

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BEAUMONT LEYS SCHOOL**

LEICESTER

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120281

Headteacher: Mrs Liz Logie

Reporting inspector: Mr George Knights  
3268

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 243900

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Anstey Lane  
Leicester

Postcode: LE4 0FL

Telephone number: 0116 2620257

Fax number: 0116 2515356

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. T. Byron

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                  |                      | Subject responsibilities                | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 3268         | George Knights   | Registered inspector | Equal opportunities                     | What sort of school is it?<br>Interpretation of results<br>How well are pupils and students taught?<br>How well is the school led and managed?<br>What sort of school is it><br>Key Stage 3 Strategy - mathematics |
| 19743        | Ann Taylor       | Lay inspector        |   | Attitudes, values and personal development/attendance<br>How well does the school care for its pupils and students?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?                                  |
| 30046        | Ross Parker      | Team inspector       | English                                 | Key Stage 3 Strategy - English   |
| 11548        | David Lee        | Team inspector       | Mathematics                             |  |
| 10561        | Angela Fraser    | Team inspector       | Science                                 |  |
| 3555         | Carol Emery      | Team inspector       | Information & communications technology |  |
| 18854        | Malcolm McGregor | Team inspector       | Design & technology                     | How good are curricular and other opportunities?   |
| 18670        | Peter Tidmarsh   | Team inspector       | Music                                   |  |
| 22458        | Gilbert McGinn   | Team inspector       | History                                 |  |
| 29806        | Jose Marshall    | Team inspector       | Modern foreign languages                |  |
| 8204         | John Sheffield   | Team inspector       | Art and design                          |  |
| 2628         | Jim Edwards      | Team inspector       | Physical education                      |  |
| 18673        | Richard Wilkins  | Team inspector       | Religious education                     |  |
| 12331        | Vera Grigg       | Team inspector       | Geography<br>Special educational needs  |  |

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Beaumont Leys School is a mixed comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 16 years of age. It is situated some two miles from the centre of the city of Leicester. Students generally live quite close to the school. Almost all students come from 13 primary schools in the local development group of schools. Attainment of students on entry to the school is below average. There are 1040 students on roll, making the school a little larger than average. The school is over-subscribed. A significant number of students are from low socio-economic backgrounds. Unemployment in the area is above the national average and the number of students eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Around a quarter of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds, with around half of these having English as an additional language. The number on the college's register of special educational needs is well above the national average and the number with statements of special educational needs is above average. Around three quarters of students transfer, at the end of Year 11, to further education or training.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Beaumont Leys is a good and improving school. It has many strengths, which far outweigh the areas where improvement is needed. Standards have risen rapidly in recent years, mainly because students now benefit from consistently good teaching. Leadership of the school is very strong and management is very effective. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school is very well led and managed, providing clear educational direction for all its work.
- It enables students to attain good results in national tests and examinations.
- Teachers create a secure environment in classrooms where students are confident to work and be seen to work.
- Consistently good teaching enables students to develop as learners and make good progress.
- The school encourages and develops very good relationships, based on respect and care for one another.
- The curriculum offered is continually refined in order to respond to the needs of all students.
- The provision of a programme of careers education and guidance in the school is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Some aspects of the management of provision for students with special educational needs.
- The role of middle managers in analysis and evaluation of work in order to bring about further improvement in the school.
- The ability of the school to be sure that it is catering well for the needs of students for whom English is an additional language.
- Levels of achievement in music and information and communication technology.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Standards in national tests for 14 year old students and in GCSE examinations have improved at a faster rate than nationally. Teaching and learning are now of a better quality and leadership and management have been strengthened through effective delegation of responsibilities. The school made good progress in dealing with the issues identified in the previous report. There has been good improvement in provision for design and technology and the school now provides a course in religious education for all its students. Middle manager training has helped these staff become more effective in their roles. Funding for students with special educational needs is now better balanced with overall expenditure than previously. Outdoor facilities have been improved. There has been unsatisfactory progress toward enabling all students to take part in a daily act of collective worship.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds, based on average point scores in national tests and GCSE examinations.

| Performance in:   | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-------------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                   | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                   | 1999          | 2000 | 2001 | 2001            |
| Key Stage 3 tests | D             | D    | C    | A               |
| GCSE examinations | C             | C    | C    | A               |

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

Standards in the school are broadly average, which represents good progress in students' learning. The achievement of students currently in the school suggests that improvements in standards will be maintained. Results at both key stages have risen faster than those nationally in recent years. Overall results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2001 were average and well above the average for similar schools. Results were broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Results in 2001 GCSE examinations were also broadly average. Almost all students who left the school in 2001 did so with at least one GCSE grade G or better. As a result of concerted work by teachers, there has been an improvement in the standards achieved by all students. A programme to support gifted and talented students helps these students achieve well. A planned programme to raise the attainment of boys has been successful and boys are now performing much better than at the time of the previous inspection. The school met its targets in 2001 and has set challenging, but achievable, targets for the next two years.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | These are good. Students enjoy their lessons, where they are keen to volunteer information.   |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Behaviour in classrooms is good. At lunch and break times students are more noisy and boisterous. The number of students excluded from school is low.                       |
| Personal development and relationships | Personal development is satisfactory. Relationships, both between adults and students and amongst the student body, are very good and are key in helping students to learn. |
| Attendance                             | Attendance is close to the national average overall. It is lower among older students in the school.  |

Students are polite and friendly. They are interested in their lessons, behave well and there is a good deal of respect shown for each other by students and teachers. Relationships are warm and supportive. Despite the school's hard work there is a significant number of students whose attendance is only sporadic.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of students: | Years 7 – 9 | Years 10 – 11 |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Quality of teaching   | Good        | Good          |

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

Teaching is good overall, with very good or excellent teaching occurring in a third of lessons. Consistently good teaching is helping students to learn well and is the major factor in raising levels of achievement. Teaching in science is very good throughout the school, whilst the teaching of English is good at Key Stage 4 and very good at Key Stage 3. Mathematics teaching is good throughout the school. In no subject is overall teaching quality unsatisfactory. Teachers are keen to present their subjects in lively and interesting ways and the overall quality of lesson planning is good. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is improving well in English and mathematics, but steps to develop literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects is under-developed. Work is well matched to the needs of students, with good attention to the needs of boys and, in most subjects, to the needs of the most able students.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment   |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | This is good. All students are able to follow the good range of courses offered in Key Stage 4.   |
| Provision for students with special educational needs   | This is satisfactory overall, but support may not target those with the greatest need.  |
| Provision for students with English as an additional language                                 | Unsatisfactory. The school does not have an effective register of these students and therefore their specific needs may not be met.   |
| Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The school makes good provision for students' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their cultural development. Its provision for their spiritual development is, however, unsatisfactory.                                    |
| How well the school cares for its students  | The school supports its students well because they are well known to both tutors and heads of year. Arrangements for mentoring are helping students to learn more effectively. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. |

Generally, all students follow the same course in Key Stage 3, though some linguistically able students are able to study a second modern foreign language in Year 9. The availability of some GNVQ courses enhances students' choices at Key Stage 4. There are some areas of non-compliance with requirements in the curriculum provided. A small number of students are not able to follow a music course in Year 9. Not all students are guided to follow a design and technology course in Key Stage 4, though all could take such a course. There is inadequate provision for students to meet the information and communication technology requirements in a range of subjects including mathematics, art and modern languages. The taught curriculum is enhanced by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for students to participate in.

The school works closely with parents, especially in situations where there are concerns about students' behaviour, work or attendance. Staff believe in consulting parents to find out their views and they modify their practice, when possible. The care and welfare of students is strong and the school caters well for the needs of individuals. Health and safety procedures are unsatisfactory.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | This is very good. The headteacher has given a strong lead in seeking to bring about improvements, based on a clear and well-articulated vision. Delegation of responsibility is good.  |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | The governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are progressively playing a greater role in strategic management. They do not ensure that the school fulfils all its statutory responsibilities. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | This is an area where there has been significant improvement, but there is scope for greater rigour in evaluating the quality of provision.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | This is satisfactory overall, though with some significant areas of strength.   |

Leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection because more senior and middle managers have been able to play an active part in supporting initiatives to bring about change. The leadership of the outgoing headteacher has been strong and central to moving the school forward. Recent changes in senior and middle management functions have established a firm framework for further development. There is a clear plan for further growth, set out within the school improvement plan. Staff are generally appropriately qualified and all are committed to helping students to learn effectively. Resources, considered to be inadequate at the time of the previous inspection, have been improved, though there are shortages of textbooks in some subjects and the deployment of computers does not ensure good access by all subject teachers. Accommodation is adequate for the curriculum and a rolling programme of re-decoration is beginning to create a more pleasant learning environment. The school applies the principles of best value well and makes satisfactory use of all resources available.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Before the inspection, eight parents attended a meeting with the Registered Inspector. Questionnaires were returned by 338 parents and additional comments were appended to 28 of these.

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school sets high expectations of what students will achieve.</li> <li>Teaching in the school is good, enabling students to make good progress.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>Children like coming to the school.</li> <li>The school is very open to parents' approaches with questions or concerns.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The information they receive about the progress of their children.</li> <li>Closer working between the school and parents.</li> <li>The range of activities for students outside lessons.</li> </ul> |

Inspectors agree with parents about those things that are most pleasing. Teaching in the school is good, enabling students to make good progress because there are, throughout the school, high levels of expectation about what students will achieve. Students like coming to the school. The school is very receptive to approaches of parents. Leadership and management of the school is strong. Inspectors do not agree with parental concerns about the quality and range of information provided for parents. The school's arrangements for reporting, both orally and in writing, to parents are adequate and of good quality. Inspectors consider that the school seeks to work closely with parents and welcomes parental involvement in their children's education. Inspectors also consider that the range

of activities for students outside lessons is good, though they recognise that many students do not take part in these.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

- 1 The attainment of students when they arrive in the school is below average. Students perform less well in national tests in English at the age of 11 than they do in mathematics and science. The school is aware of this because it has established good links with the primary schools from where most students come. Those students who require intensive support in literacy skills are taught English in small groups so that they can practise and improve the basic literacy skills necessary for them to cope with work in other subjects. Similarly, students who need to catch up with their basic numeracy skills are well supported in mathematics lessons. These aspects of the work of the school are typical of the commitment of managers and staff to helping all students achieve their potential. Because of consistently good teaching, students make good progress as they progress through the school and, by the time they leave, they are attaining broadly average standards.
  
- 2 In 2001, results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were close to the national average overall and were well above those in similar schools<sup>1</sup>. Table 1 sets out the full details for the three subjects in which students were tested. Results in all three subjects have improved at a faster rate than nationally in recent years. This improvement has largely been the result of significant improvements in the overall quality of teaching, which has resulted from the concerted efforts of all staff. Over the past three years the rate of improvement in standards has been greater in mathematics and science than it has in English. In 2001 tests, as in the previous two years, boys performed relatively better than girls in national tests. This reflects the successful work that teachers have done to improve the attainment of boys because it had previously been identified that they were under-performing.

**Table 1: Key Stage 3 (Year 9) results 2001**

| <b>Subject</b>    | <b>Boys</b> | <b>Girls</b>  | <b>Total</b> | <b>Standards compared to similar schools 2001 are</b> | <b>Recent school trends</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| English           | Average     | Average       | Average      | Above average   | Improving                   |
| Mathematics       | Average     | Below average | Average      | Well above average                                    | Improving                   |
| Science           | Average     | Below average | Average      | Well above average                                    | Improving                   |
| All core subjects | Average     | Below average | Average      | Well above average                                    | Improving                   |

- 3 The application by the English department of some methodology from the National Literacy Strategy is already promoting very high standards for some students currently in Year 7. The students' command of technical language and their grasp of concepts enables them to identify key features in different kinds of writing and to reproduce them in their own work. All students benefit from a greater understanding of the way that language works and a sharper focus on what they are expected to learn within each individual lesson. This is promoting higher standards across the school as teachers extend the use of new techniques to their lessons with students in every year.

<sup>1</sup> Similar school comparisons are made with schools having a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals.

- 4 The mathematics department has been applying some of the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy in its work for several years. As a result, students throughout Key Stage 3 have good numerical skills and this is helping them to achieve well in mathematics lessons. Students are acquiring greater confidence in applying their skills in a range of contexts within mathematics lessons. In some other subjects, including design and technology and science, students are able to further apply their mathematical skills and understanding. However, the school does not yet systematically monitor where such opportunities occur and so some potential applications are missed.
- 5 Standards in science have improved steadily since 1998, mainly as a result of the dedication of science teachers to improve the quality of their teaching. The department has developed a fresh approach to the science course, which amongst other benefits, provides significant challenges to the more able students who are encouraged to solve complex problems. Elsewhere in the curriculum, standards are broadly average in most subjects in Key Stage 3. They are below average in information and communication technology (ICT) and music, where teaching is less effective and students thus make less progress in lessons. Students are learning well in most subjects during their first three years in school, though their achievements are only satisfactory in religious education and art and are unsatisfactory in ICT and music.
- 6 Students make good progress during their last two years in school, building well on their achievements at the end of Key Stage 3. In GCSE examinations last year, students achieved results that represented good progress, given that this group of students scored below average results in national tests two years previously. Table 2 sets out the overall pattern of results in 2001. Overall results were close to the national average and were well above the average for similar schools. This represents a big improvement since the previous inspection, with results improving at a faster rate than the improvement nationally. Most impressive are the numbers of students gaining five or more grades G or better and one or more grades G or better. These results are testimony to the fact that the school has worked very hard, and successfully, to make sure that the vast majority of students, of all abilities, leave the school with a tangible reward for their hard work.

**Table 2: Year 2001 GCSE / GNVQ (Year 11) results overall**

|  | 2001 |       |       | Standards compared to all schools 2001 are | Standards compared to similar schools 2001 are | Recent school trends |
|--|------|-------|-------|--|--|----------------------|
|  | Boys | Girls | Total |  |  |                      |
| Percentage 5+ A*-C grades or GNVQ equivalent | 44   | 44    | 44    | Average                                    | Well above average                             | Improving            |
| Percentage 5+ A*-G grades or GNVQ equivalent | 92   | 94    | 93    | Above average                              | Well above average                             | Improving            |
| Percentage 1+ A*-G grades or GNVQ equivalent | 98   | 99    | 99    | Well above average                         | Well above average                             | Improving            |
| Average total GCSE points score per pupil    | 37.4 | 37.3  | 37.4  | Average                                    | Well above average                             | Improving            |

- 7 As at Key Stage 3, boys performed relatively better than girls in GCSE examinations in 2001. This has been a pattern for the past three years and is, as at Key Stage 3, a consequence of a programme of modification to teaching strategies to help improve the attainment of boys. The school is aware that there is now a need to explore ways in which the attainment of girls can be boosted, whilst maintaining the good performance of boys. A distinct feature of many lessons is that both boys and girls are confident to be seen to be working hard and striving to improve their

performance. It is these positive attitudes to work, nurtured by teachers, that has been a significant factor in bringing about overall improvement in standards.

- 8 In 2001, results in English and mathematics were a little below the national average, whilst those in science were above average. Elsewhere, results were above average in French and drama and were close to the national average in most other subjects except geography and art, where they were below average. Further details of subject performance in 2001 are set out in Table 3.

**Table 3: Year 2001 GCSE / GNVQ (Year 11) results by subject (percent A\* to C grades)**

| Subject                | School |       |       | National |       |       | Recent school trends |
|------------------------|--------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------------------|
|                        | Boys   | Girls | Total | Boys     | Girls | Total |                      |
| English Language       | 45.8   | 58.3  | 52.1  | 52.4     | 68.6  | 60.8  | Improving            |
| English Literature     | 43.6   | 63.2  | 53.2  | 47.9     | 64.3  | 56.1  | Improving            |
| Mathematics            | 42.7   | 34.9  | 38.9  | 47.5     | 48.6  | 48.1  | Improving            |
| Science (Combined)     | 69.6   | 44.4  | 56.9  | 48.9     | 51.0  | 50.0  | Improving            |
| Information Technology |        |       |       |          |       | 50.6  | Improving            |
| Art & Design           | 21.7   | 48.1  | 36.0  | 52.1     | 73.3  | 63.9  | Improving            |
| Design and Technology  | 48.0   |       | 47.4  | 42.1     | 59.4  | 50.6  | Improving            |
| Geography              | 31.9   | 27.6  | 30.3  | 53.1     | 59.9  | 56.1  | Improving            |
| History                | 46.7   | 58.8  | 53.1  | 54.0     | 60.8  | 57.5  | Improving            |
| MFL French             | 75.0   | 73.1  | 74.0  | 38.4     | 54.8  | 47.0  | Improving            |
| MFL German             | 20.0   | 80.0  | 60.0  | 45.7     | 59.9  | 53.1  | Improving            |
| PE or Sports Studies   | 57.1   | 25.0  | 50.0  | 51.2     |       | 52.3  | Broadly same         |
| Drama                  |        | 95.0  | 90.0  | 59.5     | 75.0  | 69.1  | Improving            |

N.B. Gaps in tables indicate that there were too few candidates to make reliable comparisons.

- 9 The work of students currently in Years 10 and 11 is broadly average overall. Standards in lessons are above average in science and below average in geography, art and music. Students are, because of generally effective teaching, learning successfully and thus achieving well in most lessons. Only in music, where there is currently insufficient specialist teaching, is achievement unsatisfactory in lessons at Key Stage 4. Students improve their numeracy and literacy skills well in English and mathematics, but as in Key Stage 3 there are not yet whole school strategies for enhancing these skills in other subjects. Similarly, students are not able to develop and apply their ICT skills in other subjects and thus their ability to do so is underdeveloped.
- 10 The school has set itself targets that reflect its commitment to improvement. In 2001, targets were broadly met in both key stages. Given that the school made good progress in order to achieve these targets, they were sufficiently challenging. For the next two years the school has set targets at Key Stage 3, which represent an aspiration to improve in English and to a maintenance of current standards in science and mathematics. The targets for Key Stage 4 also indicate an intention to bring about further improvement and, whilst challenging, the targets set by the school are realistic, given the good work being undertaken by teachers and their students.
- 11 Throughout the school there is a significant number of students from ethnic minority groups. Many, but not all of these, have English as an additional language. All are well integrated into their teaching groups and there is no evidence to suggest that these students are achieving less well than other students in the school. Apart from a small group of refugees, however, the school does not have an effective system for monitoring how well these students are progressing, nor ensuring that they receive all the help they may need. Senior managers in the school are aware of this and are taking the necessary steps to put procedures into place.

- 12 Students with special educational needs make good progress in lessons with the support of both teachers and classroom learning assistants. In subject departments, good account is taken of the needs of students who need additional help or who are making slower progress than others. However, the progress of students on the register of special educational needs is unsatisfactory. For example, there are 35 students in Year 11, who were placed on the lower stages of the Code of Practice in Year 7 and who have stayed at those levels. There are very few students who have moved up or down the register. This represents a failure to ensure that their needs have been properly met. Successful work has been undertaken in many subjects to ensure that the most able students are making good progress and achieving the high standards of which they are capable.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 13 Relationships in the school are very good. Behaviour in class is good and students have good attitudes to their education. These important school strengths are helping students to learn. The positive picture presented in the previous inspection report is still in evidence and relationships are even better than they were.
- 14 Students enjoy lessons and are very forthcoming when asked for their views in class. Parents agree that their children enjoy school. When teachers ask questions, there are usually several hands up to reply. Students come to lessons prepared to learn and they swiftly settle down to work. The quality of students' attitudes and behaviour closely mirrors how good the lesson is. Where lessons are interesting, varied, with lots of student involvement and activities that move at a fast pace, students respond very well. These characteristics are true of most lessons in school.
- 15 Positive attitudes to learning were clearly displayed in a history lesson for younger students where they were examining different sources to illustrate the Battle of Hastings. Here, the teacher's very lively start, with students using cards to indicate whether different pieces of historical evidence were primary or secondary sources, ensured students were involved, excited and fully alert. A dramatic touch where the teacher stood on a table to illustrate Harold's advantage on Senlac Hill ensured their complete and utter immersion in the subject, as well as their amazement, and their strong motivation to work and do well. Student's attitudes in this lesson were excellent because of the extremely high quality teaching.
- 16 Between staff and students, there is a good deal of mutual respect and shared humour. In class, relationships between students and their peers are also very good. They work as a group with the minimum of fuss and are prepared to listen to each other's point of view. Students who join school mid way through the year, and there are several who do, are made to feel welcome by others.
- 17 The school has a high mix of students from different races and there is racial harmony. Older students spoke about racism to inspectors. They explained they do not feel it is an issue in the school and confirmed that any racist comments are dealt with well by teachers. In two lessons, as part of the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, Year 7 students showed mature attitudes as they debated whether racism is right or wrong, having read about the history of black American people and their struggles for equality.
- 18 Students respect the feelings of others. In another PSHE lesson, the teacher shared with everyone his feelings of loss when a close relative was dying in hospital. This helped set the scene for a lesson on the arguments for and against euthanasia.



Students listened carefully and respectfully and, in the debate that followed, showed that the teacher's very personal introduction to the lesson had made an impact upon their thinking.

- 19 Behaviour is good in lessons. Parents are pleased with the quality of behaviour in the school. Students are polite, friendly and willing to talk about their work with visitors. When reminded about their behaviour by teachers, they generally modify it to meet the high standard expected. At lunch and break times, although behaviour is satisfactory overall, some students, especially boys, occasionally show a lack of self-restraint and can be more boisterous and noisy. Younger students expressed this view as well. The number of exclusions is low and represents a reduction since the previous inspection. There is a small amount of bullying in the school, but this is generally of a low level and is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Students indicate that they do not find the school in any way intimidating and regard it as a safe environment.
- 20 Students are positive about the value of the school council and point to improvements, such as an outside area being paved and covered, in response to their suggestions. Members of the council take their roles seriously and attend some governors' meetings to ensure their views are represented. A considerable amount of money is raised for charity, both by year groups and by individual students. Students in Year 8, who are currently fundraising for the National Canine Defence League have already raised around £750. Students volunteer to act as guides at parents' evenings and show prospective job applicants around school. Through their responsible attitudes and behaviour, students show themselves to be capable of a greater degree of responsibility than they are actually given.
- 21 The students who are known to have English as an additional language, and who receive support, have a very positive attitude to school and attend regularly. They stated that their acquisition of English has been entirely due to the support and encouragement that they receive in all lessons. They have started to make English friends, which reflects their confidence in spoken English. Students with special educational needs also have positive attitudes to school. In lessons, they work hard and want to learn. For example, one student was excited when he learnt that they were to have a spelling test.
- 22 Overall, attendance is very close to the national average. It has improved a little since the previous inspection and, compared to other schools in the city, is one of the highest. The unauthorised absence figure is above average because not all parents see the importance of explaining why their child is away. However, the school is working hard to encourage parents to support the school in its attempts to improve attendance. Attendance is lower among older students. This is due to a combination of factors. Some parents do not value education highly and condone their child's absence from school by, for example, sending in notes explaining illness or the like, whilst this may not actually be the correct reason. Members of staff are becoming more vigilant and do not automatically authorise absences, even when an explanation is provided. Some students, especially older ones, become disaffected with school for a range of social reasons. There is a small, but significant number of these students that the school is finding it very difficult to encourage back, despite their best endeavours. They have also found that a significant number of students with attendance problems are those who have joined the school mid way through an academic year. For some of these, the procedure of actually changing schools has taken some months, has caused considerable disruption to their lives and is reflected in their subsequent sporadic attendance. Intermittent attendance is

slowing the progress of a significant number of students. Punctuality to school is good and is carefully checked by senior staff.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 23 Teaching in the school is good overall and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. As a result, students achieve well in lessons, building on their knowledge and understanding and refining their skills. The improvement in teaching quality is a direct outcome of a commendable commitment by all staff to improve their work, coupled with an effective programme of staff training. During the inspection, students were learning well because of teaching, which was good or better in over three quarters of lessons and very good or excellent in a third. Only rarely was teaching unsatisfactory. Because teaching is consistently good, students respond well, show interest in their work and strive to do their best. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching between Key Stages 3 and 4. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3.
- 24 The previous inspection report highlighted that teaching of the most able students was less good than for others. This is no longer the case. A detailed programme of support for the most able students, funded by a grant from the Excellence in Cities<sup>2</sup> initiative, has meant that teachers are more aware of the need to meet the needs of these students, without jeopardising the progress of others. As a result, the gifted and talented students in the school are making good progress in most subjects, though less so in geography, modern languages and information and communication technology (ICT). Another successful initiative since the previous inspection has been to improve the attainment of boys who were, previously, performing less well than girls. Teachers have, through training and regular review of their work, developed strategies to use in lessons that have improved boys' achievements. The success of this work has been seen in results in public examinations. A refreshing aspect of many lessons observed during the inspection was the willingness of boys and girls to work together on tasks and projects. Teachers have established a climate in most classrooms where students are confident that they will not be ridiculed if they are seen to be striving to do well.
- 25 The teaching of English is very good overall. It is better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. This variation is largely to do with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy into Key Stage 3. Here, lessons are characterised by great pace, variety and a sharp focus on the exact skills to be learned. Assessment is immediate throughout the short activities and work is constantly adjusted to meet identified needs. Literacy skills are actively developed in some other subjects, through word banks and a wide variety of opportunities to speak, listen, read and write, but this is not consistent across all areas of the curriculum. Listening is a particular strength and forms the basis of literacy skills that are good overall.
- 26 The teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. The mathematics department has been adopting many of the methods advocated by the National Numeracy Strategy for several years and this has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching in all year groups. The teaching of numerical skills is integral to the teaching of mathematics across the school. Students successfully develop and enhance these skills through planned activities, mental and oral starters and in the context of the teaching of other aspects of the mathematics curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 3. Students handle number in a variety of forms with confidence. The application of students' numerical and more general mathematical ability in other subjects is not well developed. Currently the school does not have the policies

necessary to provide a framework for the effective development of students' literacy or numeracy skills in other subjects. Whilst good work goes on in many classrooms, this is not well co-ordinated and thus good work is not shared. The school is aware of the need to develop strategies for supporting students' numeracy and literacy development at a whole school level and has plans to do so.

- 27 Science teaching is very good throughout the school, thus enabling students to learn their science very successfully. This is because teachers' planning throughout the department is of a high quality. As a result, teachers are able to communicate scientific ideas to students very well, through carefully chosen activities, which hold the interest and attention of the students.
- 28 Elsewhere, teaching is good in all other subjects at both key stages, except in ICT and in music, where it is satisfactory. In ICT, students take an interest in their work and gain a good grasp of some basic skills in the use of computer software. In some lessons, however, work is not well matched to the needs or prior learning of the students. In particular this means that the more able students are not sufficiently challenged to enable them to gain higher order skills or knowledge. There are also lessons in which the teachers do not successfully review with students what they have learned and this means that the learning is not well consolidated. Whilst students all follow a course in ICT, there are limited occasions when they can refine or apply their ICT skills in other subjects. Rarely, in other subjects, are teachers making the necessary use of computers and other technology to support their work and students' learning. In music, teaching is no better than satisfactory because the school does not currently have experienced or suitably qualified teachers for the work with students to be as successful as it should be<sup>3</sup>. Whilst students have some good practical experiences, the range of teaching is not broad enough to enable sufficient numbers to develop higher performing skills and the teaching of too much musical theory is not supporting students' creative needs well. As a result, their progress is only satisfactory.
- 29 A strength of teaching is the consistently good grasp that teachers have of their subject and of the ways in which it can be presented to students in interesting and stimulating ways. This helps students to retain interest in their work and thus maintain concentration and focus in lessons. This is particularly a strength in English, mathematics and science. In these subjects, too, lessons contribute well to helping students develop good basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Good teachers' planning ensures that lessons are well structured and it is this that helps students to work productively and at a good pace. Only in ICT is teachers' planning unsatisfactory.
- 30 Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve in lessons are good overall and are very good in science and English at Key Stage 3. They are satisfactory in design and technology, ICT, music and in art at Key Stage 3. Generally the school does well to challenge the most able students, identifying them as gifted and talented and then developing strategies that provide sufficient stimulation to enable these students to make good progress. Although teachers generally have good expectations of what students can achieve, rarely do they provide students with the chance to show independence in their studies.
- 31 Overall, the best teaching methods are used in English and mathematics. It is not coincidental that in these two departments there has been a considerable focus on the best ways to present work and to structure lessons because of the introduction of the national strategies for numeracy and literacy. In most subjects, however, teachers use good teaching methods, mainly because there has been a



considerable input, in terms of staff training, on how to improve teachers' classroom techniques.

- 32 Students generally know how well they are doing in lessons and are also aware of what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. This is because teachers make good use of their marking and day-to-day assessments of students' work, both to plan lessons and to give clear feedback to students. Teachers generally make good use of time, resources and support staff. Lessons are very productive, with little time wasted on administrative matters. Electronic registrations, for instance, rarely interrupt the flow of lessons. Teachers and students together recognise the importance of prompt starts to lessons and the benefits of well-structured summaries in which students are able to review what they have learned. Resources are generally used well, though there are shortages in some subjects. Only with regard to the use of computers is there a significant weakness. This is partly because availability and access is difficult, but also because teachers do not yet routinely identify where the application of ICT skills would enhance the students' learning.
- 33 Overall, the teaching of students with special educational needs is good. Most teachers provide work that is suitably challenging and at an appropriate level, though there are inconsistencies in practice between teachers. This inconsistency is increased by the number of temporary teachers employed at present because they do not know the students so well. There is particularly good work for students with special educational needs in some departments, such as physical education, business education and design and technology.
- 34 The quality of teaching provided by the learning support department for students with special educational needs is good. Some are taught in small groups, when their specific needs can be more readily met. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace so that much is covered and a variety of activities keep students involved. Facts and concepts to be learnt are constantly reinforced to ensure that students learn and understand. For example, the different sounds that an 'o' can make were explored by adding an 'e', by testing and by reading. Resources, such as video clips, are effectively used and help to sustain students' attention and interest. Relationships are very good and students are constantly encouraged, which motivates them to try and gives them confidence. Learning support assistants provide good support and ensure that students are kept on task.
- 35 Individual education plans for students with special educational needs are not sufficiently developed by subject departments to provide subject specific targets for students. The level of teamwork and planning between teachers and learning support assistants is inconsistent, with the result that these assistants are not able to be fully prepared for some lessons. Where they are, then they have a positive impact. Many good examples were observed during the inspection of support staff having a positive impact on the learning of individuals and groups of students. This was mainly because the support staff knew their students well and had been well briefed by class teachers about the main purposes of the lesson.
- 36 Insufficient data has been available to teachers in the past to enable them to review their work with groups of students from a range of minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is not their first language. Data is now available to help teachers to do this. Senior staff in the school are aware of the need to monitor the progress of these students and, if necessary, to modify teaching strategies accordingly. The quality of teaching for students who have joined the school as refugees is very good. Tasks are set that have a high level of challenge, which moves these students on in

their understanding. Relationships are very good and therefore, these students are confident to ask for help and consequently, make good progress.

- 37 There is considerable variation in the effectiveness with which teachers provide students with tasks to do beyond the classroom, either at home or in school, when not in lessons. Good use is made of homework tasks in science and English and, generally, other subjects provide a satisfactory range of activities. Only in ICT is there a significant lack of well-structured work for students to undertake between lessons.

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

- 38 The school's stated aim is to provide its students with a balanced experience that will enable them to have confidence in their abilities across the curriculum and give them real choices at the end of Year 11. This it achieves well through a curriculum that provides a range of good quality learning opportunities. These opportunities are rooted in the school's equal opportunity policy and are based upon the subjects of the National Curriculum, together with vocational and work related courses of study.
- 39 Since the previous inspection the school has taken steps to audit and review the curriculum, taking note of national initiatives, whilst maintaining quality of provision. The school has made good progress with its literacy and numeracy strategies and has developed its provision for gifted and talented students. Governors are kept informed of developments, although there is not a specific curriculum committee. The curriculum is generally well planned and ensures that all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught at both key stages. In addition, all students study courses in religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The latter covers aspects of sex education and drugs awareness, together with citizenship.
- 40 As at the time of the last inspection, further development of the curriculum is required in information and communication technology (ICT). There is a lack of consistency in the development and application of students' ICT skills in other subjects to meet statutory requirements at both key stages. Students are allocated specific time for the study of ICT in all years and in these lessons the course just meets the statutory requirements. The provision of computers is adequate for this course and students make full use of the facilities available. The majority of subjects meet statutory requirements regarding the application of ICT skills, the exceptions being modern foreign languages, art and mathematics. The co-ordination and tracking of cross-curricular ICT in the school is inadequate and does not ensure that all students receive what they are entitled to. Students have access to the computers in the library before and after school and to computer club at lunchtimes. This is well attended and enjoyed by students. During the day, teachers make little use of the library as a resource for learning. This is mainly because departments do not, systematically, include the use of the library for developing students' research skills in their schemes of work.
- 41 Following the last inspection the school took the decision to make design and technology an option at Key Stage 4. Whilst this has enabled the school to overcome staffing difficulties and raise standards, statutory requirements are not met because not all students follow a design and technology course in their last two years at school. In most respects there is very good inclusion for all groups of students and equality of opportunity is good across the curriculum. However, in physical education, boys receive more curriculum time than girls do in Key Stage 3

and curriculum time for this subject is low at Key Stage 4. In modern foreign languages, students study in ability sets in Key Stage 3 and the most able linguists make very good progress with a second foreign language. In music, the timetabling arrangements mean that two classes of students in Year 9 do not get their statutory entitlement to music.

- 42 In Key Stage 4, students follow a core curriculum that includes religious education. Students are then able to make choices from a broad range of GCSE full and short courses, together with vocational courses in business, manufacturing and health and social care. Students are guided in their choices to ensure that courses selected match their needs and that they make the most of the curriculum on offer. The school has also made effective provision, both internally and through links with the Leicester Education Business Partnership, for boys and girls at risk of becoming disaffected to follow a more vocationally based course of study. This includes extended work placements and college courses.
- 43 The English curriculum is very well planned at both key stages. Visiting writers and poets support a wide range of arts, poetry and writing events, which ensure that students get a rich and varied range of experiences, well matched to their needs and abilities. Gifted and talented students are catered for through lunchtime sessions and Year 11 students can attend after-school sessions to help improve their standards in GCSE. The quality of learning is further enhanced by the literacy policy at Key Stage 3. Good links with junior schools ensure that students build upon their literacy skills from Year 6. Opportunities to reinforce and develop these skills in Key Stage 3 are good in science, modern foreign languages and design and technology. Elsewhere, provision is satisfactory. The full impact of the school's strategy for literacy has yet to take effect. The National Literacy Strategy is helping students to develop basic concepts about language. This results in standards in reading improving steadily in Years 7 to 9. The school provides extra *Catch-Up* sessions in English for students who have not reached their target level and intensive small group work for those students who need help with basic reading.
- 44 In mathematics and science, the quality and variety of learning experiences is good at both key stages. There is very good provision in both subjects for gifted and talented students through extra lessons in the form of 'breakfast clubs'. Other students are also able to improve their performance through 'catch up classes' after school. Students with special educational needs are given good support in mathematics through the provision of a suitable curriculum and teaching strategies to meet their differing needs. There are very good relationships with local primary schools, which are having a significant impact on the curriculum, especially in English and mathematics. In these subjects, teachers are more successfully building on the work that students have undertaken before they arrive than is the case in other subjects. The Primary Transfer Project, funded by the Leicester Training and Enterprise Council, allows primary and secondary staff to share good practice, discuss the use of assessment data and develop bridging materials<sup>4</sup> to ensure more continuity through the key stages. Learning mentors<sup>5</sup> are making a significant difference to the ease with which more vulnerable students, moving from primary schools, are able to cope with the secondary curriculum. The school is making use of these links with primary partners to refine its strategies for developing numeracy skills across the curriculum. A draft policy is in place and the next stage of development is planned. In other areas of the curriculum, the links with partners that could help the planning of continuity are not so strong.
- 45 The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented very effectively. A very thorough audit of the school's provision in English led to clear

decisions about the sort of timetable, resources and staffing that would be needed and swift appropriate action has been taken. Similarly, mathematics teachers used a departmental audit to help refine their priorities for improvement within the department. They have made good use of materials from the National Numeracy Strategy to support 'catch up' programmes and the improvements to teaching, linked to implementing the strategy, have provided students with a more varied and lively experience of mathematics.

- 46 There is flexibility in the curriculum for extended tutor periods to enable very good careers education and guidance within a programme of PSHE. This programme is led effectively by a senior teacher and a team that includes the careers co-ordinator and the heads of year. The school has trained the team of teachers to ensure that the sex and drugs education elements of the course are appropriately taught. Planning has been thorough and forward looking in the way it has identified openings to develop citizenship skills within the PSHE programme and across the curriculum. Students are effectively introduced to the world of work and all students in Year 10 have a work experience placement. The school has been awarded the prestigious *Career Mark* for the quality of its careers provision.
- 47 The curriculum is inclusive for students who have English as an additional language. Although the progress of these students is not generally monitored, all teachers take steps to ensure that all these students can participate fully in the activities and tasks being presented. For example, in a music lesson, the teacher ensured that a particular student understood a task and was therefore as involved as others and able to enjoy the musical experience.
- 48 There is a clear policy and well-planned provision for students identified as gifted and talented. The school is part of a cluster of five schools working together to share resources and develop staff expertise. There is an early entry policy that enables students to take GCSE statistics when they are in Year 10. Many enrichment activities are provided and targeted at gifted and talented students, such as the production of a CD on twentieth century life by Year 9 students. There has been substantial staff training for work with these students and the school is well placed to continue the development of its curriculum to meet their needs.
- 49 Students with special educational needs follow the full curriculum, with the exception of two students who do not study modern foreign languages in Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, students with special educational needs have the option of taking the work extension programme, which enables them to work outside the school. This prepares them well for work or for further education when they leave school.
- 50 The school has established very good links with the colleges in the city to which many students transfer for sixth form study. These links enable students to be well informed about the courses available and teachers in Beaumont Leys are able to give good guidance to students on how best to build on, and extend, their studies.
- 51 Overall, the school's provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Within that context, however, its provision for their spiritual development is unsatisfactory. It has not effectively addressed a key issue of the previous inspection, concerning its statutory responsibility to provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.
- 52 Students attend two assemblies a week in their year groups. The school takes the organisation of assemblies seriously and these events play an important role in reinforcing its moral and social values. There is good practice in thought provoking

addresses and in involvement of students in their planning and delivery. Most major religious festivals are celebrated, but some assemblies lack the characteristics of worship and have insufficient Christian, religious or spiritual content. When students meet in their tutor groups on other mornings, the time is used for administrative and pastoral purposes and has no spiritual dimension. Opportunities are not planned, for example, to provide students with time for reflection on a *Thought for the Day*.

- 53 Some subjects make good provision for students' spiritual development in lessons. Religious education leads them to explore beliefs, questions of purpose and meaning and worship. In English, students explore the value and fragility of human life and, in drama, human feelings and emotions. Art uses the wonder and beauty of the natural world as a stimulus for work, as was well evidenced in the display of Year 9 three-dimensional work inspired by the human form. History confronts students with the transcendental world-view of medieval man. Elsewhere, opportunities are largely missed to foster students' spiritual development in class.
- 54 The school makes good provision for students' moral development. It has clear values, based on respect and caring for the individual, that inform its everyday life. It has good policies and effective strategies for behaviour management, anti-bullying including racial and sexual harassment, child protection, substance abuse and sex education. There is a clear code of conduct and students know right from wrong and behave well. Students enjoy very good relationships with each other and with their teachers, who are very good role models. Students give practical expression to the values of caring in good support for a wide range of charities.
- 55 A sound programme of personal, social and health education addresses a range of moral issues, such as those of relationships and drugs. Other subjects also raise students' awareness of moral issues. For example, many English lessons have moral themes, ranging from the exploration of hypocrisy in *An Inspector Calls* to the ethics of war photography. Science explores the ethics of genetic engineering. Geography challenges students with issues relating to the environment, population and development and ICT those relating to the impact of new technologies. History questions the part played by morality in leadership of nations.
- 56 The school also makes good provision for students' social development. It publicly recognises their achievements and raises their self-esteem, through a well-planned system of merits, commendations, certificates, praise postcards home and presentation and certificate evenings. It enables them to develop their social and leadership skills through an effective School Council, the annual Activity Week, educational visits, extra-curricular activities and wide-ranging sports activities.
- 57 Older students can develop a sense of responsibility through mentoring younger students, especially with regard to bullying, and students host visitors to the school. In general, however, the school does not do enough to provide students with enough opportunities to learn to take responsibility for themselves and others in its daily life and develop a sense of self-discipline.
- 58 Most teachers help students to develop skills of collaborative working through paired and small group working in lessons. The personal and social education programme challenges them with social issues, including those relating to citizenship, where provision is well advanced. Social issues are also dealt with in a number of other subjects in the classroom. For example, in English, students explore social issues through such texts as *Buddy* and *Our Day Out*, while through drama they experience the plight of the homeless. Sociology challenges them with issues relating to crime



and deviance, education, work and social class. History brings alive how people lived in former times in this country and how our present day society evolved. Religious education introduces them to the rites of passage surrounding birth, marriage and death.

- 59 The school makes satisfactory provision for students' cultural development. It offers a modest range of musical activities, which are well supported by students through the guitar club, rock bands and regular casual opportunities to play keyboards and use computers. Students can develop the skills of performing for an audience through school productions. The annual themed Arts Event raises students' awareness of the expressive arts. Students' appreciation of their own cultural heritage is deepened through visiting poets and theatre groups, and history presentations, for example to Year 8 on the Civil War by the Sealed Knot Society.
- 60 Some students develop an appreciation of other European cultures through visits to France, Germany and Holland during Activities Week. A number of subjects do much in lessons to raise students' awareness of the contribution of cultures, other than the Western European, to the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century civilisation. These also develop students' appreciation of the multicultural richness and diversity of contemporary British society. Religious education introduces them to the major world faiths. Students create artwork drawing on African and Aboriginal inspiration and experience music from different traditions, such as the African. Geography introduces them to the cultures of Brazil and Japan, history to those of Black America and 20<sup>th</sup> century China, and modern foreign languages to the Francophone cultures of Africa.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 61 The school provides a supportive learning environment through a focused pastoral system geared to the needs of each individual. Staff are dedicated to helping ensure that students are able to take full advantage of all the school is offering, in both the curriculum and other activities. Any barriers preventing students from learning properly are worked through together and this is one of the schools' strengths.
- 62 Monitoring of students' personal development has improved from the already strong position described in the previous inspection report and it is now of a very good standard. The school keeps a register of vulnerable students and the support they receive is of a high quality. Tutors and heads of year use data from termly grades for effort in subjects, behaviour and completion of homework to enable them to praise students who are working hard and to help where there are concerns. Tutors play a front line role in providing day to day contact with students who appreciate the helpfulness and approachability of tutors and heads of year. Parents are pleased with the good quality care their children receive.
- 63 The school is justifiably proud of its good-quality system where each child has a mentor, who is usually their form tutor. Their work is making a significant contribution to the support and guidance for students whom the school has identified as needing extra help. Using Excellence in Cities funds, a team of learning mentors are firmly established, with demand for their time outstripping supply. They have worked hard to earn recognition from students, staff and parents in helping to overcome a range of social problems preventing students from learning. School data on attendance, effort, and attainment confirms the gains in progress being made by many students because of mentors' work.

- 64 To illustrate the kind of issues they are striving to overcome, one student was having problems completing his work and was not able to keep it properly organised at home. He was falling behind and starting to become completely disenchanted with the subject. Learning mentors talked through his worries and liaised with teachers. He is now keeping his work at school, doing homework at lunchtimes with the teacher's help and enjoys his lessons. Students recognise the help learning mentors provide. In conversation with inspectors, one told about his friend who sees his mentor when he finds it difficult to control his anger.
- 65 The Primary Transfer Project, funded through the Leicester Education Business Partnership, is making a significant difference with more vulnerable students who are supported through their move from primary to secondary education. Working in close liaison with the head of Year 7 and primary staff, a learning mentor establishes relationships with selected Year 6 students from the May before transfer takes place. This is strengthened over the summer term with work designed to raise students' self esteem and help them cope with life in a new school. From September, the learning mentor starts her work again at Beaumont Leys and many students continue to receive support well into their first year at the school. Several students quite quickly gain enough confidence to cope on their own. School data confirms the positive effect this is having in terms of students' improved levels of attendance, social development and increased effort in their work.
- 66 Students receive very good guidance to help them prepare for life after school and the careers education and guidance programme is of a high quality. Year 11 students are positive about the careers advice received and the usefulness of interviews attended. They feel well prepared and speak knowledgeably about the information provided, both written and through presentations, by local colleges. Tutor times and extended tutor periods are used effectively to help students complete applications, write their curriculum vitae and receive individual guidance from tutors.
- 67 Health and safety procedures are unsatisfactory and some procedures need to be tightened up. The school recognises this and training is planned for the person with responsibility for health and safety. No whole school risk assessments have been completed and there is a lack of a central system for recording risks. The school has the necessary child protection procedures in place and staff are aware of whom to go to if they are concerned about a student. The teacher responsible, covering for the absence of the designated person, has not had the recognised training and this requires urgent action.
- 68 The provision for administering First Aid in the school is unsatisfactory. There are two people with relevant qualifications and some staff have recently undertaken a St John's Ambulance Emergency Aid at work course. The location of the only recognised First Aid point in the school, the science preparation room, is inappropriate. The medical room is poorly equipped and not used as intended. There are no signs around school to show where First Aid is available and where boxes are kept. The issues from the previous inspection, concerning the state of the field, have been resolved to the best of the schools' ability.
- 69 The school is very supportive of those students who are known to have English as an additional language. Problems encountered, both in and out of school, are dealt with in a practical and sympathetic manner, which promotes the self-esteem of students and their positive attitude to learning.

- 70 The schools' systems for encouraging regular attendance and checking on absences are good. Rewards and congratulations for good attendance are a significant feature in assemblies. In addition, tutors spend extra time talking individually to students with attendance problems, to encourage them to improve. All assistant heads of year have attendance targets to aim for, both for reducing unauthorised absence and improving overall attendance. Data produced by the computerised recording system is used well to target extra support for students whose attendance falls below a certain level. Senior staff have started to analyse attendance data for different groups of students, although this is in a very early stage of development. Certain students are part of a *First Day Call* system, where parents are telephoned the first day their child is away to find out why, but these procedures are not applied to all students.
- 71 The school has a good working relationship with the Educational Welfare Officer, based on site, who works with Beaumont Leys students for just over half of her time. There are some families who do not feel regular attendance is important, they do not value education and they condone absences from school. This is hard for the school to overcome. Students are, however, constantly reminded of the need to establish good attendance patterns as a preparation for adult life. Staff remind students, for instance, that there will be frank assessments of attendance patterns when references are written in support of students' applications for college places to continue their sixth form studies.
- 72 Staff work effectively to modify timetables to encourage a small number of students, absent for some time, to return to school. Courses, such as the work extension programme, are part of the answer for some students who enjoy the course and feel it is more relevant for them. Good relationships with external agencies means the school is able to tap into a number of different schemes. For example, *Firebreak*<sup>6</sup> is used as an alternative to the curriculum for some students who have become disaffected with school life.
- 73 Procedures to promote good behaviour in the classroom are effective. The improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection has had a direct effect on improving behaviour because students enjoy lessons. The behaviour policy is followed consistently in classes. Staff treat students in a polite and respectful yet firm manner, making clear both what is and what is not acceptable. The Code Of Conduct, in which the giving and receiving of respect and consideration is paramount, provides simple yet important guidelines to help students understand what is expected of them. The school is less effective in ensuring that behaviour around the school is as good as in lessons. Work to promote student self-discipline has not been fully effective, with the result that behaviour patterns on corridors and in the school grounds are inconsistent. The small number of times the school uses fixed term or permanent exclusions is, however, testimony to their good overall behaviour management procedures.
- 74 Instances of bullying are relatively rare. When they do occur they are treated seriously and as soon as staff are aware that there is a problem it is effectively dealt with. Parents and students are happy with the school's approach. Younger students said they would appreciate more control over the boisterous behaviour in the playground and corridors and the newly-appointed headteacher has already told students that this is a priority for her to deal with. Inspectors agree that the schools' management of this kind of behaviour is not of the same high standard as in the class.



- 75 Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good because the school has worked hard to ensure that assessment has a positive effect on learning. The school's focus on effort has been very successful in motivating students. Every subject teacher contributes to this assessment by systematic reporting of effort marks to form tutors. Students are able to set new targets on a termly basis, based on feedback from their teachers. The system gives students a rewarding sense that their work is valued. Information is conveyed to parents who feel well informed about the progress their children are making. Marking reflects the school's system and, at best, gives students very good feedback on how to improve their work.
- 76 Arrangements for assessing students' standards of work have improved since the previous inspection. Most subjects carefully assess students throughout the year and give them good information about how their work compares with national standards. Examples of *Good Work* boards were displayed in science, for example, to show the range of work possible, giving students in both key stages clear indications of what has to be included to achieve a higher level of work. The quality of such information is satisfactory in art, music and physical education, but is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT), as it was at the time of the last inspection. Most subjects use assessment information well to plan future work. However, art, design and technology and music could make more effective use of assessment to ensure new work builds clearly on students' earlier success. In design and technology, religious education and science, students are encouraged and helped in self-evaluation. This provides further support in helping them to organise their work and focus on what they need to do to improve. Teachers have gained good experience in setting individual targets to show students how to improve in Key Stage 4 and are beginning to set sharper targets in Key Stage 3.
- 77 The school has invested time and resources to improve the quality of assessment data, ensuring it reflects the requirements for monitoring the performance of different groups of students. Information from primary schools gives attainment by the end of Year 6, but records are incomplete because a significant number of students join the school later in Key Stage 3. The school is aware of the need for more effective strategies to monitor the progress of those students who do not have stability of schooling. Information has been used to monitor test and examination outcomes of girls and boys. As a result, effective strategies have overcome under-performance of boys and the school is aware of the need to now balance its work in order to equally monitor attainment of girls. The school monitors the progress of students on the social inclusion register, but has not hitherto monitored progress and attainment of students by ethnicity or those who have English as an additional language. However, the school has targets to do so and intends to provide middle managers with more detailed analysis.
- 78 The arrangements for monitoring and assessing students with special educational needs are unsatisfactory. Although the test data and information from previous schools is used effectively in Year 7, the static nature of students on the register shows that further assessment and monitoring is ineffective.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 79 This is a popular school amongst parents and one that is over subscribed. Several parents have chosen to move their child to the school part way through their secondary education. The vast majority of parents view the school in a positive light and are pleased with all it offers. As at the time of the previous inspection, relationships between the school and parents are good.

- 80 Parents believe, rightly, that teachers have high expectations of the work children are asked to do. They feel children make good progress at school, they find staff approachable, they believe that teaching is good and that children enjoy school. Parents' feelings about the school are endorsed by the findings of the inspection, which is highlighting the good teaching, very good relationships and good progress as being particular strengths.
- 81 Some parents do not feel they are kept well informed about their child's progress. Others have concerns about homework, the extent to which the school is working closely with parents and the range of activities provided outside lessons. However, inspectors consider that the quality of information parents receive about their child's progress is good overall. The school makes good use of homework to support students' learning, especially in English and science. Staff work hard to establish a good relationship with parents and are pro-active in finding out their views in order to improve practice. The range of activities for students to participate in outside lessons is satisfactory and similar to that found in many secondary schools.
- 82 Parents are provided with good information about how their child is progressing. Effort sheets sent out each term contain grades for each subject as well as for behaviour and homework. An enclosed letter highlights areas for concern and congratulates those students who are doing well. Parents are invited to both form tutor and subject teacher consultation evenings each year. Annual reports are of a satisfactory quality. They have recently been improved by adding a section for subject targets. These targets vary in their usefulness. Some are quite clear about what the student needs to do to improve, whilst others, like 'continue working hard' are only complimentary. Year 11 reports are very helpful as they are specific about what individual students need to do to help them in their forthcoming GCSE exams. All contain a section inviting parents to reply and the school is proud that staff reply individually to every comment made.
- 83 Regular meetings are held to review the progress of those students with statements of special educational need. Not all parents of these students attend their children's review session, although many make regular, even daily, contact with the school. The newly-appointed inclusion manager has planned to reinstate the support group of parents whose children have special educational needs. This is scheduled to start in the next half term, when changes in the Code of Practice will be identified as the topic for discussion.
- 84 Letters from the heads and assistant heads of years are useful in providing an overview of specific activities and events pertinent to that year group. A yearly information booklet, giving term dates, examination results, advice on how parents can help and other procedural guidance, is useful for parents to keep and refer to. Currently, there is no regular newsletter, but the new headteacher plans to remedy this, so that parents can know a little more about day to day news, student achievements and other items of interest. The Governors' Annual Report, whilst informative, does not include the required details about the success of the schools special educational needs policy.
- 85 Staff are open in their relationships with parents and willing to consider changes in practice because of parental views. Whole school questionnaires, surveys of new parents and parent's evenings are all used to gauge current opinion. Most reveal a high degree of satisfaction for the school's work. The school responds well to parents' suggestions, for instance, making changes to parents' evenings arrangements because of comments made on questionnaires.

- 86 Although only a few parents are actively involved, the impact of the work of the Parents' and Teachers' Association is significant. Members of this group are successful fundraisers and the Christmas and summer fairs are well-established events in the school year, involving students, parents, and staff. These raise considerable sums of money to buy items the school would otherwise be unable to afford. This hard work is making a difference to the quality of education students are experiencing. Parents who are governors play an active part in school management.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 87 Beaumont Leys is a very well-run school. The leadership of the headteacher, who has recently left the school after six years in post, has been very strong. Aply supported by staff and governors, she has helped shape the many improvements that have occurred since the time of the previous inspection. Very good systems and structures are now in place to guide further developments. The new headteacher, her staff and the governing body are working very well together. There is a high level of commitment to doing the best for the students in the school and the capacity for further improvement is very good.
- 88 The school's motto, *together we achieve success*, is effectively lived out in practice. There is a real sense of 'togetherness' in the school. Staff are dedicated to helping students do their best, both in lessons and in general school life. Relationships amongst the student body are positive, with all groups represented being well integrated into lessons and other activities. Governors are active and very encouraging of the work of staff. This has led to the creation of a harmonious and inclusive community. The school motto is supported by a mission statement and sets of aims and values. These were drawn up by staff and governors, with parental consultation. Originally a statement of aspiration, they now describe the school very well. These statements are published regularly in all major school documents and stand as a consistent reminder of what the school is seeking to achieve.
- 89 During recent years, there has been a programme of re-structuring of the senior management team and an enhancement of the roles of middle managers. This programme has been very successful. Members of the senior management team work very closely together and they give very good support to the headteacher. Delegation of responsibilities to these members of staff has been improved. A significant amount of attention has been given to developing the roles of middle managers. Heads of year now give strong leadership to their tutor teams, ensuring that the care and welfare of each student is a high priority. Heads of faculties and other subject leaders have been given training in the strategic and monitoring aspects of their roles and they are now giving much stronger leadership than previously. It is through their efforts, for example, that many initiatives, such as improving the attainment of boys, have been successful.
- 90 The school has become progressively better at reviewing all aspects of its work. Policies to guide the work of the school are regularly reviewed and the start of each annual cycle of school improvement planning commences with a review of progress on previous targets and plans. All subject leaders have been trained in classroom observation techniques and this has been a factor in bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching. The links between subject leaders and members of senior management are becoming stronger, but meetings are not sufficiently sharply focused on specific areas requiring attention and this means that rigorous evaluation has still to be developed. Despite this area for development, the work of heads of

subject has been effective in bringing about improvement. Provision for design and technology, identified as an area of weakness in the previous inspection, is now much better. Subject leadership is very good in English, mathematics, science and history. There is a need for stronger leadership in music, where there is currently no head of department, and in information and communication technology.

- 91 The school has a strong commitment to ensuring that all students are well catered for in the school. Initiatives to improve the attainment of boys and the gifted and talented students have been successful. Work to integrate refugees is also impressive. The school does not, however, have the necessary procedures in place to be sure that the needs of students from ethnic minorities are met.
- 92 The management of support for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. At present, there is not a clear rationale for the allocation of teacher support. The progress that these students make is often due to the help that individual departments and support staff provide, rather than as the outcome of a co-ordinated approach. Students' individual educational plans are unwieldy. The use of tick boxes does not set out students' targets clearly, although there is space for subject specific targets, which is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection. There is also no movement towards the introduction of the new Code of Practice. The annual reviews are thorough and conducted efficiently. There is a very good relationship with outside agencies, in particular with the Educational Psychologist. There is, however, a lack of vision to build a high-performing team and to manage change in provision for students with special educational needs. This is exemplified by the lack of movement of these students on the register, which shows that students' progress towards set targets has not been effectively monitored. The SENCO<sup>7</sup> has been in post for three years, but the static situation of these students has not been tackled. Consequently, the school is unable to monitor the effectiveness of the support that individual students receive.
- 93 The policy for special educational needs is incomplete and does not meet legal requirements. To assist the SENCO, the school has recently appointed a dedicated Inclusion Manager, who has led the recent thorough assessment of Year 7 students on the register of special educational needs. The Inclusion Manager and the SENCO are jointly responsible for the learning support assistants, links with parents and the overview of the support centre and behaviour management. These two staff work very well together to ensure that the department becomes more efficient and effective.
- 94 The recently-appointed Inclusion Manager also has responsibility for students who have English as an additional language. She is experienced and committed to meeting these students' needs. She is aware that the school does not have a register of these students that shows their levels of proficiency in English or their educational background. The creation of this database is recognised as a priority in order to meet these students' needs and is now being produced. When completed, teachers will be made aware of these students' specific needs, for example, with assistance with technical language or spoken English. The school will then be sure that it can help these students to reach their potential.
- 95 Clear priorities for the school are set out in the school improvement plan. This document is drawn up annually, with full involvement of staff. Commencing with a review of developmental work in the previous year, it successfully links whole-school and area priorities. Detailed actions are described and cost implications are fed into the production of the school budget. The improvement plan gives pointers to what will be needed in future years to meet the longer-term objectives in the school. The

plan takes account of the education development plan of the local education authority and the priorities of initiatives with which the school is associated, such as Excellence in Cities. Departmental plans are well integrated with whole-school plans. The one area of relative weakness in the improvement planning process relates to the involvement of governors. They tend to see the plan in a late draft form and thus have insufficient input to helping shape the strategic direction of the school.

- 96 Governors are generally active, involved and committed to the school. They meet regularly and, through a committee structure, have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas where it is considered there is room for improvement. They function well, therefore, as critical friends. There is more that they need to do, however, in helping shape the strategic direction of the school. They are not involved sufficiently early in improvement planning and identifying priorities. They manage the budget well, but do not review patterns of expenditure against national patterns. Nor are they fully involved in evaluating the cost-effectiveness of their spending decisions. Whilst governors generally monitor activity in the school, they do not ensure that all statutory requirements are being met. They do not, for instance, ensure that the curriculum fully meets National Curriculum Orders, nor does their annual report to parents does not provide all the information required. They neither ensure that risk assessments are properly undertaken nor that all students are able to take part in a daily act of collective worship.
- 97 Financial management in the school is very good. The budget is closely linked to the priorities identified and governors work well with senior staff to monitor spending on a regular basis. Financial administration and control is efficient. The school has become much more aware of the need to become more cost-effective. Careful management of specific grants is a feature of the school's overall financial management. Weaknesses in financial management, highlighted at the time of the previous inspection, have been resolved. The school has benefited from additional funding from a range of sources, such as additional staffing allowance to support students who are either gifted or talented. This funding is being used very effectively.
- 98 Overall, the school makes satisfactory use of the resources available to it. Staff are generally well qualified for the tasks they perform, though there is currently a lack of specialist music teachers in the school. Good improvement has been made to the programme of professional development of staff, with appropriate priority being given to ensuring that training has been focused on those areas for development identified in the school improvement plan. There has been a lack of necessary training for the team of teachers, many of whom are non-specialists, who teach religious education. Appraisal and performance management of teaching staff has been well integrated into the overall staff development programme. Staff give good support to those who come to the school as part of their initial training to become teachers. Arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are very good.
- 99 There has been a satisfactory improvement in the availability of learning resources since the previous inspection. There is now, for instance, better provision in mathematics, English, physical education and music, but there remains a shortage of textbooks in a number of subjects. More work remains to be done to ensure that teachers of all subjects are using computers to support students' learning. The library provides a potentially good resource, with access to computers, and it is used effectively out of lesson time. Subject teachers, however, make little use of the library as a learning resource during lessons because they do not systematically plan to do so. The resources to support students with special educational needs are



in one area of the school, so that at break and lunchtime, these students and their friends tend to meet together. For example, the lunchtime 'Friendship Club' buzzes with activity. It provides a caring and supportive area, where all are welcome. The school is progressively making better use of new technologies. An electronic registration system has made the checking of attendance efficient and good use is now being made of computers to build up detailed databases to record students' attainment and progress.

100 There has been good improvement to the accommodation since the previous inspection. The addition of a teaching block for the expressive arts and the refurbishment of rooms in food technology and science have enhanced overall facilities considerably. A programme of re-decoration has begun to improve the appearance of the buildings generally and there has been good improvement to the outdoor facilities for physical education. It is still necessary to use a dining room for some indoor physical education activities. The school is eagerly anticipating gaining access to the City Learning Centre<sup>8</sup> in order to enhance access to computer facilities in a wide range of subjects. The school buildings are clean, with premises and teaching staff making valiant attempts to keep them as presentable and attractive as possible. There continues to be a significant problem with litter around the school site. The school has access for wheelchairs on the ground floor of the buildings and there is, as yet, no problem with access to the upper floors, as students have sufficient mobility to cope with stairs.

101 Overall, the school works effectively in meeting its aims and providing a good education for its students. The attempts to ensure that the school secures best value have been good. Students make good progress as they move through the school and achieve creditable standards in national examinations and tests. This is because of good teaching throughout the school. Very good leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff have ensured that the school has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The school thus gives good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

102 In order to further raise standards in the school and to improve provision, attention should be given to the following issues:

Improve the management of special educational needs by:

- Producing an accurate register, through introducing effective procedures and systems, for monitoring and recording progress;
- Introducing the new Code of Practice and disseminating that information to staff and parents;
- Producing accessible Individual Educational Plans that contain only the necessary information and arrangements;
- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the deployment of learning support assistants in order to establish an effective and efficient system;
- Add to the special educational needs policy in order to meet legal requirements;
- Preparing a development plan for the direction and development of special needs provision.

*(paragraphs 12, 35, 78, 83, 92, 93 and 94)*

Make middle managers more effective in their roles, by:

- Providing more training in how to analyse data and use this analysis to guide future planning;

- Extend the programme of monitoring, making it more evaluative and focused, so that classroom observation and other review strategies become more effective;
- Strengthening and refining the links between members of the senior management team and middle managers.  
(paragraphs 76, 77, 89 and 90)

Ensure that students from ethnic minorities and those for whom English is an additional language are well provided for, by:

- Establishing and maintaining a register of these students;
- Giving all teachers the necessary guidance to enable them to meet the needs of these students fully.  
(paragraphs 11, 36, 47 and 91)

Raise standards in music and information and communication technology in the school, by:

- Improving the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects;
  - Appointing an experienced head of music to improve teaching and learning and to develop the subject throughout the school
  - Extending the development and application of information and communication technology skills in all subjects, so that statutory requirements are met.  
(paragraphs 5, 9, 24, 28, 29, 30, 32, 37, 40, 76, 114, 165, 169, 170 and 183-189)

In addition, the school should include the following issues in its action plan:

Promote students' spiritual development more effectively, by:

- building on existing good practice to ensure that all subjects promote spiritual awareness in lessons;
- complying with statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.  
(paragraphs 51, 52, 53 and 96)

Ensure that the school fully complies with statutory requirements, by:

- Reporting on SEN provision in the governors' annual report for parents;
- Ensuring that the school policy for special educational needs contains all the required information;
- Enabling all students in Year 9 to follow a course in music;
- Improving health and safety arrangements, particularly regarding the requirements to undertake the necessary risk assessments;
- Providing a course in design and technology for all students in Key Stage 4.  
(paragraphs 51, 52, 53 and 96)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

|  |              |     |
|--|--------------|-----|
| Number of lessons observed   | Years 7 - 11 | 156 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils |              | 54  |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|                     | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| <b>Years 7 - 11</b> |           |           |      |              |                |      |           |
| Number              | 9         | 43        | 67   | 34           | 3              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage          | 6         | 27        | 43   | 22           | 2              | 0    | 0         |

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

### Information about the school's pupils

| <b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>                                    | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll                                 | 1040     |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 221      |

| <b>Special educational needs</b>                                    | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 51       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 398      |

| <b>English as an additional language</b>                | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 155          |

| <b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>                                | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 28           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 7            |



## Attendance

### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 7.9 |
| National comparative data | 8.1 |

### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 1.3 |
| National comparative data | 1.1 |

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

|  | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | 104  | 98    | 202   |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above   | Boys     | 63      | 68          | 73      |
|   | Girls    | 60      | 56          | 57      |
|   | Total    | 123     | 124         | 130     |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School   | 61 (55) | 62 (63)     | 64 (51) |
|   | National | 64 (63) | 66 (65)     | 66 (59) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School   | 27 (18) | 44 (35)     | 31 (20) |
|   | National | 31 (28) | 43 (42)     | 34 (30) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above   | Boys     | 62      | 67          | 74      |
|   | Girls    | 66      | 52          | 55      |
|   | Total    | 128     | 119         | 129     |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School   | 61 (72) | 65 (68)     | 65 (63) |
|   | National | 65 (64) | 68 (66)     | 64 (62) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School   | 24 (35) | 40 (36)     | 38 (29) |
|   | National | 31 (31) | 42 (39)     | 33 (29) |

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

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

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2001 | 91   | 88    | 179   |

| GCSE results  |          | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A*-G | 1 or more grades A*-G |
|---|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified    | Boys     | 40                       | 83                    | 88                    |
|   | Girls    | 38                       | 82                    | 90                    |
|   | Total    | 78                       | 165                   | 178                   |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School   | 44 (42)                  | 92 (95)               | 99 (99)               |
|   | National | 48 (47)                  | 91 (91)               | 96 (96)               |

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

| GCSE results                  |          | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School   | 37.4             |
|                               | National | 39.0             |

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

| Vocational qualifications  | Number   | % success rate |
|--|----------|----------------|
| Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied | School   | 0              |
|  | National | n/a            |

### Ethnic background of pupils

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 20           |
| Black – African heritage        | 5            |
| Black – other                   | 8            |
| Indian                          | 136          |
| Pakistani                       | 7            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 6            |
| White                           | 813          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 45           |

### Exclusions in the last school year

|                              | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage   | 0            | 0         |
| Black – African heritage     | 0            | 0         |
| Black – other                | 0            | 0         |
| Indian                       | 3            | 0         |
| Pakistani                    | 0            | 0         |
| Bangladeshi                  | 0            | 0         |
| Chinese                      | 0            | 0         |
| White                        | 9            | 0         |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 5            | 1         |

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 65.2 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 15.9 |

### Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 33  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 936 |

### Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 71 |
|---|----|

### Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 3 | 24.8 |
| Key Stage 4 | 21.5 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Financial information

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| Financial year | 2000 - 2001 |
|----------------|-------------|

|  | £         |
|--|-----------|
| Total income                               | 2 382 874 |
| Total expenditure                          | 2 369 980 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2298      |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 38 260    |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 51 936    |

## Recruitment of teachers

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years (FTE)     | 14.6 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years (FTE) | 25.6 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 1.0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 4.2 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 2.5 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

|                                   |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 1040 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 338  |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 33             | 55            | 8                | 2                 | 2          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 43             | 52            | 3                | 1                 | 1          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 28             | 55            | 12               | 2                 | 3          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 27             | 54            | 14               | 3                 | 2          |
| The teaching is good.  | 34             | 57            | 4                | 1                 | 4          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 34             | 46            | 15               | 4                 | 1          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 45             | 48            | 5                | 1                 | 1          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 58             | 39            | 1                | 1                 | 1          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 29             | 50            | 14               | 3                 | 4          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 34             | 54            | 3                | 1                 | 8          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 32             | 55            | 6                | 2                 | 5          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 24             | 43            | 14               | 4                 | 15         |

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed satisfaction with the work done to raise the attainment of boys. Many felt that the support given by teachers to individual students was a strength of the school.

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

**ENGLISH**

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

Strengths

- The range of teaching skills.
- The richness of the curriculum.
- The positive learning environment.

Areas for improvement

- The use of information and communication technology.
- The use of assessment data to refine planning and target setting.

- 103 In 2001, the school's results in the national tests for students aged 14 were close to the national average. They were below the average in 2000, but they have been improving at a faster rate than nationally over the last three years. Attainment in GCSE examinations for students aged 16 have been around the national average in English Language for the last four years. However, there was a distinct improvement last year, both in the number of students gaining grades at GCSE and in the number of students gaining the highest grades. Results in English Literature have also remained steady and in line with the national average. In Media Studies, a much smaller group of students who opted to study the course gained grades above the national average in 2001. Though girls achieve higher standards than boys, the difference is smaller than nationally.
- 104 The needs of students entering the school are clearly identified on the basis of evidence provided by primary schools, so that those who require intensive support are taught in small, well-supported groups. Here, they have carefully planned practice in the basic literacy skills needed to cope with the full curriculum, as well as developing some of the wider literacy skills that are taught in the larger classes. The specific needs of students with special educational needs are well understood and effective additional help is provided where necessary. A small number of students at the early stages of learning English have additional support, but others for whom English is an additional language cope without specialist help. In lessons, the needs of students from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds are carefully and sensitively met and the curriculum is frequently enriched with activities to enhance the experience of groups who are at risk of exclusion.
- 105 Inspection evidence indicates that standards of writing are above the national average in Years 7 to 9 because of the influence of the National Literacy Strategy. More able students in Year 7, for instance, are already able to analyse an advertisement for Centre Parcs and discuss whether the verb forms that are used are the ones usually found in persuasive writing. They use the correct technical language, and once they have analysed an advertisement, they can produce writing of their own with a similar structure. Less able students in Year 8 can gradually build simple paragraphs, which clearly describe a character from the book they are reading. By Year 9, students are analysing and revising their own writing to ensure that it suits the audience and the purpose. Higher-attaining students in Years 10 and 11 write confidently and accurately. They punctuate their complex sentences well and choose vocabulary carefully to create particular effects. They can write

stories in the style of one of the characters and can communicate information clearly and succinctly. This was well illustrated by a working website created by two boys in Year 11. From research to online product, the language was well suited to the task and the audience of 'gadget' enthusiasts. Other students can express their ideas clearly and accurately, but with less control of the style and more mundane vocabulary. The lowest attainers are able to use the support available to express their opinions about books that they have studied in simple, planned paragraphs. After careful drafting, they can punctuate with reasonable accuracy and present their work legibly.

- 106 Speaking and listening skills are very well developed. Year 7 students will offer fluent answers to questions, extending to two or three complex sentences. In Year 8, students with special educational needs have the confidence to volunteer to present their work orally to their classmates. They will read several paragraphs clearly and with good effect. By Year 9, low-attaining students can articulate their ideas about the influence of the witches in *Macbeth*. In all three years, students listen very well and show courtesy and respect when their classmates express their ideas. In Years 10 and 11, the quality of listening has a clear effect on the quality of expression because speakers at every level of attainment are confident and feel able to experiment and to take risks.
- 107 About one third of the students enter the school needing to catch up with their literacy skills. They generally read slowly and hesitantly. Others with more developed skills can read confidently on their own. The more able students read critically. They can identify the purpose of a piece of writing and so are more aware of how the writer might want them to react. By Year 9, students have progressed to understand how writers manipulate their style to achieve particular effects on the reader. In Years 10 and 11, reading is well developed so that higher-attaining students are excited by the tension in *An Inspector Calls* and the lowest-attaining students form critical opinions about contemporary performance poetry.
- 108 Although they arrive with literacy skills that are well below average, students achieve very well by comparison with similar schools by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. This is because of very good teaching. Whether they are supporting basic reading or exploring the morality of war, teachers maintain a pace and focus which engages almost all students almost all of the time. Influenced by the National Literacy Strategy, which has promoted new methods in Year 7, teachers are varying the activities and leaving very little time or reason for students to be coasting. The work is challenging and teachers are constantly checking levels of understanding and adjusting their approach in response to particular needs.
- 109 Overall, the teaching of English is very good and is better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. Teachers inject a great deal of energy, and time their change of activities very carefully to motivate students, to maintain their concentration and work rate. This approach appeals particularly to boys, though some girls would work more effectively with a less directed approach. The most influential feature of the teaching, however, is the way that behaviour is managed. Very good relationships and a clear sense of purpose free all students to concentrate on learning most of the time. This in turn leads to a more secure atmosphere, where students will try things without fear of ridicule and where it is acceptable to be keen and excited by learning.
- 110 The literacy strategy has introduced teachers to a new way of planning, where the learning objectives from every activity are very clearly defined. Although aimed at Year 7 classes this year, the practice is influencing planning for all lessons and is leading to very effective learning. Teachers use questioning well to check on

understanding, another technique advocated by the literacy strategy. This is particularly helpful to students with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and students with special talents in English. They all make very good progress because their needs are constantly monitored.

- 111 The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy in Year 7 is just one of a series of improvements since the last inspection. It has had a good affect on planning, teaching and achievement, as well as creating demanding, but exciting, challenges for teachers. Across the curriculum the general standard of speaking, listening, reading and writing are good. Listening skills are a particular strength, but students are confident to present their ideas in most subjects, particularly in English and science. Discussion is used to good effect in history and is a strong aspect of every lesson in GCSE physical education. Most subject areas provide displays of key words to help students with their writing. This is particularly evident in design and technology and in mathematics, where the displays are adjusted to suit current topics.
- 112 To make the best of the National Literacy Strategy, the school has worked very closely with primary schools to reduce the difference between the ways that students learn in Year 6 and in Year 7. A consultant from the local authority has worked very closely with the teachers to help them to adapt to the new ways of working. She has led some exciting research on the skills that make the biggest contribution to progress, so that teachers are now planning which individuals will benefit from closer attention to a particular rule or technique. A recently appointed technician is enabling teachers to concentrate on preparing and teaching lessons and training is under way to develop a greater understanding of thinking skills and information and communication technology (ICT). Two particular successes have been the work to find ways of enabling boys to succeed in English and the successful Media Studies course to GCSE.
- 113 A major influence on students' achievement has been the very good leadership of the head of faculty. He has developed a rich and varied curriculum, which is frequently supported by visiting writers and theatre groups. He has helped his team to develop new skills after many years in teaching and he has repeatedly refreshed his own enthusiasm and drive.
- 114 There is still work to do, particularly in moving the literacy strategy up through the years and out across the curriculum, with colleagues in other subject areas. The department does not effectively exploit the potential of ICT to support learning. Teachers do not sufficiently use the available data to analyse achievements and focus their work on the greatest need. Nor have they yet fully explored how they can adapt teaching and learning approaches so that all individuals can be busily engaged for all of their time in the classroom.

## **Drama**

- 115 Provision for drama is very good. Standards in the 2001 examinations at the end of Year 11 were very good and showed a good improvement on the high standards of the last two years. Work seen in lessons was in line with national expectations. In Year 7, students speak with interest, variety and in developing sentences. Movement and sequences of action are planned quite well and most students perform with good control of their actions. They know how to behave when they are watching and commenting, so that others are not embarrassed to perform. All students are included in the work and those with special educational needs have good opportunities to participate. In Year 11, students develop their set pieces with

good discipline. They use facial expression well and watch and listen to each other attentively. Though initial characterisation is sometimes superficial, students are well supported by good teaching and constructive criticism to develop their portrayals and achieve well within lessons.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Consistently good teaching of mathematics.
- Standards and progress made by students in both key stages.
- Very good relationships between teachers and students.
- Very effective leadership of the faculty.
- The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 7 to 9.

### Areas for improvement

- Analysis of students' performance data by gender, ethnicity, and special educational needs.
- Target setting within the faculty, both for teaching groups and individual students.
- Opportunities to use and apply information and communication technology.

116 Standards at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were close to national averages. The proportion of students achieving Level 6 or above improved in 2001 and was similar to that achieved nationally. These improvements have occurred largely as a result of good teaching and the increase in students' numerical confidence. Generally, boys and girls achieve similar standards. When compared with similar schools, standards achieved by students are well above average. The standards in mathematics are slightly higher than those achieved by students in English and similar to those achieved in science. Standards in Key Stage 3 over the last three years have improved at a faster rate than nationally.

117 Results in GCSE examinations in 2001 were a little below the national average. The number of students gaining A\* to C grades rose and the number gaining at least a grade G was close to the national average. The proportion of boys achieving the higher grades was higher than girls, reflecting effective work in recent years to help boys achieve higher standards. When considering how these students did in national tests two years previously, they have made good progress.

118 Students in Key Stage 3 are gaining considerable benefits from the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has effectively been introduced in Years 7, 8 and 9. Introductions to lessons are very effective in increasing students' confidence and understanding of basic number work. The additional time for mathematics in Year 7 is used effectively to develop and improve students' numerical skills and the resulting increase in confidence enables students to make good progress with their mathematics. Students are generally competent with number calculations and they work in fractions, decimals and percentages with relative confidence. These skills are enhanced further by work from other subjects, where, in design and technology for example, students measure accurately and weigh quantities using the appropriate units. In science, students make full use of a range of diagrams and graphs to depict data collected from experiments. Where students use the calculator for more difficult calculations, they do so appropriately and with confidence.



- 119 All students in Key Stage 3, irrespective of gender, special educational need, ethnicity or for whom English is an additional language, are making good progress with their mathematics. Attainment in lessons reflects this progress and is similar to the results achieved in the national tests at the end of Year 9. Higher ability students are achieving well across the different aspects of the curriculum because the work set extends their knowledge and understanding. For example, students in a Year 9 group confidently discussed the likely outcomes from an investigation into the dropping of a drawing pin. The more able students in this group quickly grasped the concept of relative frequency and its use in predicting possible outcomes of an event.
- 120 By the end of Year 11, students are achieving improved standards, although still below national averages. Attainment in lessons is slightly better than indicated by the results in previous GCSE examinations. For example, students in a Year 11 more able group extended their knowledge of shapes and space through building vector equations to represent journeys. These students went on to consider more complex arrangements that required good application of algebraic skills. A group of Year 10 students working towards a GCSE in statistics made very good use of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. In this lesson, they needed to construct a spreadsheet for use with the calculation of a moving average for a set of data on energy consumed in a home over a 12 month period. These students quickly learnt the technique and were able to produce a graph to depict the data. Through discussion they were able to evaluate the effectiveness of this method to display the trend of energy consumption. This skilfully managed lesson enabled students to consolidate their understanding of moving averages and their computer skills.
- 121 Students in Years 10 and 11 continue to develop and improve their numerical skills. They are able to practise these skills through short tests and oral work. These skills are improved further by work in other subjects. For example, in a health and social care lesson in Year 10, students coped very well with using a formula to find the body mass index.
- 122 The overall achievement and progress made by students with special educational needs across the school is good. As a result of good teaching and support, students in a Year 9 group, made impressive progress with their understanding of simple probability associated with the throwing of two dice. The guidance these students received from both their teacher and the support teacher was outstanding and made a significant contribution to their learning. In a Year 10 class, students constructed triangles accurately using a ruler and protractor correctly in preparation for an investigation. The achievement by high-attaining students is improving and more students are reaching Level 7<sup>o</sup> or above at the end of Year 9 and achieving grades A and A\* in GCSE examinations.
- 123 The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good. Very good teaching was observed in about a third of the lessons and in both key stages. This represents an improvement on the last inspection. Teachers work hard at planning interesting lessons that motivate and stimulate students to learn and this is having a direct impact on the standards they achieve and the quality of their learning. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and this is effectively used through exposition, demonstration and asking challenging questions of students. They make very good use of the time and resources available.
- 124 In the very good lessons, teaching is exemplified by well-planned and structured activities. These lessons start briskly with an effective oral or mental activity to

develop students' basic numerical skills. In almost every lesson, effective use is made of white boards for students to display their answers. On most occasions these starters usually link into the main activity. Expectations of students are high and they are expected to listen, contribute orally in the lesson and make progress with their learning. The skilful mix of probing questions, discussion and a range of tasks enables every student to make good progress and achieve high standards. Tasks are well matched to students' needs and students have time to consolidate their learning before moving on to new work. Teachers make substantial efforts to integrate students from ethnic minorities and these students make progress that is in line with others in the group. The successful blending in of all students has created a harmonious environment in which all can learn. The contribution of support staff to the management of the group and student learning is significant.

- 125 Teachers develop very positive relationships with their students, helping them gain good learning habits, display positive attitudes and behave well in lessons. Teachers assess student performance largely through homework and regular testing. Assessment records provide valuable evidence from which a student's future attainment can be predicted. As a result of this information, students in Year 9 and 11 are set target grades for national tests and examinations. They are not, however, given sufficient guidance of what they need to do to reach those grades. Similarly, with the marking of students' work, not all teachers add guidance about what needs to be improved and how. The introduction of more regular self-assessment would act as a meaningful tool for students to judge their own progress and the gains in knowledge and understanding they have made.
- 126 For teaching to improve further, teachers need to build on the success of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and extend the ideas to other aspects of the mathematics curriculum. Although good use is made of the words displayed around each classroom in most lessons, the faculty needs to ensure that developing student literacy skills remains a priority and is consistently approached by all teachers. In some situations, teachers have not given enough consideration, in their planning, to the skills students will need to use and consequently, students are unable to proceed at the pace expected. In many lessons, teachers do not lead effective reviews of the learning that has taken place and thus students are not always in a position to assess the progress they have made in the lesson.
- 127 The mathematics curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum at both key stages. The early morning breakfast club and the extra sessions for students prior to their examinations are popular and effective strategies for raising standards. The department currently does not ensure that students use ICT sufficiently to support their mathematics development.
- 128 The head of faculty provides very clear leadership and educational direction for the department. Despite the recent changes in staff there is a strong team ethos and the reassignment of responsibilities within the faculty continues to ensure that it is efficiently run. There is a need for the faculty to make more effective use of its monitoring procedures to evaluate the various initiatives it has installed. The faculty has made good progress since the last inspection. The improvement plan for the faculty is a clear statement of its willingness to embrace new ideas and challenges as part of the process to raise standards in mathematics.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- Teachers value students, encouraging them to believe in themselves.
- Good standards in lessons.
- High performance against similar schools by Year 11.
- Very effective communication with students.
- Successful scientific enquiry.
- Very good leadership of a cohesive and committed team.

### Areas for improvement

- Use of assessment to help students set subject specific targets for improvement.
- Formal speaking by students in order to clarify ideas.

- 129 Results in national tests in 2001 showed an improvement on recent years and were broadly average. Boys' results were better than those of girls. The improvement in test results is the outcome of the successful implementation of a range of strategies, not least to boost the performance of boys. A revised scheme of work has encouraged teachers to challenge the more able students and additional lessons have helped gifted and talented students to resolve complex scientific problems. Standards being achieved by students currently in Year 9 are above average because the team places a high priority on scientific enquiry and standards of literacy. Consequently, students have a good grasp of concepts in lessons, but it is more difficult for some to retain this standard of written explanation in national tests. Resources, including computers, are used effectively to help students improve standards in science. Results against similar schools are well above average, showing very good achievement.
- 130 Standards being achieved by students currently in Year 11 are above average and are better than those of the previous year's students. These latter students achieved average results in GCSE examinations in 2001, though the number achieving A\* to C grades in double award science was above average. Results have improved over a period of four years, with a significant improvement in 2001. This rise has been achieved because time and energy have been invested in additional lessons for gifted and talented students and for those who want to improve from a grade D to a grade C. Girls meet the average point score for girls nationally, but boys are above boys nationally. Standards of literacy are good in science because teachers use a wide range of successful strategies to enhance these skills. Standards of numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are average because teachers guide students in how to apply these skills. Performance in GCSE examinations is high when compared with similar schools.
- 131 Students reach good standards in lessons because teachers communicate their expertise very successfully, inspiring students to do their best. Those in the lowest set of Year 11, for instance, understood the basic ideas governing genetic inheritance because the teacher provided very good visual analogies, using coloured peas, and checked continually on how well students understood. High attaining students can balance chemical equations, overcoming difficulties because the teacher challenges them to identify clearly the mathematical ideas they are finding difficult to apply.
- 132 Achievement is very good because students are highly valued and encouraged to believe in themselves. The most able show considerable insight into scientific ideas, as seen in Year 9 when everyone clearly understood what affects the speed of a falling object after viewing 'bungy jumping' on a very good video. As a result of the very good work to analyse factors underlying boys' underachievement, higher

attaining boys now display very high achievement. Able girls achieve well, but some are tentative and continue to need encouragement to argue their case. Teachers are sensitive to their needs. Students in the lowest sets, including those with special educational needs, are making very good gains because teachers work very effectively with individuals, emphasising scientific language to ensure skills improve. Students of all abilities do better in GCSE coursework than might be expected because each group is mentored by a teacher who works successfully with them to reach the best standards they can. However, a small discrete group of students in Year 11 is not likely to complete coursework to the best standard because of absence.

- 133 Teaching and learning are very good because teachers have achieved consistent planning of high quality. Lessons have a tight structure and a fast pace, helping students to stay focused on particular learning objectives. Students are able to exercise higher order skills in the best starter activities. Teachers are very successful in communicating scientific ideas to students, using good analogies to deepen understanding. Year 11 students understood mutations because the teacher showed how the change of just one letter in a simple sentence totally alters the meaning. They use very good literacy strategies, as seen in a Year 8 lesson, when students read a play about the discovery of Penicillin. Similarly, Year 10 students were moved by a poem *Requiem to a smoker*. Such good techniques sustain interest, improving powers of concentration and provoking discussion. Good use of questions could be further refined to engage students in more formal scientific speaking. Teachers use good resources to motivate students and two superb presentations using computer programs made a positive impact on the quality of learning. As a result, students work productively in lessons and written work shows they have sustained very good effort throughout the year. Students are expected to be independent, particularly when they are using ICT to present scientific ideas, as seen when able Year 9 students were preparing a talk on the solar system.
- 134 Teachers use marking well to praise students for their effort. At its best, students receive very good feedback, but comments are not always sufficiently diagnostic in identifying errors and showing them how best to improve their work with reference to National Curriculum criteria. Teachers monitor the progress of students as they work in groups and this results in a significant improvement in skills and knowledge. They review key aspects of students' learning at the end of the lessons, but sometimes this loses its impact because teachers have not left sufficient time. Teachers encourage students further by effective display of good work, showing a very good range of attainment levels.
- 135 Leadership and management are very good. A highly cohesive team reflects the aims of the school in its work to raise standards and do the very best for students of all abilities. The quality of monitoring is good, but analysis and evaluation are areas for further development to be sure any concerns are spotted early, with further strategies to overcome them. The faculty is beginning to track progress during Key Stage 3 and this information needs to be analysed each year in order to discuss refinement of targets. Highly committed teachers work very hard to engage students of all abilities in challenging tasks. The quality of work provided by technicians is very good, with effective support for using ICT to enrich student experiences.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

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|-----------|
| Strengths |
|-----------|

- Consistently good quality teaching.
- Good relationships and attitudes.
- Very good support for students with learning difficulties.
- Good student achievement and progress at both Key Stages.

#### Areas for improvement

- The use of ongoing assessment and the sharing of assessment criteria.
- The number of students gaining A\* to C grades.
- The development of information and communication technology as an integral element of the art and design curriculum.

- 136 Standards have improved since the previous inspection. By the end of Year 9, the majority of students are achieving in line with national expectations. GCSE results in 2001 were below the national average, though all students who entered achieved at least a grade G. There has been a steady improvement in results in art over the past three years. Forecasts indicate that this improvement can be sustained and increased.
- 137 The new schemes of work, with a strong emphasis on a skills based course in Year 7, compensate very well for the low skills and knowledge base of many students on entry to the school. As the course develops there is a strong emphasis on drawing and the use of colour, with activities that build on prior learning and the needs of the individual.
- 138 During their Key Stage 3 course, students' knowledge and understanding of art and design is increasing, as is their use of a wide range of media and materials, including graded pencils, pastels and paint. Students work with increasing skill and imagination. For example, in the Year 7 project on the effects of shape on pattern and colour, students were able to arrange shape and use colour in the style of Mondrian. Students now have knowledge of a wide range of artists and designers from different cultures and times, including Constable, Cézanne and Gauguin. Students use the styles, colour and line quality in these various artists' works in many of their projects. One such example is the Year 8 landscape topic, where students are beginning to understand how the use of colour and tone can convey depth and distance. The discussion and study of artists' work is adding a good cultural dimension to students' knowledge and understanding of the art and design curriculum. During Year 9, students bring together ideas and skills learnt. The majority are able to work with greater independence and follow their own ideas within projects. Students confidently interpreted the composition and richness of colour and pattern to produce quality personal responses.
- 139 In Years 10 and 11, the majority of students are able to build upon the rich and varied experiences gained in their Key Stage 3 course, making good progress and achieving well. A minority of students are still having to practice and develop basic skills in the first year of their GCSE course that should be firmly established by the end of Year 9. The majority of students adapt well to a different way of working in producing GCSE coursework. They are able to sustain themes and develop ideas and give reasons for visual decisions made. For example, in the Year 10 project on cubism, students are able to discuss the work of Picasso with understanding of how colour and shape are used to produce different effects and variety in composition. Students show involvement and commitment. They take a pride in their work and its presentation. Students make good use of homework to develop initial ideas and research the work of their chosen artist.



- 140 The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. This is having a positive impact on students' learning, attitudes and achievement and has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is a strength of the department. It is conducted with confidence and a sensitivity to the needs of individuals, including those with learning difficulties and from different cultural backgrounds. Teachers have a depth of specialist knowledge and expertise and this enables them to challenge students well. There is a strong emphasis on quality and high expectations of all. Lessons are carefully thought through, with learning supported by discussion and directed questioning at the beginning and during lessons. Students' learning is well supported and enhanced by the good balance between whole group and individual help at all levels. Students respond well, working with pace and creative effort in the friendly supportive atmosphere where they feel valued.
- 141 Students' attitudes and behaviour are good throughout. They enjoy art and design, relationships are good, students share materials and older students can discuss their work with interest and confidence. Students are prepared to experiment, they use media with confidence and show initiative and an ability to organise themselves.
- 142 The Key Stage 3 course now meets National Curriculum statutory requirements and the department offers the opportunity for all to follow a GCSE course in art and design. Assessment and recording systems are in place and National Curriculum levels are beginning to be used. The use of ongoing assessment and the sharing of criteria as an integral part of teaching and learning is not yet secure. As a result too many students at both key stages are not sure what they need to do to improve or what is being assessed. The use of information and communication technology needs immediate attention across both key stages, as there is little evidence of its use at present.
- 143 Art and design is now well managed within the faculty of design and technology. Art and design staff are well qualified, experienced and work well together. They are well supported by a very able technician. The teacher responsible for art and design has a clear view of arts direction and its contribution to other areas of the curriculum. The documentation for art and design and the new scheme of work are well presented, informative, and take into account the new art and design curriculum. There is an enthusiasm to succeed, to take the subject forward and continue to improve standards. Although the accommodation for art and design is too small for many groups and hinders the scale of work undertaken, it provides an interesting visual environment that encourages learning. The range, quality and variety of displays in the art room and around the school celebrates students' achievements and emphasises the variety and depth of experience gained by all.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Leadership and management.
- The breadth of experiences offered at Key Stage 3.
- Students' understanding of the design and making process.
- Teaching in textiles and food.

### Areas for development

- Ensuring that all students follow a course in design and technology in Key Stage 4.



- Standards in public examinations.
- The pace and challenge in graphics and resistant materials.
- The use of computers to support designing and making.
- Accommodation and resources for resistant materials and graphics.

- 144 Since the previous inspection there have been significant improvements in provision under the leadership of a new head of faculty and standards have improved. By the age of 14, standards overall are in line with national expectations. Teacher assessments in 2001 indicate few students attaining at the higher levels. Students enter the school with below average attainment and very mixed experiences of technology from their junior schools. They make good progress with knowledge and skills across a wide range of materials that include food and textiles. Students with special educational needs are given good individual support that enables them to make progress. Students demonstrate competence and confidence in expressing their ideas and recording and evaluating their work because there is a strong focus on the design process. They learn to develop a design brief and a specification, plan a sequence of working and realise their ideas. They can work independently and as a group to solve problems and learn about industrial production methods. Practical making skills are satisfactory overall. Students are encouraged to make use of computers to support their work, particularly in food, and understand how computers can be used to control systems and events. They have limited experience of the function of mechanisms and their knowledge and use of computer aided design is under-developed.
- 145 Standards by the age of 16 are below the national average for both boys and girls, though they are significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. Comparisons however, are difficult, as a much smaller proportion of Year 11, particularly higher attaining students, follow an examination course in Key Stage 4 than is the case nationally. The school does not meet statutory requirements with respect to design and technology. Only 38 students, two thirds of whom are boys, followed a full course in design and technology in 2001. Boys outperformed girls overall. Their results were above the national average for the percentage of A\* to C grades, but all these were at the C grade. This is a reflection of the department's caution in entering boys for the foundation, rather than the higher, papers. Girls were below the national average, but the small number of entries make comparisons unreliable. Standards were best in food technology. Students who took the short course in graphics achieved very well in the examination, with four fifths gaining the higher grades. Around 30 Year 10 students took the short course in either graphics or textiles and also achieved well. Some students studied the intermediate vocational course in manufacturing and, although there was an absence of the highest grades, these students achieved satisfactorily in comparison to their prior attainment. However, standards are affected by the poor attendance of some students who then fail to complete the necessary coursework.
- 146 In the work seen in lessons, standards by the age of 14 are close to national expectations. Boys and girls work with a range of materials and apply their skills to solve problems. Standards are good in food where, for example, students design recipes, use computer software to analyse nutrient content and make modifications to create a balanced food item. In resistant materials, students use their research of the work of designers and simple drawing skills to create a range of ideas for clocks in acrylic. They successfully generate a range of solutions from simple geometric shapes because teachers give them clear guidance on how to develop ideas. Use of the design process is stressed throughout. All students, for example, learn to use flow charts to plan their work.

- 147 Teachers encourage the use of specialist vocabulary when describing and evaluating work. In food and textiles lessons, strong emphasis is placed on the development of literacy skills. When asked to work on more open tasks, students can generate a range of individual and imaginative designs to a set brief, as was evident in a display of clocks using plastics and man-made board by Year 9 students. In textiles, students are encouraged to experiment and use their skills creatively, for example, working in pairs to make a collaborative patchwork wall hanging. Subject matter is well chosen to ensure all boys and girls are included. Graphical skills and the conventions of illustration are not so systematically developed. Students often work with a limited range of equipment and tools, particularly in practical workshop areas, and this affects standards. Students are encouraged to use computers for research. They are introduced to the principles of systems and computer control technology, but the lack of equipment and resources for computer-aided design limits development of knowledge and understanding.
- 148 Teachers encourage students and involve them in the evaluation of their work, which helps them understand how to improve. Boys and girls achieve well across the materials areas. Structured worksheets are used in food and textiles that enable students to work at their own pace. This helps students with special educational needs to achieve well. Behaviour is very good in lessons and students have positive attitudes to their work that help them learn and work very well together. In a Year 9 food lesson, for example, they worked in teams to plan a batch production of biscuits, allocating and agreeing tasks amongst themselves.
- 149 From work seen in lessons and folders, standards by the age of 16 are close to the national average. Students are achieving well in the presence of good teaching. Work is strongest in food and textiles technology because lessons are very well managed with good pace. Students are given clear targets for the lesson and these are developed and explained by the teachers. Standards in graphics are below average. In some lessons, teachers allow students to carry out drawing work on benches in workshops rather than working with the appropriate equipment and drawing boards. Work becomes untidy as a result and consequently, undervalued by students.
- 150 The more consistent approach to the use of assessment and evaluation that is evident in Key Stage 3 is helping to improve the overall quality of boys and girls work at Key Stage 4. In all lessons, students are given clear information about the marking scheme and, in the best lessons, teachers use this very regularly to help students make good progress. Practical skills are well taught, but often a very narrow range of skills is applied to tasks because teachers do not always challenge students sufficiently. In general, the design process is used well to support practical work and students show satisfactory understanding of how to develop this aspect of their work. Folders in food and textiles contain a range of presentational techniques and are of a good standard because teachers encourage students to complete work in a structured way and give good quality examples. Students following the vocational manufacturing course are making satisfactory progress and some have well-developed computer design skills. The poor attendance of some students continues to affect standards.
- 151 There has been significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Teaching is good overall at both key stages. Whilst some teachers miss opportunities to develop learning, there is now a more systematic approach to planning that is steadily improving the experiences students have. Assessment is now used to raise standards and greater attention is paid to National Curriculum

expectations. In all areas, but particularly resistant materials and graphics, there is scope for teachers to make better use of assessment information in the planning of lessons to challenge students' and raise standards of practical work still further.

- 152 Leadership and management of design and technology are very good and have been effective in securing improvements through evaluation and a whole department approach. This has enabled staff to focus on raising standards. Systems are now clear and assessment has been improved with the ability to track students' progress through key stages. The scheme of work is regularly reviewed, but requires more emphasis upon the use of computer-aided design and manufacture. The lack of a clean, dedicated graphics area is lowering standards. There are still resource and shortages for graphics and resistant materials. Workshop areas are in need of upgrading to the high standards now evident in food and textiles. The appointment of a second in department with responsibility for this area is ensuring a clearer picture of how to move the department forward and raise standards. There are some health and safety issues surrounding dust extraction and the upgrading of workshop areas, but the school is aware of these and is taking action.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Leadership and management, which gives a clear direction to the department.
- The quality of teaching, which motivates students to learn.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards in Years 10 and 11, to meet national averages in GCSE examinations.
- Extending the more able students, to assist in raising standards.
- The provision of individual textbooks, to assist students' learning and standards achieved.
- The inclusion of fieldwork that widens students' experiences.

- 153 All students, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress in Key Stage 3 to reach standards that are in line with national averages at 14 years. They continue to make good progress to reach standards that are nevertheless below national expectations at 16 years. Changes in staff and students' absences affected results achieved. The most recent GCSE examinations show a decline in the average points score, due to the high number of students who gained a D grade. Geography was not taken as a GCSE subject at the time of the last inspection.

- 154 Standards in lessons seen, and an analysis of work, show that standards are in line with national expectations at 14 years and below those levels at 16 years. At 14 years, students use a range of places and environments to explain geographical patterns, such as the spread of population in Brazil. They also have a clear understanding of processes. For example, when writing about 'The journey down a river', students explained changes in the river profile and the uses to which the water is put. The investigation into the microclimate around the school showed a good use of information technology. At 16 years, students have a sound understanding of plate tectonics and clearly explained the different types of plate margins. They also understand coastal processes, such as longshore drift, and measures that are taken to prevent the movement of beach material, with the effect on places and people. Students study issues such as industrialisation and global warming, but they do not

reach the higher levels of understanding, such as the economic implications. This also results in a lack of extended writing, which would contribute to their literacy ability. The maps and diagrams used in their coursework are well presented, but many conclusions are poor, which affects the overall standards. The use of higher level statistical techniques would also assist in raising standards.

- 155 Students want to learn and this shows in their curiosity about the topic. For example, a student was keen to explore the possible effects of changes to our climate if global warming accelerates. They apply themselves to tasks set and finish tasks quickly. This was seen when they related changes in Leicester to a settlement model. They then moved on rapidly to the next task. Students work well together in mixed groups and this was seen when they prepared presentations on wind farms. They arrived at conclusions quickly and without fuss. Students take care with the presentation of their work and this shows in their carefully drawn diagrams and maps.
- 156 The quality of teaching in geography is good. In lessons observed, teaching was never unsatisfactory and was good or very good in four fifths. All lessons are conducted at a brisk pace so that much is covered. Relationships are very good, which shows when students readily ask for help, for example, to understand why few people are now employed in farming. Questioning is searching to make students think. For example, they were asked about the effects of an earthquake again and again, until they had explored all the possibilities. All students, including those with special educational needs, are included in the questioning. For example, when discussing why it would be difficult to stop the world burning fossil fuels, a student with special educational needs answered that all countries would not, because they needed to industrialise. This was a very perceptive comment and shows the progress that these students make. The very good lessons are dynamic. This was seen in a lesson on local industries, when rapid-fire questions and explanations ensured that all were involved and were active learners. Also, the enthusiasm of the teacher transfers to the students, which motivates them to learn. Occasionally, lessons lack vitality, which is, in part, due to a lack of individual textbooks. The insufficiency of textbooks makes it difficult for students who do not complete classwork, or who are absent, and hinders the progress that students make. It also affects teaching styles, as students copy diagrams that are essential to their understanding of the topic, and exercise books have many photocopied sheets of information. This meant that students have to copy text and diagrams and thus become passive learners. Homework is given due attention and is well marked with clear targets to help students improve. This is better than at the time of the last inspection.
- 157 The recently appointed head of department is enthusiastic, committed to raising standards and is providing good leadership and management. Changes that have been made by the head of department include planned revision, which is now integral to the scheme of work. This should assist in raising standards. The end of unit tasks now provide clear levels of attainment, known to students. However, more able students are not always given tasks that challenge and lead to higher levels of attainment. This has not improved since the time of the last inspection. The provision of such tasks would assist in raising standards. Fieldwork is only undertaken in Year 7 and for GCSE coursework. Therefore, those students who do not continue past 14 years have a restricted experience of other places and investigations. The inclusion of other types of fieldwork would also assist in raising standards.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Students achieve well at both key stages in developing a sound understanding of the past and effective history skills.
- Good learning is promoted by good teaching, with well-planned lessons and a variety of stimulating activities.
- The department is well led and considerable improvements have taken place since the last inspection.
- Students are well motivated and have very good relationships with teachers.

### Areas for improvement

- The development of strategies to raise the level of literacy skills, especially of extended writing, in Years 7 to 9.
- Sharing the examples of good teaching through more systematic classroom observation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9, which is not sufficiently well used to modify curriculum planning and teaching.

158 Standards in work seen by the end of Year 9 are broadly average. This reflects the proportion of students attaining Level 5 and above in teachers' assessments for 2000 and for 2001. Students achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry in Year 7, which is below average. Boys perform as well as girls. This is consistent with standards reported in the last inspection.

159 GCSE results in 2001 were in line with the national average, as indicated by the average points score. Nearly all students gained at least a G grade, which is also in line with the national average. These standards have been consistently maintained for the last three years and history has been one of the best performing subjects in the school. During this time, there has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, although at the very highest grades in 2001, boys did better than girls and better than boys nationally. Overall, this represents good achievement for all students compared with their attainment at the end of Year 9. It is largely due to close monitoring of students' progress, strong student motivation and successfully building upon the sound skills of enquiry and source analysis developed by Year 9. Comparisons with standards in GCSE at the time of the last report are impossible, as students then took an integrated humanities examination.

160 By the end of Year 9, students of all abilities have a sound knowledge and understanding of key events and chronology. They have good skills of enquiry and recording of evidence from different sources. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs are helped to write by well-structured guidance, including starter sentences, and resources which match their learning needs. Students who speak English as an additional language are effectively helped by learning assistants and also make good progress. Students are learning to analyse sources for reliability and bias from as early as Year 7 because teachers are setting high expectations in developing their history skills. For instance, Year 7 students enthusiastically and critically examined differing sources of evidence on the battle of Hastings to compare their relative usefulness. The most able students in Year 9, through more challenging teaching, develop sound skills of interpreting and analysing evidence and events. Other students are less confident as opportunities are not frequently provided. However, students of all abilities have much practice to



develop sound skills of speaking and listening through frequent group and class discussion. Skills of writing at length in a well structured way and in various forms is less well developed as there is insufficient emphasis on these aspects of literacy development in the teaching.

- 161 Standards in work seen in Year 10 and 11 are close to the national average. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and events under study. For instance, they can compare accurately different periods in the history of medicine in terms of changes and continuity. All students are developing sound skills of selecting and recording evidence. Less able students and those with special educational needs are particularly well supported, with very well prepared recording sheets. More able students evaluate sources well and write at length both fluently and analytically, with supporting evidence, as in their coursework on Modern China. The most able are being encouraged by attending a GCSE revision conference.
- 162 Teaching and learning are good overall at both key stages. They are often very good and occasionally excellent. This is a marked improvement on the last inspection. In setting high expectations, teachers now set varied and challenging tasks that involve students actively in enquiry work and problem solving. Students make good progress in lessons in acquiring secure knowledge and learning important new skills of enquiry, communications, organisation and interpretation of evidence. For example, Year 9 students cooperated very well in researching famous people and inventors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After keenly presenting their findings in the form of a television chat or game show, their performance was assessed by their peers for content and interest. The well-qualified staff plan lessons carefully to match the learning needs of all abilities, using the thorough schemes of work. Teachers manage time well, with a good pace to the lesson, setting deadlines for tasks and allowing time at the end to assess students' understanding. The students' enthusiasm for work, seen in nearly all lessons, is encouraged by the teachers' very warm relationship with them and by their good classroom management, which makes history fun. For instance, Year 9 students learned much about the 1<sup>st</sup> World War by excitedly playing a board game to take them through the hazards of trench warfare. Students in Year 11 are aware of their predicted grades, current performance and how to improve. This is due to regular monitoring of work and the strong guidance given on coursework. However, not all students in Years 7 to 9 are so sure of their levels and how to improve because the marking is not consistently thorough in explaining their weaknesses and giving advice.
- 163 The subject is effectively led by an enthusiastic head of department. As head of the humanities faculty, she has provided thorough policies on nearly all aspects. The faculty as a whole is strongly motivated to improve. The clear educational direction has produced significant improvements since the last inspection. Priorities for raising achievement strongly reflect those of the school. A much-improved programme of information and communication technology is now integrated into the schemes of work and further development is planned. There is a good programme of outside visits, which stimulates interest in the subject. The good assessment procedures use data well to set individual targets in Years 10 and 11 and monitor progress at both key stages. However, results are not yet adequately used at Key Stage 3 to decide how the curriculum or teaching might be changed. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and marking have not been fully developed to ensure that the good practice in so much of the department is shared.



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Provision and access to computers for teaching ICT lessons.
- Attainment in basic skills and interrogation of software.
- Relationships between teachers and students and between students themselves.

### Areas for development

- Assessment to guide planning and to develop students' learning.
- Depth of knowledge and understanding.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department.

164 At the end of Year 9 in 2001, the standards attained by students, as indicated by teacher assessments, are in line with national averages. This is not, however, the finding of the inspection evidence. Students in Years 7 and 8 reach the expected standards in skills in areas of word processing, desktop publishing and using the Internet for research. However, by the end of Year 9, students lack depth of knowledge about applications and alternative or extended use of ICT, which means standards are, overall, below average.

165 Standards have improved since the previous inspection with all students receiving a sound foundation in the skills of presenting information and using the Internet to research information in Year 7. By the end of Year 8, most students have reached the expected standard in the skills of word processing, desktop publishing and using the software packages available to them. In addition to these, Year 9 students are able to use spreadsheets and databases. The existing schemes of work do not provide the necessary tasks and activities to develop a depth of knowledge and understanding, which would enable students to attain higher standards in this subject. The head of department is aware of this and is currently looking at alternatives to rectify the situation.

166 The GCSE and GNVQ short-course results of students aged 16 in 2001 are below national averages. In the work seen in Years 10 and 11, standards reflect these results. However, their experience and learning in previous years, because of instability in staffing and unsatisfactory provision, has not provided them with a secure base from which to begin the more advanced work. There is now significantly improved provision for the subject. In the Year 10 GNVQ course, students are achieving below expected standards. They are, however, learning to work independently, showing sound understanding of page layout and communicating information when they evaluate a range of documents. However, they have insufficient understanding of the work, which limits their attainment. Students following the GCSE course work well independently, developing understanding of a range of documents and are able to communicate information effectively. They are also able to use spreadsheets and databases well, but the fragmented experiences in previous years limits their knowledge and understanding.

167 Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in all years. The open-ended nature of the tasks and the individual support given by teachers enables them to achieve in line with what is expected. More able students make satisfactory progress, but are not challenged sufficiently for them to achieve their potential. Students for whom English is an additional language are all well

integrated into lessons and are helped to make progress at a similar rate to that of others in the group. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls.

- 168 In relation to prior attainment, achievement in Year 7 is good and the development of skills in Years 8 and 9 is sound. Students enter the school with below average knowledge and are introduced to a range of ICT skills, starting with word processing, editing and combining text and some graphics for desktop publishing. They also gain a satisfactory understanding of measurement and control. In Years 10 and 11 they consolidate and develop skills further and adopt a more independent approach to their learning to develop knowledge and understanding of uses and applications of ICT.
- 169 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Good relationships with students encourage their co-operation in lessons. This leads to good behaviour, positive attitudes and good quality of learning. Students are motivated because they are actively involved in tasks. Students respond well when working together and teachers promote this interaction and co-operation. Teachers also encourage students to develop independence in their work, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The co-operative atmosphere promoted by teachers, and developed by students, aids learning, with examples of students helping others to progress with their work. Students from different backgrounds, religions and cultures work very well together. Teachers provide good individual support, which enables all students to make steady progress. There are examples of lessons where teachers do not emphasise the main learning points for the lesson and do not review progress at the end, which leads to students not consolidating their learning effectively.
- 170 Marking of students' work lacks constructive comments for improvement and this impedes progress and attainment. Assessment at Key Stage 3 is not specific enough. In Years 7 and 8, the assessment criteria are not specified in plans and are not related to the National Curriculum. This produces inaccuracies in teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 and limits the extent to which they can be used to promote improvement in students' learning.
- 171 Whilst the management of department is sound, there are some weaknesses that are slowing improvement. The head of faculty has concentrated his efforts on improving the provision and access to computers and software. This has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is having a positive effect on students' use of ICT in lessons and in other subjects across the curriculum. Statutory regulations are just met, but coverage of the full range of the ICT course at Key Stages 3 and 4 is barely adequate. The existing schemes of work are inadequate and do not provide sufficient detail to promote depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding. Monitoring and evaluation of students' progress and achievement are weak and do not promote the raising of attainment in this subject.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- Teachers know their subject very well.
- Students gain good results in GCSE examinations.
- Students behave well in lessons, enabling them to learn.
- Teachers and students respect each other and work well together.

#### Areas for improvement

- The availability of textbooks so that students do not have to share.
- Opportunities for students to use computers in the subject.
- Time for students to study a second language before deciding on examination choices.
- Extend the most able students to enable them to gain the top grades in GCSE examinations.

- 172 At the end of their third year in the school, students' test scores in French or German are close to national averages. Those students who study two languages do well in their second language. Results at this stage have remained similar to those gained at the time of the last inspection.
- 173 In the GCSE examination, French results in 2001 were well above national averages, with girls comparing particularly well with girls nationally. Boys' results were also above the national average in this language. In German, the small number of students taking the subject achieved above average results. Those students taking Gujarati achieved results that compared well with their results in other subjects. Although the results were good by national and school standards, very few students gained A\* or A grades. Apart from the lack of higher grades, results have improved strongly since the last inspection. Students from all ethnic groups, and those for whom English is not the first language, achieve as well as all other students.
- 174 In their first three years at the school, students study either French or German as their first modern language. They enjoy their learning, remembering words and phrases from one lesson to the next and are ready to try them out in answering questions or in making up their own sentences. Students in the early stages of learning French or German are able to express opinions and give reasons for what they say. They have a quick understanding of what they hear or read and can enjoy a joke or play a game, using their listening and speaking skills. Their ability to listen helps them to learn from each other by reacting to what fellow students say and expanding on what they hear. Even the youngest students can have a lively exchange of views on their likes and dislikes or their favourite hobbies.
- 175 In their third year at the school, the students who are making the most progress with their first language add a second. These students make rapid progress with the new language and are quickly able to follow quite complex and rapid speech, answering in complete sentences with a ready command of basic vocabulary. The students have to choose their GCSE subjects soon after the introduction of their second language and few feel confident enough at this early stage to opt for continuing both languages.
- 176 During Key Stage 4, students who feel they would be better suited to other subjects may discontinue their modern language study or may choose to study their family's language instead. In Gujarati lessons, students learn to write the language as well as speak it so that they may gain a GCSE qualification. In all years, students from different cultural backgrounds work harmoniously together and show liking and respect for each other regardless of background or ability.
- 177 Students of French and German work in groups with others of all abilities. Those students who find languages difficult benefit particularly from hearing a fluent answer and then using what they have heard to formulate their own ideas. Students of all abilities and backgrounds listen hard to recorded tests and understand them well.

Some students produce more complex written work than others. Regardless of ability, students do their best, presenting their work neatly and with pride. Students whose first language is not English often produce very good work.

- 178 The lack of the highest grades in the GCSE results indicates that not all of the best linguists are being fully stretched. Lessons are stimulating and challenging, but there are students who could do even better if they could always go as fast as they are able. The department has not been as successful as some others in the school in ensuring that these students achieve their full potential.
- 179 Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Teachers expect and achieve high standards of behaviour so that the students can concentrate on their work. All use French, German or Gujarati as the main means of communicating with students, explaining in English when necessary. Work is regularly marked and teachers know their students' strengths and weaknesses well, enabling them to give individual help. Lessons are relevant to the students' own interests. A Year 10 German group were very interested in a video about preparing for a party and enthusiastically offered their own suggestions in German. Teachers know exactly what is required for the GCSE syllabus and ensure that the students are well prepared for their examinations.
- 180 Teachers use resources, such as videos and compact discs, to enrich the students' learning. Very good use is also made of the time spent in school by the German assistant. However, more textbooks are still needed to prevent sharing so that students may look for reference points without interfering with their partners' concentration. There are few books in the library to engage students' interest and teachers are not making any use of computers in the subject. Students would benefit from regular informal contact via e-mail with students in other countries and by access to the Internet for news and up to date information about the countries whose languages they are studying.
- 181 Lessons are well planned to ensure that students build on their knowledge during lessons and over time. This careful structure contributes to the students' natural improvement over time. Students who do not attend regularly are at a disadvantage because they do not acquire knowledge as smoothly as other members of the group.
- 182 Students often work in pairs or groups, which they choose from among their friends without reference to ethnic background or academic ability. In this way, as well as by direct teaching about other languages and cultures, the subject is contributing to the students' moral and social education. This contribution could be enhanced by extending the programme of foreign visits and exchanges and providing more opportunities for learning languages outside the classroom.

## MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**, but with significant weaknesses.

### Strengths

- The successful introduction of music technology.
- Good attitudes to music.
- Very good accommodation and resources.

### Areas for improvement

- Leadership and management to improve the range, organisation and development of musical activities throughout the school.
- The quality of staffing to raise standards of teaching and learning.
- The development of higher performing skills.

- 183 Music is taught currently by unqualified teachers and without the leadership of a head of department. Since the previous inspection, there has been a succession of short appointments that have inhibited long-term development of successful musical activities. The current use, moreover, of inexperienced and unqualified teachers prevents sufficient progress towards higher musical standards. The school is seeking to appoint an experienced leader to develop the subject effectively and has already invested heavily to prepare for this. Significant improvements have recently been made to the accommodation and resources. The new purpose-built expressive arts suite provides an outstandingly attractive and suitable environment for the teaching of music. There are sufficient good quality keyboards in the main teaching room for the large classes that use them. A second teaching room is lavishly equipped with computers linked to MIDI keyboards. There are two practice rooms and a separate store.
- 184 By the end of Year 9, standards are below average compared with national expectations. Even taking into account students' below average starting points, their level of achievement generally is unsatisfactory. Boys do as well as girls and there is no significant difference between the achievements of those from different ethnic backgrounds. Students take a good interest in composing and playing short melodies on keyboards and enjoy the opportunities afforded to practice on their own with headphones. Although most understand written music sufficiently to work out the pitch of notes, their playing is limited rhythmically. Very few have high enough performing skills to play together in parts or in ensembles. During the inspection, no singing was heard and music making generally is restricted to what can be performed solely on keyboards. The range and use made of other acoustic instruments is limited.
- 185 Since the previous inspection, occasional one-year GCSE courses have been introduced for relatively small numbers of students, too few to make valid comparisons with national averages or to establish an improving trend in attainment over time. What is clear, however, is that all those involved over the last two years have creditably attained at least a G grade. The proportion of those attaining higher grades is small. This is largely due to below average performing and musicianship skills. The school has started to remedy this by providing extra keyboard lessons for all involved in GCSE work. During the inspection, an instrumental lesson was observed where a student was developing expressive control and rhythmic dexterity in combining well-known melodies like *Sailing* with single-finger chords and pre-selected rhythms. Standards in composing have improved with the introduction of computers that are enabling students to add a degree of sophistication that they did not achieve in the years prior to the inspection. This was seen in a Year 10 class where a few of the more able students used technology well to support their musical ideas in coherent musical structures. Most, however, use a rather limited number of chords and rhythms to create basic song structures.
- 186 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but with some significant weaknesses. The limitations of inexperienced and unqualified teachers are apparent in most lessons. There is too much reliance on commercially produced lesson outlines and concern for musical theory, neither of which fully match the needs of all students. For example, basic note names and values were taught in most of the lessons



observed, although a significant number of students already knew them adequately. In many of the lessons observed, support teachers were present helping those with special educational needs. In the least satisfactory lessons, basic class teaching skills are poor and students are given little idea of what they should be aiming to achieve musically. Where this was observed, standards of behaviour and attitudes deteriorated to an unacceptably low level.

- 187 In most lessons, however, teaching focuses well on practical activities. Tasks are provided that enable students to make a good creative effort. In these lessons, students respond enthusiastically, practising individually and sharing their ideas collaboratively. Students' behaviour is good and relationships with their teachers and with each other are friendly and productive. Several involve themselves in mainly informal extra musical activities within the department each week. Teachers are skilled in the use of music technology and are particularly supportive to GCSE students when composing. Elsewhere, they provide relatively few opportunities to listen to and reflect on music that would develop students' understanding or inspire them in their own composing and performing. Greater use could be made of the resources available to develop ensemble skills in particular.
- 188 Since the previous inspection, there has been a modest increase in the provision for extra instrumental lessons. About 25 students currently have tuition on a limited range of instruments, mainly to support GCSE performing activities. This area of activity is not yet sufficiently widespread to support the development of higher performing skills in the school.
- 189 Temporary management of the department, supported by the head of faculty, is largely in the hands of an inexperienced teacher who nevertheless works hard to maintain and develop basic musical activities. At the time of the inspection, there was no established scheme of work for students to follow and no established tradition of music making in the school. Two classes in Year 9, moreover, do not have any music lessons. The appointment of a full-time and experienced head of department is urgently required to lead and develop the clear musical potential of students throughout the school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Good teaching throughout the school.
- Very good relationships between students and their teachers.
- Above average standards in GCSE lessons.
- Very positive attitudes of students.
- All students are valued.

### Areas for improvement

- Examination results.
- Curriculum planning to ensure full equality of opportunity.
- Time allocation for students in Years 10 and 11.
- Arrangements for the assessment of students' work.
- Accommodation.

- 190 The standards achieved by students in the GCSE examinations in 2001 were below the national average. They are below those in similar schools, with boys obtaining



more of the higher grades than girls. Results are better than in previous years, although only 18 students sat the examination in 2001 and all students achieved at least a G grade. The number of students on the current course has increased.

- 191 By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, standards are average in the majority of lessons. Students arrive at the school with below average standards in soccer. In Year 8, students lack ball control and accuracy in passing and have a limited understanding of the use of space to receive a pass. They are unable to apply the correct skills in a game. In volleyball, students in Year 8 demonstrate above average standards. They have a clear understanding of the technique of a range of passes, including the dig and volley, and know the difference between the spike and the block.
- 192 Standards are often above average in most GCSE lessons. In theory lessons, students in Year 10 know the process of respiration in a cell and that oxygen and glucose are required for energy. They compare the pulse rate of different athletes during exercise and interpret information from graphs. In Year 11, students are aware of the range of injuries in sport, how they are treated and methods to ensure that sporting injuries are prevented. No application of information and communication technology is taught in physical education, but students make use of the Internet to retrieve information. The scrutiny of students' written work indicates standards above average. Students take pride in their work and presentation is of a high standard.
- 193 In practical work, standards are often above average, particularly in basketball. Students in Year 10 and Year 11 play the game with knowledge and understanding of tactics and strategies of the game. For example, they can set up systems of defence and attack during games and use the dummy to outwit opponents. They understand when to use a zone defence and a man to man defence. Their skills of dribbling and passing are good, but shooting often deteriorates in a game. Students make good and sometimes very good progress. Students of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds are integrated into all lessons and make good progress. Students are often extended in their learning. Standards are well below average in badminton, where students in Year 10 are unable to serve a shuttlecock correctly or play a game with knowledge and understanding.
- 194 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Only one lesson observed during the inspection was unsatisfactory. All teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching and this contributes to the good progress and standards achieved by most students. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection. All teachers form very strong relationships with their students and this is a strength of the department. Relationships are particularly strong with students studying the GCSE course. In a volleyball lesson, the teacher supported all students when developing serving in the game. Targets were set for all students and the teacher used demonstration effectively. Teachers' knowledge of the activities taught is good, but their awareness of the National Curriculum requirements is less secure. Lesson planning is good and includes clear learning objectives, but specific activities or support for students with a special educational need are not included. Nevertheless, they make good progress in the lessons because teachers ensure their full involvement. This is also true for those students for whom English is an additional language. The gifted and talented are stretched well and many students make very good progress. In the best lessons, pace is brisk, with students working hard and concentrating on tasks set by the teacher. The department has benefited from the monitoring of teaching throughout the faculty of expressive arts. This has helped teachers review and improve their work.

- 195 Students' attitudes are very positive. They arrive enthusiastically to lessons and work hard. There are few non-participants, a major improvement since the last inspection. Students listen intently to instructions and enjoy being with their teachers. Behaviour is often very good and sometimes excellent. All students work collaboratively in groups, are confident and prepared to be involved in discussion. Students' attitudes have improved since the last inspection. Students studying the GCSE course demonstrate mature attitudes to both their practical and theory lessons.
- 196 The leadership of physical education in the school is satisfactory overall, though there are still weaknesses in the curriculum, which were identified in the last inspection report. Planning does not ensure equality of time for boys and girls in Years 7 to Year 9 for all activities, especially gymnastics and games. In Year 10 and Year 11, students use the local sports centre to extend their experiences, but some activities, such as swimming, are supervised by non-specialist teachers and no formal teaching takes place. At present, physical education alternates with personal and social education for 10 week blocks in Years 10 and 11, limiting the continuity of work in these years. This is exacerbated by the inadequate time in Years 10 and 11 for the subject, where students are unable to complete the revised requirements of the National Curriculum. Schemes of work are developing, but they are not yet complete in all the activities taught. Students' grades are recorded for assessment purposes, but there has been insufficient improvement in this area since the last report. There is no indication of what students have covered, nor what they know, understand or can do. Not all reports to parents give this information. There is a range of extra curricular activities offered to students and school teams are successful in basketball, soccer cricket and netball.
- 197 Accommodation is adequate, but the quality of the gymnasias is unsatisfactory. The dining room is unsuitable for many of the activities taught there. The tennis courts have been resurfaced, but outdoor areas are affected by litter, which is a hazard to students in their lessons. Resources have increased, but an increase in portable apparatus for gymnastics would extend students' work.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision for religious education is **good**.

### Strengths

- Good teaching, which enables students to learn well.
- Excellent use of self-evaluation to help students understand how to raise the level of their attainment.

### Areas for improvement

- Developing the subject - specific knowledge and skills of non-specialist teachers.
- The regular monitoring of students' work.

- 198 Provision for religious education at Key Stage 4 has significantly improved since the previous inspection and now meets the requirements of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus. All Key Stage 4 students now follow an accelerated course of study leading to entry to the GCSE Short Course examination at the end of Year 10.
- 199 In the 2001 GCSE Short Course examinations, the proportion of Year 10 students gaining A\* to C grades was below the national average. However, for reasons

unrelated to the subject, the school deferred the entry of two groups of the highest attaining students until 2002. The pass rate was therefore significantly lower than might have been expected if all the candidates prepared had been entered, as they will be in future years. Again, for this reason it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons with students' performance in previous years.

- 200 There are no national standards for religious education at 14 years of age. However, in work seen during the inspection, the attainment of students at the end of Year 9 is broadly in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus for their age. Students have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, of the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country and of their origins and distinctive features. They understand why the beliefs of practising members of faith communities are important to them and how they shape their lives. They can also make a personal response to religious questions. However, their skills in applying religious insights to ethical issues are under-developed.
- 201 In work seen during the inspection, the attainment of students at age 15 preparing to sit the GCSE Short Course examination at the end of Year 10 was broadly average. Students show a good knowledge and understanding of Christian perspectives on moral issues and of the inter-relationship between religion and the media. However, their understanding of Christian beliefs about God and of the philosophical arguments concerning the existence of otherwise of God is less well developed.
- 202 Students of all levels of prior attainment achieve well at age 14 because of good teaching and the good attitudes they bring to their work. Boys achieve well because they are set clear short-term targets. Students with special educational needs, and those from minority ethnic and faith backgrounds, also achieve well. This is because of caring and supportive teaching, work that is well matched to their individual needs and very good in-class support. Students make good progress both in lessons and over time. For example, they progress from simple descriptive work on the origins and distribution of the major world faiths in Year 7, to being able to grasp and evaluate a range of ethical issues, and the central concepts of Islam, in Year 9.
- 203 Students pursuing the GCSE Short Examination course also achieve well at 15 years of age. By then, their skills have developed sufficiently for them to be able to understand, for example, the formative influences determining moral decision-making. They can also evaluate secular and religious responses to the complex ethical issues surrounding concepts of marriage, the family and personal and social relationships.
- 204 The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is good overall. It is very good or better in a third of lessons. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have a good grasp of their subject and high expectations of students. They know clearly what they wish their students to learn, routinely share their aims with them and review to what extent they have achieved them at the end of lessons. They plan their lessons well to achieve their aims and engage and hold students' interest through a variety of activities and tasks that are well matched to their individual needs. For example, Year 7 students made very good gains in understanding Hindu teaching in the *Vedas* because the teacher planned very well to use their own experience of rules for living at home and in school to introduce the concept of religious rules. She then led them step-by-step to a very good understanding of the key concepts of Hinduism through skilled explanation and questioning and interesting and challenging written activities. By the end of the

lesson, students had grasped the key ideas and could make a mature personal response to them in plenary discussion.

- 205 Teachers create a secure ethos in the classroom in which all students feel valued. Students with special educational needs or from minority backgrounds therefore, feel able to take risks in their learning, knowing that their peers will respect their contributions. This was well evidenced in a Year 9 lesson on prejudice and discrimination. There, students from minority ethnic and faith backgrounds were encouraged to contribute their own experiences to a challenging, but sensitively managed, discussion of racism in British and American society. Therefore, they made good gains in understanding the nature and impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.
- 206 Teachers make excellent use of student self-assessment at the end of topics to help students understand how to raise the levels of their attainment. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, there was excellent planning and collaboration between the teacher and the learning support assistant. This enabled all students, including those with special educational needs, to use the outcomes of an end of module assessment on Sikhism to set their own targets for their next unit of work on Christianity. Teachers also make good use of homework that extends the learning in class. This good teaching is underpinned by the very good relationships that teachers engender in the classroom, based on mutual respect and caring.
- 207 Where teaching is less strong, non-specialist teachers sometimes have an insufficient grasp of the subject to extend students' understanding or to provide sufficient challenge. For example, Year 9 lessons on ethical issues are essentially secular in content and do not do enough to develop students' understanding of religious responses to them. Year 10 work on concepts of God and arguments for the existence or otherwise of God is insufficiently rigorous. Teachers mark work conscientiously and supportively, but marking is less diagnostic than at the previous inspection and does not do enough to help students to understand how to raise the levels of their attainment.
- 208 The head of department exercises effective leadership and day-to-day management of the subject. He has a clear vision of the educational direction the subject should take if standards are to be further raised. Improved learning resources since the previous inspection have made a positive contribution to standards. However, the department does not monitor students' work regularly enough to ensure that all are achieving appropriately.