeracy overall remain low when compared with national norms. The improvement of standards is a priority for the school. The department are aware of the need to improve the role of mathematics in servicing other subjects and a proposal has been put forward to senior managers to arrange training for all staff. Although there are limited examples of numeracy being used and developed in other subjects, a particularly good example was observed in Year 7 English lesson. Pupils were discussing when *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* was set and when it was written. They were helped by their teacher to calculate the number of years between 1842 and 2001 using clear mental strategies. In some subjects, such as science, mathematics, English and GNVQ courses, pupils are given some good opportunities to develop their numeracy skills. For example, in a Year 12 GNVQ health and social care lesson, students used fuel tables to calculate the nutritional value of a day's meals and subsequently gave advice on how to improve that daily diet. All pupils in Years 11 to 13 who undertake GNVQ courses and all Sixth Form students, study application of number as part of their entitlement. The provision meets the requirements for accreditation and is often good.
131. Pupils respond well to their teachers and to each other. The majority of pupils of all ages

and abilities remain on task and show interest in their work. Behaviour in lessons is generally good and, in the case of the one example of bad behaviour observed, department procedures were followed. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour are making a significant contribution to their progress.

132. In contrast to the findings of the HMI visit in 2000, teaching overall is now good. Lessons observed were never less than satisfactory during the inspection and two out of ten lessons were very good or excellent. Planning of lessons overall was good and often included imaginative activities. These often included practical work, such as the generation of data using a hexaflexagon in a probability lesson in Year 8 and the cutting up of oranges and grapefruit in a Year 7 lesson on fractions for lower ability pupils. Lesson planning made good use of time and the setting of time targets in many lessons ensured the pupils worked at a brisk pace. Pupils are encouraged to accept that we all learn through our mistakes. Relationships between teachers and pupils are firm but caring. Pupils learn in mixed ethnic groups and are supportive of each other, working well together. Teachers reinforce the basic tools of mathematics whenever possible. For example, in a Year 8 lesson when pupils were asked 'Why can't you cancel $\frac{5}{2}$?' and the answer that 5 was prime was given. Similarly, in an A-Level lesson on partial fractions pupils were reminded about polynomial powers. All teachers displayed good subject knowledge and often emphasised useful exam techniques particularly in Years 11 and 13. Oral sessions at the beginning of lessons were almost always good and teachers often made use of responses to assess knowledge and understanding. The majority of staff mark work regularly and use the agreed system displayed in classrooms, but advice on how to do better is not clear in many books. Literacy skills are reinforced by the use of words displayed around the classroom and an insistence that pupils listen to each other.
133. On those occasions where lessons were less successful it was often as a direct result of the scheme of work used by teachers suggesting activities that did not in practice meet the needs of all pupils. Although lesson objectives were usually shared with the pupils they were sometimes confused with tasks to be done. The review session at the end of the lesson sometimes did not include pupils' views on how successful they had been against the objectives. Although extension activities for the more able are planned they were not in practice observed during the inspection.
134. Since the HMI visit in 2000 the lesson format of the National Numeracy Strategy, particularly the oral and mental elements, has continued to impact positively on pupils' basic numeracy skills and was a feature throughout the majority of lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4. Clear proposals are now in place to arrange in-service training for all staff with regard to reinforcement of numeracy in all subject areas.
135. The use of information and communication technology to support and develop mathematics remains a weakness as a result of problems of access to the computer network.
136. Although some monitoring of departmental development has taken place, notably with regard to the improvement of marking strategies throughout the department, the sharing of good practice is not fully developed and the outcomes of monitoring are not used consistently in planning. For example, although the department has begun to analyse the

differing experiences of the current Year 7 pupils before they begin Key Stage 3, examples seen of pupils counting squares as part of their work on area and the use of ink blots to demonstrate symmetry were unnecessarily repeating work covered in primary schools. The department's priority to develop links with primary schools is crucial if they are to ensure progress between the two stages and avoid unnecessary repetition.

137. Assessment strategies require further development to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses although there are very positive signs with the good use of the assessment of oral work and the embryonic development of pupil self assessment.
138. The head of department and his colleagues have a commitment to the pupils, the school and mathematics. There is a good team spirit amongst the staff who support each other well and contribute to the school's positive ethos. Some progress has been made since the previous inspection visit despite acute staffing difficulties this year which are now resolved. The head of department and the new team recognise what needs to be done to continue to improve standards in the future.

SCIENCE

139. Overall, attainment is broadly in line with standards expected nationally but with much higher standards in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. This is largely due to a large number of staffing changes adversely affecting results at the end of Key Stage 3. Standards in Key Stage 3 national tests are low. Pupils' average points scores, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 or above and the percentage attaining Level 6, are all well below national averages and those achieved in similar schools. Comparison of pupils' attainment in science with their performance in English and mathematics shows that there has been underachievement in science at Key Stage 3. However, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above rising from 26 per cent in 1998 to 35 per cent in 2000. Girls achieve more highly than boys: over the past two years girls' performance in national tests has risen whilst that of boys has fallen by the same amount. The teacher-assessed levels of attainment at Key Stage 3 are based upon the results of regular tests at the end of topics and are broadly consistent with results from national tests.
140. Standards observed in lessons during the inspection were broadly similar to the results from national tests. However, some higher standards were seen in the scrutiny of written work, particularly in Years 7 and 8.
141. In GCSE examinations at the end of Key Stage 4, standards were above those attained nationally. In 2000, pupils' average points scores were higher than the national averages for both single science and double science. The percentage of pupils achieving an A*-C grade was above the national average in 2000 and has significantly improved since 1998. The school's value added analysis comparing the GCSE grades of every pupil with their average points score at the end of Key Stage 3, shows that pupils have made excellent progress in Years 10 and 11, well above the national average. For the past two years every pupil has achieved a pass grade. Girls achieve more highly than boys in both single and double science. Comparing their average points scores with their averages across their other

subjects, pupils are achieving well in double science. However, boys' results in single science are lower than their average for all their other subjects.

142. Pupils' written work and their responses seen in lessons show attainment to be in line with national expectations in Year 10 and below in Year 11.
143. In the Sixth Form, attainment is satisfactory. The proportion of students achieving A-level A-E pass grades has increased over the past three years in the three sciences: from 57 per cent to 80 per cent in biology, 70 per cent to 80 per cent in chemistry and 0 per cent to 100 per cent in physics. Similarly there has been a rise in the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades from a total of 10 per cent in the three sciences in 1998 to 37 per cent in 2000. The standards seen in current A-level science lessons and in a very limited sample of students' written work, with no extended independent writing, were broadly in line with those found nationally.
144. Throughout the school the standard of investigation skills is lower than standards in other areas of science. Standards of literacy and oracy are low.
145. The quality of teaching is good, particularly in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form. It was good or very good in 60 per cent and was unsatisfactory in only two of the twenty-one lessons observed.
146. Teaching has many strengths. In all lessons seen, relationships between adult and pupil and between pupils were always satisfactory and usually good or very good so that pupils wanted to get on with their work. Lessons were well planned, usually with clear and specific learning objectives and activities designed to achieve these objectives. All lessons were structured well with introductions telling pupils what they were to learn and what was expected of them. There was a variety of suitable activities to maintain pupils' interest, a final plenary session in which pupils' learning was identified and consolidated, and homework which extended or reinforced what pupils had learned in class.
147. All teachers use questions well to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. Most use open questions to help pupils clarify and extend their thinking, for example, the teacher's high expectations of precise responses from pupils and her challenging questions enabled a bottom set Year 10 group to discuss whether a change was chemical or physical and to support their arguments with reasons. Teachers treat pupils as individuals so no group of pupils is disadvantaged and all are equally involved in class activities. A Year 7 lesson with a low ability set showed that pupils with special educational needs are not excluded from complicated practical work: they carried out a series of colourful reactions to copy the process of extraction of copper from its ore and they were thrilled by the transformation of green powder to copper. Teachers vary their approach, modify activities and provide different levels of support to meet the differing learning needs of pupils in different ability groups.
148. There is good support for pupils' development of technical and everyday vocabulary. Key words are displayed on the walls of laboratories. New words are emphasised and there are opportunities for pupils to use them correctly. For example, a Year 7 group with special educational needs did not know the word 'increase'; by the end of the lesson they all used

the words 'increase' and 'decrease' correctly and had written them in their vocabulary books.

149. There are other teaching strengths in the department. Some teachers use a variety of teaching strategies to stimulate and motivate pupils. Where open-ended activities are used, teachers ensure that all pupils, across the range of ability in the class, are both challenged and successful. For example, a Year 7 class studying fuels was asked to work in groups to plan and deliver a presentation, using overhead transparencies, to the rest of the class on the advantages and disadvantages of a particular fuel and to be prepared to answer questions from the group. The effort and commitment of the pupils was impressive; the quality of their material and its presentation varied but all pupils were proud of what they had achieved. Another example was seen in an A-level chemistry group where, at the end of a topic on fuels, students were asked to produce a poster which would be their personal aide-memoire, with pictures and symbols to remind them of the important vocabulary and processes which they needed to know for a formal test the following week. The posters were varied and the students' engagement with key learning points was much greater than it would have been using a conventional revision strategy.
150. Some science lessons contribute well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of education. For example, in response to questions about cloning from Year 9 pupils studying genetics and inheritance, the teacher prepared a lesson where the pupils cloned a cauliflower then used role play to test and clarify their understanding of cloning. This was supported by a worksheet and led on to role play in which pupils debated the moral aspects of cloning and the responsibility of citizens to have informed opinions on science issues.
151. There are a number of relative weaknesses in the generally good teaching of science. Although the balance between theory and practical activities was satisfactory during the week of the inspection, pupils' unsatisfactory practical skills and the small amount of practical work in pupils' written work indicate that not enough use is made of illustrative practical work and of scientific investigations where pupils test, apply and extend their understanding of science concepts. Teachers provide few investigations to improve the development of numeracy and there are few situations where information and communication technology is productively used. Although teachers make effective use of discussions between pupils, they do not use them to build pupils' confidence in their ability to explain, hypothesise and predict. The range of teaching strategies used in the department is not shared sufficiently to help teachers make better provision for the range of learning needs within classes. Resources for information and communication technology are not sufficient to enhance learning in science. The contribution of marking of pupils' work to pupils' learning and progress should be improved by consistency in the frequency of marking, the use of success criteria, the identification of what is good in pupils' work, and specific advice to inform pupils what to do to improve their work.
152. The majority of pupils enjoy the learning opportunities offered by their teachers. They work hard and co-operate well together in small groups. Those with behavioural or learning difficulties respond well to the support, warmth and encouragement given by their teachers. Most pupils answer questions enthusiastically although many find it difficult to give extended answers to questions and a large minority appear to be unwilling to risk making mistakes and

do not contribute to whole-class oral work. Pupils nearly always make satisfactory progress or better and achieve well in relation to their ability. Technicians provide unobtrusive, efficient and effective support for pupils' learning.

153. The leadership and management of the department are good. The priorities in the department's development plan match those of the school's development plan. Performance data is analysed and the quality of teaching in science is monitored by observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' written work and feeding back to teachers. Members of the department demonstrate commitment to science education and a willingness to work together as a team. Although only recently appointed, the head of department has shared her vision of good science education. She has already identified priorities for raising the quality of pupils' experience in science and an outline of the steps needed to build on existing strengths. She has introduced a progress form for every pupil; it includes Key Stage 2 average scores and uses chances graphs to set targets for Key Stage 3 national tests in Year 9, and from this is drawn a progress profile. Every pupil's level of attainment will be worked out half yearly and his or her progress monitored against the profile.
154. This is an improving department. It has made very good progress since the school's inception in 1998 despite major staffing and accommodation problems. There has been a large number of staffing changes leading to lack of continuity particularly for pupils at Key Stage 3. Progress is demonstrated by: the improvement in results in the national tests and examinations at Key Stages 3 and 4; the excellent progress in Key Stage 4 shown by the value added analysis and the monitoring of lessons and pupils' written work. All staff, including the technician, have participated in a range of professional development opportunities; lesson planning has improved greatly with nearly all having clear, specific and relevant learning objectives and outcomes which were used effectively to promote learning.

ART AND DESIGN

155. This is a very effective department and pupils overall are reaching standards above those expected nationally.
156. In National Curriculum assessments at the age of 14 in 2000, teachers assessed their pupils as working at a standard close to that expected for pupils of the same age nationally. This was reflected in work seen during the inspection. In GCSE examinations in 2000, all pupils gained grades in the range A*-C, a result well above the national average. There was no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils did better in art than in the majority of their other subjects. In A-level examinations in 2000, results were well above national averages overall and for the award of higher grades.
157. In work seen during the inspection, at the age of 14 pupils are achieving standards that broadly match those expected for their age. As a result of the department's concentration on teaching basic skills, drawing from observation develops progressively from Year 7 through exercises that concentrate on shape and detail using line. By the end of Year 9, most pupils can record what they see with reasonable accuracy. Higher-attaining pupils produce well-developed drawings that show understanding of proportion and perspective. Pupils show good understanding of how to use tone and shading to show shape. They have

a good knowledge of established artists and their styles because their work is used in references for all projects. Between Years 7 and 9 pupils are introduced to a variety of two and three-dimensional media to give them the opportunity to discover interests and talents. Pupils enjoy working with clay and many have better than average skills in building and decorative techniques. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others in their classes.

158. In work seen during the inspection, attainment by the age of 16 is above average. Overall, standards in the current Year 11 do not quite match those indicated by examination results in 2000 because a significant minority of pupils have too much unfinished work in their folders and seem to lack the necessary sense of urgency to attain the higher grades in the time left. However, pupils in Year 10 are achieving higher standards for this stage of the course in both GCSE and GNVQ classes. Skills build upon the solid foundation of Years 7 to 9 and pupils develop their independence as artists. Ceramic skills are particularly well developed. For example, modelling of seated figures shows understanding of proportion and composition and close attention to good standards of finish. Pupils' work throughout shows references to the art of their own and other cultures.
159. Standards in the Sixth Form are high. Students' personal studies are often of an exceptionally high standard, showing extensive research and a mature grasp of artists' intentions and ways of working. Students are articulate in discussing their work. They are well aware of themselves as artists and this is reflected in their competent handling of a variety of media to realise their ideas. Work shows clear development and exploration of ideas in a creative response to coursework tasks.
160. Attitudes are very good in all years and in the Sixth Form they are excellent. This is because teachers in the department have created a working atmosphere in which it is acceptable to be keen to learn, to work hard and to do well. The department makes a strong contribution to pupils' and students' personal development in the way it develops their confidence and competence as they move through the school. They develop their own sense of style and pride in their achievements. They respond well to suggestion and the great majority engage in a creative dialogue with their teachers, which leads to improved standards of work. Pupils support each other and respect one another's work. Their positive attitudes contribute significantly to their progress.
161. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned to challenge pupils of all levels of ability. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and this underpins their authority in the classroom. They present projects in ways that arouse pupils' enthusiasm, so that there is often a buzz of creative excitement in lessons and learning is enjoyable. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and students; they are approachable but demand high standards of work and behaviour. Pupils appreciate teachers' high level of support, which is geared to individual needs and often accompanied by effective demonstrations to promote progress. A number of pupils in different classes commented that they did not think that they could achieve such high standards but that their teachers made it possible. Lessons are usually conducted at a very good pace to make very good use of time.

162. The overall quality of learning is very good because teachers carefully plan the sequential development of skills to build pupils' confidence. They successfully communicate their enthusiasm for the subject so that pupils become engaged in creative activity and want to achieve high standards. The use of assessment, both informally and formally, contributes a great deal to the quality of learning. Pupils know how well they are doing and the system of target setting means that they know what they have to do to improve. Pupils enter the school with a wide variety of previous experience and overall standards of attainment that are below average for their age. High quality teaching enables pupils of all levels of attainment to make good progress through the school so that by the age of 16 overall standards are high and those who follow Sixth Form courses achieve very high standards in relation to their prior attainment.
163. The department is very well led in a collaborative style that makes best use of teachers' complementary strengths. Key strengths are the shared commitment to improvement and the effective monitoring of performance to enable appropriate action to be taken, which are reflected in the high standards that the department maintains. A particular feature of work in the department, and on display around the school, is the celebration of the cultural diversity of pupils' backgrounds through art. The department makes a significant contribution to the school's wider aims in the way it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
164. The department has adequate resources for most of its work. However, it is unable to meet National Curriculum requirements to teach elements of the programme of study for information and communication technology because it does not have sufficient provision of computers and the necessary equipment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

165. Although standards are below those expected nationally, they have improved dramatically over the past four years.
166. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average. By the end of Key Stage 3, these improve but remain low with only about a third of pupils attaining levels that are expected for their age. Work seen in lessons indicates standards below average for the current Year 9 but improving in Years 7 and 8. Progress with learning is good and there is often good understanding of the design process by the end of the key stage with pupils able to generate a specification and develop their ideas through diagrams and notes. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and also make good progress. Pupils effectively learn about systems and control technology and how mechanisms operate. They learn to work with textiles, food, metal, plastics and wood and develop a range of graphical skills. Pupils can apply their practical skills to this range of materials although they do not have sufficient opportunities to finish their practical work to a high standard. Access to computers is limited and pupils make little use of information and communication technology to develop their work. Knowledge and understanding of materials and processes are developed alongside practical work but are still below what is typically expected by the end

of the key stage. Achievement of both boys and girls is good over the key stage given their very low levels on entry.

167. Standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with the national average and are very high in the area of graphics. In the 2000 GCSE design and technology examinations, 51 per cent of pupils gained the higher A*-C grades. This was in line with the national average as was the overall pass rate and represents a significant improvement on the 1999 figure of 44 per cent. Standards were very high in graphic products where 91 per cent of the boys and 87 per cent of the girls gained the higher A*-C grades. In food technology, girls' achievement was good and 52 per cent gained the higher A*-C grades. In resistant materials, achievement was also good with 58 per cent of boys and 61 per cent of girls gaining grades above a C. Comparing their results with their averages across their other subjects, pupils are achieving well in design and technology. Standards in lessons, particularly in graphics and food, are high with pupils showing levels of practical skills and independence that are supported by sound knowledge and understanding of what they are doing. Progress in their learning is good by both boys and girls as they broaden their knowledge and build upon their practical experiences from Key Stage 3. Some pupils, particularly those with computers at home, develop their information and communication technology skills and can use these, for example, to present the results of a research questionnaire.
168. In the Sixth Form there has been a good take up for the new AS-level course, but overall levels of knowledge and understanding, particularly in the area of computer aided design, are below what is typically found at this level. Access to modern design software is not yet available and this, together with the wide range of ability and weak personal study skills of some students, has resulted in slow progress to date.
169. The quality of teaching within the department is good overall and ensures that in the great majority of lessons pupils' progress is good. Pupils benefit from specialist teachers who can communicate their subject matter effectively and teaching was very good in over half the lessons seen.
170. Teachers have clear plans, assess pupils' work regularly and support pupils with their learning through clear guidance on how to improve, which motivates pupils. Skills and knowledge are taught well alongside practical activities. Regular testing at the end of units of work at Key Stage 3 checks this knowledge and understanding and helps to ensure that individuals are working to their capabilities. There is scope for more information to be given to pupils to help them know their strengths and weaknesses and have the opportunity to improve. Pupils show real enthusiasm for their work, as was the case in a Year 9 lesson where pupils were inspired by the topic and worked very industriously cutting and shaping leaves in steel as part of a group sculpture in metal. Teachers manage pupils very well and, particularly in food and graphics lessons, have high expectations for pace of working. For example, in a Year 7 food lesson, in which there were many pupils with special educational needs, the teacher involved pupils in the practical demonstration, getting them to crack eggs and weigh ingredients and ensured that they understood by regular questioning that kept them on their toes. The learning was supported by well-prepared written materials, which were matched to the needs of the pupils and provided guidance for the homework that was

linked to the lesson. In a Year 10 graphics lesson, the teacher clearly explained the design task and sequence and method of working which ensured that pupils understood and made very good progress designing and making their card packaging.

171. Teachers have good understanding of the examination requirements at Key Stage 4, which enables them to give clear guidance to pupils. In the best lessons, teachers regularly assess pupils' work and make very good use of questioning to check knowledge and understanding and involve pupils in their learning. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils studying mass production methods in the food industry made good progress and showed good independence with their learning. This was because the teacher had clearly explained the key concepts of the topic and provided very good guidance on how to improve through individual discussion and assessment.
172. Teaching is less effective when teachers spend too much time directing pupils through talking and miss opportunities to use questioning to involve pupils or provide information in other ways. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils were using computers to write letters as part of their research on local businesses. The teacher had good knowledge of information and communication technology but relied upon giving all the instructions and guidance verbally. Opportunities were missed to provide information in written form so pupils could access this independently and make better progress. In the Sixth Form, teaching is satisfactory overall but there is a tendency for teachers to instruct students without involving them sufficiently in discussion, which slows learning.
173. Overall, pupils are very well behaved and have good attitudes to work, which helps learning and makes for productive lessons. Pupils respond positively to teachers and show respect for each other and their environment. Relationships are good between pupils and when given opportunities they work well together in pairs and groups. These factors are contributing significantly to pupils' progress.
174. Management of the department is good and provides clear guidance and systems for marking and assessment that enable the department to function efficiently. Planning has clearly identified areas for development and there has been good improvement in teaching and standards as a result. Curricular opportunities are good with opportunities for all pupils to gain experience in all areas of design and technology at Key Stage 3. Schemes of work have been reviewed and refined to meet the demands of Curriculum 2000 and now provide better coverage of the National Curriculum. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to make use of computers to develop their work, as resources for computer-aided design and manufacturing are limited. There has been some refurbishment of accommodation but workshops are in urgent need of attention to improve the quality of the learning environment.

GEOGRAPHY

175. Standards are below those expected nationally but they are improving.
176. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards are below national expectations but there is quite marked evidence in classroom observations and written work that, in Years 7 and 8, standards are approaching the national averages. In these years pupils are demonstrating

greater geographical awareness and are beginning to make deductions and make connections in their investigations, for example, into the Black Country's development. Their oral skills are generally in advance of their written capabilities but throughout the key stage they write in a clear and accurate manner and, although this is only descriptive work, it is often at some length. Equally they present statistical data clearly in graphical and other forms.

177. The proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*-C in 2000 was significantly below the national average, although there was some improvement on 1999. All pupils entered achieved grades A*-G. There was a significant decline in the number of pupils entered for GCSE in 2000. The observation of lessons and the scrutiny of written work during the inspection confirm that most pupils are able to exercise geographical skills and understand environmental change. Their written work is always clear and frequently word-processed.
178. When compared with their prior attainment, pupils are generally making good progress in Key Stage 4. As a result of the encouraging atmosphere in classrooms and a strong grounding in geographical knowledge and techniques, they are showing considerable improvement. Pupils are enthusiastic about their geographical enquiries and this motivation is contributing to a very positive situation.
179. Standards in the Sixth Form are below those typically found nationally. In the last two years, almost all candidates have achieved a pass grade, but very few have achieved the higher grades A-B.
180. Teaching is sound. It is often good. Its strengths are in strong subject knowledge; the careful and reinforced use of learning objectives; the creation of an encouraging atmosphere which promotes participation and the exercise of skills; the promotion of access for pupils with special educational needs and the sharing of the moral values which arise from various geographical challenges and phenomena. The principal weakness in teaching is that there is inadequate challenge for pupils, in the sense that they are insufficiently being guided into exercising the analytical and deductive skills required for the higher attainment levels. Teachers' on-going assessment does not adequately identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
181. Action planning is in place and this has identifiable time-tables and success criteria. The present plan identifies the incorporation of information and communication technology into the regular curriculum as an urgent priority as well as the further development of fieldwork.

HISTORY

182. Overall standards are below those expected nationally for pupils of this age group.
183. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards in history are below the national average. This is partly because of the difficulties pupils have in demonstrating their knowledge and understanding clearly in writing.
184. There is some evidence from lessons and pupils work that standards are improving. During Years 7 to 9, pupils are developing a sound level of historical knowledge. In lessons, their answers to questions show that they have gained knowledge of the Romans, the Civil War

and some key events in the twentieth century. In one Year 8 lesson, pupils demonstrated a good level of knowledge about the events leading to the Civil War and were developing a sound understanding of the case for and against Charles I. Written work shows that most pupils are able to describe aspects of the past, for example, the Roman army, but find providing explanations more difficult. Their understanding of key historical concepts such as change, cause and consequence and their ability to express their understanding clearly is less well developed. The quality of pupils' written work is improving and some examples of well structured extended writing throughout this key stage were seen.

185. The percentage of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C was well below the national average in 2000. The percentage gaining grades A*-G was slightly below the national average. No pupil gained the very highest grades. The average points score was below the national average and a significant number of pupils did not achieve their predicted grades. Girls' performance was better than that of boys. Comparing their results in GCSE examinations with their averages across their other subjects, pupils are under-achieving in history.
186. The department has started to address the low standards in a number of ways. The GCSE syllabus has been changed to one with a focus on the modern world which is considered to be more interesting, clearer targets are being set for pupils and more emphasis is being given to developing the skills to answer questions within a limited time frame. This is beginning to have an impact on the progress pupils are making. Pupils in a Year 11 class were developing a sound knowledge of collectivisation under Stalin and were able to discuss sources in terms of bias and propaganda. Pupils do find it difficult to develop their answers in depth, bring together a range of information and produce well organised written work.
187. A small number of students take history at A-level. In 2000, all students gained a grade C. These were all boys as no girls entered for history. This year the group is very small. In lessons seen, these students showed a good level of knowledge about Hitler's rise to power. They were able to engage in a constructive discussion about who might have been responsible for the Reichstag fire and their possible motives. Students have developed good study skills which support their learning.
188. Pupils who are lower attainers make sound progress in gaining historical knowledge but progress less well in developing their conceptual understanding. Often they lack the literacy skills necessary to perform well in history.
189. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In one third of lessons seen it was good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge which enables them to give informative presentations and build on pupils' responses to questions. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils at the beginning of lessons, although there are, on occasions, too many learning objectives for those in lower sets. The tasks teachers devise are usually appropriate and support learning although on a small number of occasions pupils spend too much time on an activity which is not adding to their learning. Instructions for tasks are not always clear and this affects the pace of lessons as pupils try to clarify what it is they have to do. Teachers do challenge pupils to think by asking probing questions although paired and group discussions are not used to their full potential to help pupils develop their understanding of historical concepts.

190. Teachers expect pupils to work hard in lessons and behave well. This ensures a clear focus on learning and a good pace to lessons. Pupils respond positively to these high expectations. In every lesson observed, teachers built a good rapport with pupils, encouraging them by giving helpful feedback and appropriate support. Lesson planning is good and teachers take account of pupils' different learning needs through the provision of appropriate materials and support. There is an increasing focus on improving pupils' literacy skills, with attention being given to key words, spelling, punctuation and the development of extended writing skills. In the lessons observed, appropriate homework was set which extended or consolidated pupils' learning.
191. Pupils respond well to the work which is planned for them in lessons. They are eager to answer questions although, sometimes, they have to be reminded not to shout out. They are generally attentive and apply themselves to the tasks they have been set. They get on well with each other and, when provided with the opportunities, work productively in pairs and groups. Some pupils lack the confidence to get on with their work independently and require considerable support from teachers.
192. The head of department has a clear understanding of the need to raise standards which is shared by other members of the department. Staff are already working to improve the quality of teaching and assessment in order to raise standards. There is an appropriate focus on improving pupils' literacy skills starting in Year 7 and the department is looking at ways of making history more interesting. There is insufficient analysis of performance information and the monitoring of the quality of teaching has not yet begun.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

193. Results of the teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show that at this school fewer pupils gain National Curriculum Level 5 and above than the national average. However, the percentages of pupils attaining Level 5 and over have risen steadily over the past three years and the targets for 2001 are near the national averages. Pupils' attainment in lessons seen on many aspects of information and communication technology were in line with the national average. Pupils make good progress throughout the key stage. As they enter school at the age of 11, most pupils have a limited experience of using computers, and they quickly have to become used to different types of equipment and programs and to be responsible for saving, retrieving and printing their own work on increasingly demanding tasks.
194. By the age of 14, pupils know how to log on to the network, use passwords, call up programs and use them to work with words, numbers and graphics. Word processing skills are generally good. A few of the lower-attaining pupils have difficulties with spelling and punctuation, but they use the spell-checker and thesaurus successfully to increase their word and grammar skills. Pupils who have English as an additional language often struggle with understanding what they read and usually have simpler texts given to them. Keyboard skills are variable. Some pupils easily find the keys they need and the higher-attaining pupils use short cuts to speed up their work, but some pupils, usually boys, only use one hand when working at the keyboards which slows down their work rate. Letter writing is good as pupils

understand how to set them out and most of them can do mail-merge to send similar letters to multiple addresses. Pupils have few opportunities to create their own pictures, but they all know about calling-up *clip art* to insert it into their texts to make the work more attractive to the reader. Poster work on this aspect is good.

195. Pupils by the age of 14 understand what databases are and what information may be held therein. Most pupils know how to collect data and add it to a database, but only the higher-attaining pupils can search and sort successfully. Spreadsheet work is satisfactory. Pupils use cells, rows and columns and understand that results are calculated by inserting formulae. Few pupils at this key stage know how to create formulae themselves. Pupils are relatively unskilled in data logging as they only have one short module in Year 7 on this work. Control technology is sound as pupils in Years 7 to 9 experience appropriate activities using control boxes, and the work is progressive. Most pupils know something of the Internet and are used to finding information on web sites. Higher-attaining pupils sometimes compare sites that give similar information, showing increased understanding and powers of discrimination. As yet there are few pupils who communicate freely by e-mail, but most of them have clear ideas about the advantages and disadvantages of using this facility. Most pupils, including the higher-attaining pupils, do not keep their papers and files in logical order. When they revisit a topic they cannot recall previous work easily and so waste time in remembering what tasks they attempted.
196. Standards are below those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils do not take GCSE courses in information and communication technology at the end of Year 11. The pupils who take GNVQ courses take a key skills module wherein they study aspects of this subject such as desk top publishing, e-mail, Internet searching, databases and spreadsheets. Most of these pupils gain at least a pass grade. Other pupils are expected to build on to the basic skills learned during the first three years in school, by using them in other subjects. In practice this does not happen on a regular basis. Most pupils' books and files show little evidence of their information and communication technology skills being used and developed systematically in other subjects. Consequently, pupils make little if any progress in this subject during the key stage.
197. Students in the Sixth Form attain high standards at A-level. In 1999, all candidates gained a pass grade, with 11 out of the 12 gaining a B or a C. In 2000, all candidates again attained a pass grade, with 10 out of the 12 students gaining a C or D. Students' results in this subject compare very favourably with their results in other subjects. These standards are reflected in the work of current students. As most students did not have formal lessons in the subject during their first five years in school they work extremely hard to gain the skills, knowledge and understanding required for advanced level work. They make good progress throughout the two-year course. Students who take the key-skills course are building up their knowledge satisfactorily and using it on modules to show understanding in the required elements of the subject. Many of these students have no previous knowledge of information and communication technology and make good progress throughout the course.
198. By the time they are 18, students are mainly adept at using all the programs, equipment and facilities available in school. They understand the purposes of operating systems, analyse

software, produce technical guides to enable an end-user with limited skills to enhance their use of a system, manipulate data in word and number, use complex graphics, and know about computer law. They have good knowledge of information and communication technology in business, industry and education and the impact of it on society. Computer practical work is good, but students' presentation skills vary. Printed work is usually good, but sometimes lacks annotation to explain the processes undertaken. Hand-written papers are not always legible. Some students, usually girls, keep their work tidy and systematically ordered.

199. The qualities of teaching and learning are good. In the 11 lessons observed during the inspection, four were either excellent or very good, six were good or satisfactory and only one was unsatisfactory. The weaknesses in the unsatisfactory lesson were caused by the teacher's lack of understanding of the pupils' capabilities and the low-level off-screen tasks allocated which bore no relationship to the topic.
200. The specialist teachers know their subject thoroughly and give pupils and students correct information that helps them to gain skills and understanding. Non-specialist teachers, who take the groups in Key Stage 3, usually have sufficient knowledge of the topic to keep pupils moving on, but do not always know the levels at which pupils should be performing for their age. Teachers are good demonstrators. They select suitable programs and devise interesting tasks to ensure that pupils draw upon the information and have enough work to do. Tasks are often matched to pupils' abilities, for example, simpler texts are available for those with poor literacy skills, and more challenging work is available for the more capable and confident pupils. Lessons usually proceed as planned, with good opening sessions to focus pupils' attention on task, remind them about the work and issue instructions for the lesson. During practical sessions, teachers and classroom assistants move well to check progress and they intervene if pupils are struggling. Questioning is purposeful. It gives the lower-attaining pupils confidence and makes the higher-attaining pupils think further than the obvious. At the end of lessons, teachers check with the pupils if the objectives have been realised and issue homework to consolidate the learning. No pupils are disadvantaged if they do not have a computer at home, as the tasks do not require one.
201. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. Pupils say they like working with computers and try hard in sessions. They behave well, so teachers do not have to waste time in gaining order and discipline. Teachers allow pupils scope for experimentation which improves their motivation. Marking, however, varies between teachers. At best, it is clear with marks and grades and useful comments to help pupils to improve their work. At worst it consists merely of ticks and congratulatory comments. Although most pupils know what National Curriculum levels are, they are unsure of what is appropriate for their age.
202. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is patchy. Some departments, such as design and technology, special educational needs, business and vocational education use computers often. Other departments such as history, geography, English, mathematics and science sometimes use them for accessing the Internet, word processing, improving number skills and data logging, but on an irregular basis. Most departments accept there is a need to improve the amount of computer work attempted to

secure pupils' progress in the subject, particularly at Key Stage 4, where, at present, not all pupils are receiving their entitlement in the subject and the school is in breach of statutory requirements.

203. The head of the department is a particularly enthusiastic and talented teacher and her leadership of the department is good. Staff duties and deployment are clearly set out. The development plan is well written and focuses on standards, teaching, assessment practices, cross-curricular work, and the introduction of accredited courses for pupils in Key Stage 4. There have been many improvements since the appointment of the head of the department four years ago. New members of staff have been appointed and there is now very good technical backup with two technicians and a network manager who give good support in lessons to both pupils and teachers. There is a new, more realistic, scheme of work that fully complies with recommendations at Key Stage 3 where standards are rising steadily. The A-level course for Sixth Form students from this, and a nearby school, is increasingly popular. Teachers may attend nationally funded training courses to improve their skills and they and the pupils now have access to more and better facilities in specially-planned accommodation.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

204. Pupils' attainment overall at ages 14 and 16 is below the national averages but it is clearly improving and pupils are achieving well within the context of this school.
205. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, 43 per cent of pupils attained Level 4 or above, well below the national average, but the figure in 2000 was 51 per cent, still below average, but a marked improvement to standards close to those attained in core subjects.
206. In GCSE examinations, the percentage of pupils gaining grades A*-C has doubled over the last three years in French, from 18 to 36 per cent. This is still below the national average, but when pupils' scores in French are compared with their averages in their other subjects it is clear that pupils are achieving well in French. In German, the A*-C figure is well below the national average, but again measuring performance by comparison with performance in other subjects, attainment is only marginally below the standard pupils would have been expected to attain. A higher than average proportion of pupils entering a modern foreign language gained an A* to G grade. All pupils who took a GCSE in Urdu or Punjabi gained a C grade or better, which compares well with the national picture.
207. 38 per cent of 16 years olds at King's leave the compulsory stage of education with at least a grade C in a modern foreign language: This compares well with the overall picture in England which stands at just over 41 per cent. Girls perform better than boys, the difference being greater in French and less in German than the picture nationally, but from observations of work of pupils currently in the school this difference is narrowing.
208. Standards of work observed during the inspection confirm the improvement in attainment. The range of attainment mirrors the range nationally, but with a lower proportion of highest attainers. Based on their prior attainment in foreign languages, pupils of all ages, across the

full range of attainment, are making at least satisfactory progress; and are reaching at least the standards that might be expected. There are indications that some pupils, more so in French than in German, have actually made better progress than expected.

209. In reading and listening, pupils make satisfactory progress in all years. They learn to understand an increasing range of vocabulary and structures and can extract meaning effectively from what they hear or read. The scope and complexity of the texts they deal with, though, remains relatively narrow in both key stages. There are few opportunities to extend these two skills beyond the confines of the materials contained in commercial textbooks and tapes through, for example, independent reading and listening.
210. In writing, pupils learn to copy-write accurately in the earliest stages, and build their skill and understanding through progressively more demanding tasks. Most show a reasonable grasp of some important basic grammar by the end of Key Stage 3 and extend this into Key Stage 4 and exam-focused work.
211. Skills in speaking are developed through regular practice. Pupils can take part reasonably successfully in very closely prescribed and predictable exchanges and dialogues. Accents and intonation are satisfactory in most cases, but many pupils lack confidence and remain somewhat tongue-tied without a lot of reliance on a textual model. Few take the initiative to use the foreign language in class for everyday purposes.
212. The basics are learnt successfully by almost all learners, but only a few develop skills and understanding at higher and extended levels. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in languages because of the quality of support they receive and because of their positive attitudes.
213. Pupils in all years show positive attitudes to their work in modern foreign languages. Behaviour in lessons is good. This is a positive situation, and has a positive impact upon the potential for good learning and progress in the subject. Pupils usually work co-operatively with their peers, and this supports learning where there is a need to communicate with and help a partner.
214. Few pupils develop a strong capacity for taking the initiative in extending their own learning in the subject. Most are more willing to follow the lead of their teachers and work only within the limits set. There are occasional exceptions, for example, where some pupils in Year 8 responded with interest to an open ended writing task in French on healthy living, or to a writing task describing details of house and home in Year 10. They personalise what they write, using reference materials appropriately. But the overall picture of relative dependency, even amongst older pupils at Key Stage 4, is an important feature in that it places an additional premium upon the skill of their teachers to set high expectation and choose challenging methods to match.
215. Modern foreign languages teaching is good in both key stages. A major reason for this is that the specialists put a lot of hard work into planning and preparing lessons. They choose strategies and activities carefully within a framework of clear objectives for the learning.

Teachers present the work well, and interact frequently with the pupils in a positive and encouraging way. They give help and extra direction to those who need it, often adapting and preparing materials specifically to try to meet the different needs of different groups.

216. Teachers know their subject well and have the skills to teach it effectively. Planning is good - at the broader level of longer-term schemes of work, as well as at the level of individual lessons. Teachers effectively prepare and adapt additional learning and teaching materials. Expectations are appropriate, with the right level of challenge being presented to the learners in line with their particular stage of learning and their ability. Challenging use of the foreign language is a feature of better lessons.
217. The department uses a range of methods to ensure that pupils make progress in all four aspects of the subject. That said, there is scope in most lessons for an increased emphasis to be put on intensive and active oral practice by the pupils themselves. In many classes, pupils' confidence and competence in speaking and listening are limited by the lack of sufficient exposure to native speakers speaking the language, for example, on tape recordings.
218. Time is usually used effectively. Lessons start briskly, and a good range of tasks is built in to each period. Teachers show effective class management. They have authority and control, as a result of having clear expectations and good relevant lesson plans, plus positive and encouraging relationships with pupils.
219. In presenting new work and introducing particular tasks, teachers make it interesting and clear - often visual aids are used to help the focus and to hold attention, although it might be even more effective if overhead projectors were to be used more. Teachers involve the pupils in the work; not just getting them to do the activities, but helping them to think about what they are doing and to evaluate their own learning to an extent. Feedback and assessment during lessons are effective and help the learning; misunderstandings are usually spotted and dealt with and efforts by individuals are praised. Appropriate homework is set and followed up regularly.
220. Pupils are learning and making progress in all years, and across different ability groups. Not many develop high levels of confidence, or show real ability to extend their own learning independently, but in their lessons and their homework tasks, most get on steadily with what is needed, and progress at a satisfactory pace. Whilst for some pupils, concentration can be a problem sometimes, nonetheless teachers are able to ensure enough effort and focus for enough of the time so that progress is sustained.
221. In brief: teachers are clear about what they are doing, pupils know what is expected of them, the teaching is good, and as a result the pupils learn reasonably well in most cases.
222. Pupils' progress in both key stages is effectively monitored, and regularly recorded. The subject leader shows good vision and is providing an effective sense of direction for modern foreign languages. Current action planning is focused and appropriate. There is a procedure for monitoring classroom practice, with regular and planned lesson observation and detailed written and verbal feedback. Early evidence suggests that this helps the development of

improved effectiveness of teaching. But this aspect is only part way along the road to confident self-evaluation by the specialist department, which will help even more to sustain improvements in learning and teaching.

223. This is clearly an improving department and, in working to sustain the improving performance of pupils, it is right to focus on: developing current monitoring arrangements into skilled, confident self-review; making more explicit planned differences in learning outcomes according to different needs and abilities of pupils; ensuring consistently good practice in marking and feedback; increasing the integration of elements of information and communication technology into the programmes for all pupils; exploring and exploiting use of the overhead projector; maximising lesson-time for the development, through intensive and frequent practice, of speaking skills; promoting more modern foreign languages involvement in the Sixth Form.

MUSIC

224. Overall, attainment is below what is expected nationally, with standards higher in Years 7 and 8 than for older pupils.
225. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards are below average with standards higher in Years 7 and 8 than in Year 9. Pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 achieve slightly higher standards in composing and listening and appraising music than in performing. In listening activities, pupils use appropriate terminology to analyse music and to explain why it achieves its particular effect. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the musical characteristics of Indian classical music and used this knowledge to create idiomatic compositions. Performances are generally fluent at a basic level but there are weaknesses of ensemble when pupils play together or attempt to co-ordinate right and left hands on the keyboard. No significant differences were observed between the standards achieved by boys, girls or different ethnic groups.
226. At the end of Key Stage 4 GCSE results in 2000 were well below the national average with only 36 per cent of pupils gaining grades A*-C. In Year 11 there are some very good examples of minimalist compositions which demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of style. In Year 10, compositions are more basic but demonstrate an awareness of the importance of structuring compositions and the effective use of timbre. There were some very good flute, piano and drum performances heard but also examples of very hesitant keyboard playing.
227. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, it was never less than satisfactory, with over 80 per cent of lessons in Years 7 to 9 being good or very good. In the two GCSE lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory in one and good in the other. Teaching throughout was characterised by high expectations, strong relationships between pupils and teachers, well-structured lessons and clear explanations of learning aims. Teaching provided well for pupils with special educational needs through differentiated worksheets, sensitive questioning and by involving them in musical activity. Pupils assess their own work and that of others sensitively, and are able to set their own targets for further learning. Teachers' use of written work is exemplary, being clearly linked to music learning

and experience. The presence in many lessons of learning support staff who have musical skills contributes significantly to pupils' achievement.

228. Teachers make very good use of electronic keyboards. Pupils are encouraged to think carefully about the sounds they use and this contributes significantly to the effectiveness of their compositions. In addition, teachers insist on pupils using appropriate fingering which results in performances that are, for the most part, fluent and accurate. The department has not yet developed the use of computer-based information and communication technology.
229. Occasionally, teaching is less effective when pupils are asked to listen to music that does not clearly exemplify the learning aims of the lesson or does not relate well to their interests. Sometimes teachers use talk to explain musical concepts when these would be better illustrated through listening to music or through musical demonstrations by the teacher.
230. Pupils' attitudes to learning in music lessons were good or very good in almost all lessons observed and were never less than satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy music and feel secure in expressing themselves through talking about music as well as composing and performing it. They enjoy working in friendship groups and are appreciative of the opportunities provided for independent learning. Their positive attitudes contribute well to their progress. They speak warmly of the quality of teaching provided by both members of the department.
231. Management of the department is very good. The head of department, appointed in May 2000, has been a key factor in raising standards. Highly detailed schemes of work provide wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to experience music of many different styles as active, critical listeners, composers and performers. In addition, the head of department has mentored a newly qualified teacher who is herself a highly effective teacher and has also developed and managed an extensive programme of instrumental teaching. Teaching materials are well produced and provide clearly for the range of attainments within a group. Assessment systems monitor well pupils' progression at the level of general musical criteria. In addition, teaching, worksheets and wall displays focus on assessment criteria specific to the musical style being studied, consequently providing pupils with detailed criteria for success.
232. A wide range of extra-curricular activities has been developed over the past year. A string ensemble rehearsal, taken by a newly qualified teacher, was well structured, had good pace, and was delivered with humour and flair. The music, arranged by the teacher, provided well for the wide range of abilities within the group. This session also benefited from the additional support given by the head of department and a visiting string teacher.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

233. Attainment at ages 14 and 16 is below that expected nationally for these age groups. The majority of pupils have standards below national expectation on entry to the school, but most pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 3 and by Year 9 they are working towards the expected Level 5 of the National Curriculum. Some pupils are working at or beyond this level. In Key Stage 4, the attainment of most pupils remains

below national expectation even though progress in lessons is at least satisfactory. Pupils taking GCSE physical education consistently achieve above what is typically expected. For example, some pupils have developed advanced skills in football; they send and receive the ball accurately and consistently at pace and under pressure, selecting appropriate tactics for defence and attack.

234. The quality of teaching overall is good. It is sometimes very good. In the best lessons, teachers' planning identifies clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils in order to ensure they understand and focus on the purpose of the lesson. A variety of learning tasks are set and these are well matched to the prior learning of pupils, providing appropriate challenge to those achieving high, average and lower standards. Pupils with challenging behaviour are given individual attention and support, ensuring their inclusion in learning tasks. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to enable pupils to learn effectively and their achievement and progress are summarised and celebrated.
235. Where teaching is weaker learning objectives are too broad and common tasks fail to challenge all pupils. There is an over reliance on directions or commands, inhibiting the development of pupils' understanding and opportunities for them to take initiative and responsibility in learning. Excessive time is spent setting learning tasks. This, together with pupils' slow exit from changing rooms in some girls' lessons, reduces active learning time and opportunity for learning.
236. The curriculum provides good learning opportunities for pupils. It meets statutory requirements and provides a well-balanced programme of activities in Key Stage 3. The increasing range of accredited courses in Key Stage 4 serves to motivate pupils and, together with the awards system in the department, ensures the recognition and celebration of pupils' progress and achievement. The programme of extra-curricular activities provides a broad range of recreational and competitive activities that are well supported by pupils.
237. The leadership and management of the department are good. Curriculum and development planning provide a secure framework for teaching and a clear sense of direction and purpose among staff. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the department identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for development. The decorative state of the physical education area provides a poor environment for learning despite the efforts of the department in making notice boards attractive and interesting for pupils. None of the indoor teaching areas, changing areas or the hard play area meet health and safety standards. This, together with the absence of a physical education office to accommodate all members of the department, militates against improved standards.
238. Resources are used effectively, although time spent by teachers targeting support to pupils on the register of special educational needs reduces the attention and guidance given to others in the group. The limited range of equipment used in lessons also reduces opportunity to challenge all pupils through appropriate tasks.

