

INSPECTION REPORT

WEDNESFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Wednesfield, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104392

Headteacher: Mr P Coates

Reporting inspector: Mr D Page
1028

Dates of inspection: 10 – 14 March 2003

Inspection number: 249677

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lichfield Road
Wednesfield
Wolverhampton

Postcode: WV11 3ES

Telephone number: 01902 558 222

Fax number: 01902 558 200

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Ms S Hall

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1028	D Page	Registered inspector	Chemistry (Post-16 only)	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements What should the school do to improve further?
9798	V Ashworth	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17453	C Edney	Team inspector	Mathematics (including Post-16)	
3943	D Innes	Team inspector	English (including Post-16)	
12356	R Dickason	Team inspector	Science Physics (Post-16 only)	
22524	S Innes	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (including Post-16) Special educational needs	
15940	N Godfrey	Team inspector	Art and design Business studies (Post-16 only)	

31779	V Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology	
31008	P Rourke	Team inspector	Geography (including Post-16)	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30794	G Murray	Team inspector	History	
13155	J Dixon	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages Educational inclusion English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
4697	R Black	Team inspector	Music	
31192	J Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education (including Post-16)	How well are pupils taught?
23480	M Harding	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM	12
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	19
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	26
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	30
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	31
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	35
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	37
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	44
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	74

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This mixed comprehensive school is bigger than other secondary schools with 1239 pupils compared with the national average of 993. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, (20.0 per cent), is above the national average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, (28 per cent), is very high. Most of these pupils are of Indian heritage but there is also a significant number of pupils of black Caribbean heritage. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English, (15.6 per cent), is high. The number of pupils at an early stage of language acquisition is 10. The main languages other than English spoken by pupils are: Punjabi; Hindi; Portuguese, and Urdu. There are seven refugee pupils, most of whom are from Angola. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, (15.4 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. The majority of these pupils have moderate learning needs. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs, (0.7 per cent), is below the national average. The area from which the school draws its pupils displays significant social deprivation.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The effectiveness of the school is very good. Standards on entry, are below the national averages, although rising. Standards at the end of Year 11 are rising faster than half the schools in the country. Pupils' achieve well through good teaching. The head has a very clear vision for the school and leadership is very good. Given how effective the school is, its context, and the money it receives, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership by the head is very good and the school is well managed.
- The school is raising standards faster than half the schools in the country.
- Teaching and learning are good and there is a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching.
- Pupil behaviour in lessons is very good.
- This is a caring school where relationships are good and teachers respect the pupils and have a high level of commitment to them.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is very well developed.
- The 11-16 curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by vocational education.
- Partnership with parents is good.

What could be improved

- Insufficient focus in the school's development planning leads to difficulties in monitoring and evaluating effectively.
- The identification and support for pupils with special educational needs, and those learning in English as an additional language, needs to be improved.
- The structure of the school day leads to ineffective use of time.
- The setting of homework, and the use of the homework diary, are inconsistent.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.
- The statutory requirement for religious education is not met in Years 10 and 11.

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 improvements to the many weaknesses reported during the last inspection. In the previous inspection, a significant amount of teaching was unsatisfactory. Substantial progress has been made on this, with the amount of unsatisfactory teaching having been drastically

reduced. The monitoring role of middle management has been developed although, a sharper focus remains to be given to this. The support for pupils with special educational needs has been developed, although, there is much left to do. Marking and homework are improved, although, there are inconsistencies in their implementation. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains a problem. Assessment, including target setting, is now a strength of the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	E	E*	E*
A-levels/AS-levels	N/A	E	N/A	

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

Standards on entry to the school have risen over the last two years. For the current Year 7 they were around to just below national averages. Previously, standards on entry were below average. By the end of Year 9 in national tests in 2002, standards in mathematics were below the average, and in science were well below the average. Standards in the remarked English tests are estimated to be below the average. When compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment, standards in mathematics were in line with the average, and in science were below the average. When compared to similar schools on the basis of free school meals, standards in mathematics were below the average and in science were well below the average. In the remarked English tests, standards are likely to be in line with the average for similar schools. While performance has altered by one grade up or down each year, overall, the trend in improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend. There has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls over at the last five years. There is no significant difference between the performance of higher and lower attaining pupils.

By the end of Year 11 in national tests in 2002, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C; five or more grades A*-G, and the percentage gaining one or more grade A*-G were well below the average. When compared to similar schools on the basis of free school meals, the percentage gaining five or more grades A*-C was in line with the average, and the percentages gaining five or more grades A*-G and one or more grades A*-G were well below the average. When compared to similar schools on the basis of pupils' prior attainment, the percentage gaining five or more grades A*-C was above the average. The percentage gaining five or more grades A*-G was well below the average, while those gaining one or more grades A*-G were below the average. Overall, the trend in raising performance has been faster than the national trend. The school failed to meet its challenging targets for 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are well satisfied with, and take pride in their school. There are, however, those who show disaffection and challenging behaviour.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupil behaviour is particularly good in lessons and frequently contributes significantly to their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour and no sign of racial disharmony.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. However, as part of a government initiative, the school was the only one in the authority to reach, and actually exceed, its target last year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching. As a result, pupils achieve generally well. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in 65 per cent of lessons, very good or excellent in 30 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory or poor in 6 per cent of lessons. In English, teaching is good throughout the school. Better teaching is characterised by good lesson structure. Lessons are purposeful and a brisk pace is sustained. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good throughout the school with some very good and excellent practice. Teachers have very high expectations and use teaching methods that are very effective. Teachers use the three-part lesson structure of the National Numeracy Strategy well. In the best lessons skilful questioning challenges pupils to think mathematically. Teaching in science is good throughout the school and ensures that pupils made good progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons very effectively so that learning is good. Teachers make very good use of guidance to help pupils write, and interactive whiteboards to enable pupils to plan investigations. Teaching is unsatisfactory when sanctions to reduce inattention are not used effectively. Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is best when they are taught by specialists with experience of teaching pupils with special educational needs. However, learning opportunities are reduced when pupils who have special educational needs are taught without additional classroom support. They make satisfactory progress but it could be better. Pupils learning in English as an additional language are given insufficient support to help them make the progress of which they are capable. Plans have recently been introduced to provide support for pupils who are identified as being gifted or talented. There is good provision for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy. Written policies are in place for the development of both literacy and numeracy, and an audit has been undertaken of the contribution of all subjects to the development of numeracy. Plans for lessons in all subjects now have opportunities for development in literacy and numeracy specified and key words listed.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. In Years 7 to 9 the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements. While the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good overall, there is inadequate time for the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus to be covered in religious education for some pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. In addition to all subjects of the National Curriculum, pupils have opportunities to follow courses in Years 10 and 11 which closely match their needs and are externally accredited. Pupils with special needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. However, insufficient in-class support is provided for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory. The identification and support for pupils learning in English as an additional language, needs to be improved, as little additional help is provided for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is very good, while that for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school makes very good use of test results and assessments made by teachers to track the progress of pupils, although there are inconsistencies across the school.

The school works well in partnership with parents, providing good quality information and ensuring that parents feel welcome to approach the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership by the head teacher is very good; his vision and single-mindedness has helped the school to make very good progress since the last inspection. The head is well supported by the senior staff who share his commitment to succeed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors know the school well, and make a significant contribution to its effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school's development plan is insufficiently well focused to facilitate the school evaluating its progress as accurately as it would like.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses the resources available to it well, and for their intended purposes.

The consortium arrangements ensure a good match of staff for Post-16 courses. Some departments, such as English; geography; physical education and information and communication technology, have experienced problems in the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified and experienced staff. There are insufficient staff to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory. The lack of an adequate metalled path between the 2 sites causes substantial amounts of mud to be brought into the buildings. The timetabled use of the 2 sites leads to ineffective use of time. Learning resources are adequate for the curriculum. The school is good at ensuring it achieves the best value from its spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children are making good progress in school. • My child likes school. • The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work to do at home. • Behaviour in the school. • The information about how their children are getting on.

The inspection found evidence to support all the parents' positive views. The amount of homework set, and the way this is checked by tutors, was found to be inconsistent across the school. The inspection did not find evidence to support parents' concerns regarding behaviour, which, despite some challenging behaviour exhibited by a small minority of pupils, was very good overall. In general, parents are kept well informed by the school. However, the pupil reports are not sufficiently well-focused on individual pupils, and this detracts from the quality of information parents receive regarding the progress made by their children.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The size of the Sixth Form is smaller than the national average, with 110 students compared to 171. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is above the national average, and in most years is well above. The school is a member of a consortium with 2 other schools. The range of courses offered is consequently wide and includes a good range of academic and vocational courses. The Sixth Form offers a good variety of programmes catering appropriately for the needs of learners with very different levels of prior attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The cost effectiveness of the Sixth Form is good. Standards on entry, are below the national averages. Standards seen in lessons were generally in line with national averages. Teaching is very good and ensures students make good progress. Students have mature attitudes to their work and are very well motivated. The Sixth Form meets the needs of students well. The leadership and direction of Post-16 affairs is less clear than it should be, due, in part, to the Sixth Form having no direct representation on the senior management team of the school.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good and teachers are successful in raising the aspirations of students.
- Assessment, support and guidance for students are very good.
- Careers guidance, provided by the teachers, is very effective at helping students choose future routes.
- Students exhibit mature attitudes to their work.
- The school supports students well in retaking English and mathematics GCSE courses.

What could be improved

- The Sixth Form could make a greater contribution to the life of the school.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.
- The statutory requirement for religious education is not met.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall, judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Teaching is good and as a result student achievement is good. Students taking A-level are mature and hardworking. Examination results are too low.
Chemistry	Very good. Teaching is consistently very good and information and communication technology is well used to support learning in the subject. Standards are average and set to rise, as the effect of rising standards on entry becomes apparent.

Curriculum area	Overall, judgement about provision, with comment
Physics	Good. Good teaching ensures that students make good progress in most lessons. Standards are below average in lessons. There are insufficient opportunities for students to work independently, or to make use of information and communication technology.
Business Education	Very good. The quality of teaching is very good and therefore the support available to the students is very good. Standards are in line with the average and sometimes above.
Information And Communication Technology	Satisfactory. The quality of learning and teaching is satisfactory and has some good features. Standards of attainment are below average. Students have insufficiently developed skills in organising coursework projects.
Physical Education	Good. The teacher has good knowledge which ensures that students achieve well and learn specific vocabulary. Students are given insufficient opportunity to work independently. Standards are in line with the average.
Geography	Satisfactory. Some teaching is very good and enables students to learn well. Students spend too much time copying material directly from the textbook, or writing dictated notes. Standards are well below the average.
English Literature	Good. Very good teaching and positive relationships between teachers and students encourage good achievement. The proportion gaining grades A and B is too low.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good. The secure relationships that exist within the Sixth Form offer support for those who experience difficult personal problems. School is very successful in raising personal expectations and many students are the first generation to experience Post-16 education.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Sixth Form	Satisfactory. The role of the Head of Key Stage 5 is concentrated mainly on the partnership with the other schools. This, coupled with the Sixth Form having no direct representation on the senior management team of the school, means that the leadership and direction of the Sixth Form is less clear than it should be. As a consequence, the Sixth Form does not have sufficient impact on the corporate life of the school. Insufficient focus to the school improvement plan frustrates the school's evaluation of the Sixth Form's quality. The school's policy on entry to the Sixth Form ensures equality of opportunity for all.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the Sixth Form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff treat them as adults and their relationships with the teachers have become even better. • The strong support they receive in both academic and pastoral matters. • The provision for computers is good. • The smaller classes and the greater bonding with each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships in some courses where students are taught off-site. • Problems in movement within the consortium. • More accommodation for study and socialising.

Evidence from the inspection supports all the students' views, with the exception of the relationships off-site, which were not directly inspected and so no judgement can be made.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Standards on entry to the school have risen over the last two years. For the current Year 7 they were around to just below national averages. Previously, standards on entry were below average. By the end of Year 9 in national tests in 2002, standards in mathematics were below the average, and in science were well below the average. Standards in the remarked English tests are estimated to be below the average. When compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment, standards in mathematics were in line with the average, and in science were below the average. When compared to similar schools on the basis of free school meals, standards in mathematics were below the average and in science were well below the average. In the remarked English tests, standards are likely to be in line with the average for similar schools. While performance has altered by one grade up or down each year, overall, the trend in improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend. There has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls over the last five years. The school helps higher and lower attaining pupils equally well to achieve their potential.
- 2 By the end of Year 11 in national tests in 2002, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C; five or more grades A*-G, and the percentage gaining one or more grade A*-G were well below the average. When compared to similar schools on the basis of free school meals, the percentage gaining five or more grades A*-C was in line with the average, and the percentages gaining five or more grades A*-G and one or more grades A*-G were well below the average. When compared to similar schools on the basis of pupils' prior attainment, the percentage gaining five or more grades A*-C was above the average. The percentage gaining five or more grades A*-G was well below the average, while those gaining one or more grades A*-G were below the average. Overall, the trend in raising performance has been faster than the national trend. The school failed to meet its challenging targets for 2002.
- 3 By the end of Year 9 in English, in lessons and work seen, standards were below average. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and usually to each other, particularly when working in small groups. Reading aloud is generally accurate and some read their own writing and that of others fluently and demonstrate good understanding. The quality of written work is more variable. In Years 10 and 11, some pupils do not listen attentively to teachers and, especially, they do not listen to each other. Generally, pupils make good progress during lessons and over time. The standards of literacy throughout the school are generally below expectation.
- 4 In mathematics, the standard of work seen during the inspection was in line with national expectation throughout the school. This is higher than suggested by the national tests and examinations. These higher standards are due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the reorganisation of setting which has raised both teachers' and pupils' expectations. The standards of numeracy of the majority of pupils are good. In science, the standard of work seen in lessons, and in pupils' records, is below average overall but varies greatly. Some work about balanced forces done by higher attaining pupils was well above expectation but in other lessons for pupils of lower attainment it was well below expectation. In art; design and technology; geography; history; music, and religious education, standards throughout the school are in line with national averages. In citizenship in Years 10 and 11,

standards are in line with national expectation. In information and communication technology and physical education, standards throughout the school are below national expectation.

Sixth form

- 5 The standards on entry to the courses are generally well below national averages. The school has a policy of encouraging students to stay on for further education. The average point score of students entered for GCE A/AS levels in 2001 was well below the national average and the average for similar schools. There is no significant difference between the performance of males and females. Students perform equally well in GCE A/AS levels and the advanced vocational courses. The school helps students to make good progress compared to their prior attainment.
- 6 In mathematics and information and communication technology, A-level results were below the national average. Overall, standards in AS and A-level chemistry are close to the national average. By the end of Year 13, standards are average to above average in AVCE Business Studies. In 2001, standards at AS and A-level in geography were well below the national average. Results in A-level examinations in English Literature in recent years have been below national averages, particularly for the proportion gaining the higher grades, A and B.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 7 Most pupils are well satisfied with, and take pride in their school. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Some pupils are openly enthusiastic and there are many demonstrating positive attitudes. They show respect for their teachers and are shown respect in return. They become interested and involved in activities, and are appreciative of everything the school provides. Some pupils express great enthusiasm for: the sporting activities; the after-school beauty club; and facilities for information and communication technology, particularly the proposed new centre and cyber-cafe. All those spoken to would not want to be at any other school. While many are keen to be involved in school life, there are those who show disaffection and challenging behaviour. Some of these are poor attenders and find it hard to value education. These pupils struggle to adopt positive attitudes despite the best efforts of the school.
- 8 Behaviour in and around the school is generally good, and in lessons was observed to be very good on most occasions. Year 8 pupils said that the standard of behaviour on the buses was good. Most pupils know what standard of behaviour is expected of them in lessons and on their way to and from school. One parent expressed pleasure at being alerted by some pupils when her car was parked outside her nearby home with the lights on and the keys visible. Pupils travelling between the two buildings generally behave well. Most are polite and courteous to adults although one or two were observed to exhibit inappropriate behaviour if the opportunity presented itself. A minority of pupils exhibit challenging behaviour.
- 9 School is aiming to reduce exclusions but there have been several fixed term exclusions in all years, except Year 7, during this academic year. These involve both white girls and boys and Afro-Caribbean pupils. The incidents leading to exclusion were cases of disobedience, insolence, verbal abuse and some of physical contact. Two pupils have been permanently excluded. The first was excluded in September for behaviour in the preceding term and had come from another school. The second has been excluded this term for violent and abusive behaviour. The school is

disappointed at the number of exclusions of three hundred and three days in all, but acknowledges that this is largely due to the closure of the learning support unit over the last twelve months because of long-term staff absence.

- 10 Relationships within the school are very good. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour and no sign of racial disharmony. Pupils of different ethnic backgrounds work and play happily together and new pupils are warmly welcomed. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and discreetly and pupils are generally quick to alert staff to any problems. Pupils support each other and are taught to listen to the views of others. Pupils are able to adopt positive views and take an active part in the school community. They are willing to talk to adult visitors in a responsible, positive, and helpful manner. A school council is developing very slowly and is in its second year. The meetings are infrequent and although it enjoyed a larger measure of success last year, progress is limited, mainly due to time constraints. Issues to be debated come from the pupils, and school meals are high on the agenda. However, it is acknowledged that more input is required from the upper school and sufficient time for meetings and feedback should be identified. The members feel that it teaches them to be responsible and contributes to their records of achievement. Although pupils are taught to have a mature attitude in everything they do, there are missed opportunities in developing initiative and responsibility which would encourage this process.
- 11 The last reported attendance figure is unsatisfactory at 88.6 per cent. However, as part of a government initiative, the school was the only one in the authority to reach and actually exceed its target last year. This is historically an area where low attendance is common. The academic year so far, shows a very slight improvement. Unauthorised absence was high at 1.6 per cent and remains about the same this year. Attendance is generally good in Year 7 and there are records of good attendance to be seen across the school. Despite the school's best efforts, the first persistent offenders appear at Year 8 and the numbers increase slightly up to Year 11 as some pupils become more disaffected. Authorised absence is affected by family holidays taken in term time, and the long- term sick. There are also protracted holidays to Asia for some pupils, and visits to Australia for parental contact.
- 12 The school operates an electronic system of registration which has experienced recent problems, leading to inaccuracy, arising out of the intranet connection with the local authority. There is no formal registration period at the beginning of the school day, but attendance is recorded at the start of each lesson. Some pupils do arrive late and this is recorded. Punctuality during the day is sometimes a problem for pupils moving between the two buildings despite the ten minutes allowed for movement time. For those who stay in the same building, this can be time wasted. Registration takes place with form tutors at the end of the afternoon in a registration and assembly period. This time is not always usefully spent.

Sixth Form

- 13 The students' attitudes towards the school are good. Most are keen to come to school and show interest in Sixth Form life and the opportunities this gives. They have positive attitudes towards their work and concentrate very well in most lessons. They learn to become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and look at ways to improve.
- 14 Personal development and relationships are very good. Induction procedures which start in Year 11, prepare the students for Post-16 work and independent study. School focuses well on the necessity to develop personal and learning skills which are particularly well supported in English, chemistry, religious education and business studies. The school attaches great importance to the strengthening of relationships within the school as a whole, and this is particularly evident in the Sixth Form where pupils have chosen not to transfer elsewhere, but to remain with the teaching staff and their friends. There is a Sixth Form buddy system where volunteers are trained after school. This encourages the development of self-esteem in the students and provides support for the younger pupils. The school has also been successful in attracting young people into Post-16 education where there has been no family history of continuing education.
- 15 When the opportunities arise, the more articulate students are happy to discuss their life in the Sixth Form in a frank, confident manner. Overall, they consider this to be a good school with some areas in need of improvement. They all feel that the staff treat them as adults and that their relationships with the teachers have become even better. There are, however, some exceptions, where students are taught off-site and the same relationships do not exist. This applies particularly in biology and geography. The consortium arrangement presents problems in movement with different timetables and travel. Some lessons are short and therefore insufficient. The students also feel they get less help, and access to teaching staff is sometimes limited. There would appear to be little co-ordination in the setting of homework between the members of the consortium. Registration also presents difficulties as the other schools do not have electronic registers.
- 16 They feel that the provision for computers at Wednesfield is good but access can sometimes be limited. The same criticism applies to the library. They enjoy the smaller classes and the greater bonding with each other. They are appreciative of the strong support they receive in both academic and pastoral matters but would appreciate more accommodation for study and socialising. It is appreciated that the Sixth Form common room is temporarily out of action, awaiting refurbishment. The students have a voice through their class representatives and have access to the school council. There has been student input into the common room improvement plan. Although the school is working at developing the Sixth Form, it has at present a fairly low profile within the school and opportunities should be sought to allow students to contribute more to the life of the school.
- 17 Attendance is unsatisfactory, but it is acknowledged that recording is a problem. There are some very good individual records of attendance but overall the figures are low, particularly in Year 13. The school is aware that recording is not entirely accurate from its monitoring systems and there are clear plans to improve this.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 18 Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching. As a result, pupils achieve generally well, although, pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language demonstrate satisfactory achievement. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in 65 per cent of lessons, very good or excellent in 30 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in 6 per cent of lessons. It is consistently good in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education, art, religious education and is good in citizenship in Years 10 and 11. In English, teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in modern foreign languages is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In design and technology, teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.
- 19 In English, teaching is good overall. Better teaching is characterised by good lesson structure. For example, lessons are very good when there are effective links to previous work; varied but linked activities, and evaluation of what has been learned which leads to future learning. In most lessons, teachers explain tasks very clearly so that pupils know what they are to do. Lessons are purposeful and a brisk pace is sustained throughout the lesson. Teachers use questions effectively in order to confirm and extend understanding. Relationships are good and effective management leads to pupils enjoying their learning. Teaching was excellent in a Year 10 English class preparing for creative writing in a ghost story context. The teacher built up the trust of the pupils and the excellent relationships raised their self-esteem. The teacher had very high expectations and an excellent knowledge of how pupils learn. As a result, pupils, including two with statements of special educational needs, made very good progress. Drama is very well taught in Year 11 and Year 7.
- 20 The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall with some very good and excellent practice. Teachers have very high expectations and use teaching methods that are very effective. They have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject which enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers use the three-part lesson structure of the National Numeracy Strategy well. In the best lessons skilful questioning challenges pupils to think mathematically. Teaching was excellent in a Year 9, top set class. Pupils were immediately engaged in a starter activity which was carefully chosen as preparation for work later in the lesson. They approached the task seriously and the teacher was very successful in getting the class to justify their answers. Relationships were excellent and this helped the pupils develop confidence when sharing their ideas. The teacher explained the concept of probability excellently so that pupils made excellent progress.
- 21 Teaching in science is good overall and ensures that pupils made good progress. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent in two Year 11 classes to unsatisfactory in one Year 7 class. Teachers have very good knowledge and plan lessons very effectively so that learning is usually good throughout the school. A feature of science teaching is the quality and use of assessment to inform pupils of how well they are doing. This is excellent in Years 7 to 9. Lessons that are excellent are characterised by high expectations and excellent organisation leading to pupils making excellent progress. Well-judged timing and excellent pace ensures that pupils are interested and enthusiastic. Teachers make very good use of guidance to help pupils write and interactive whiteboards to enable pupils to plan investigations and learn about electromagnetism. Teaching is unsatisfactory when sanctions to reduce inattention are not used effectively.

- 22 Teaching is also occasionally excellent in other subjects. For example, pupils' learning in a geography lesson in Year 9 was excellent because the teacher engaged the pupils in a very clear initial task which immediately drew their attention. Throughout the lesson the teacher was well organised and used questions effectively to check on learning, ensuring that as many pupils as possible were included. In Year 11 citizenship, teaching and learning are excellent with excellent relationships and trust established so that pupils are enthusiastic and take the work seriously. The lessons have an excellent emphasis on personal development and social skills.
- 23 However, there are a small number of unsatisfactory lessons. In a modern foreign languages lesson, tasks were not sufficiently demanding and there was insufficient foreign language used. Teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in a geography lesson taught by a non-specialist who had insecure subject knowledge. In a poor religious education lesson the teacher gave the pupils little direction and the behaviour and noise levels were not modified.
- 24 Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is best when they are taught in sets based on prior attainment, or mixed prior attainment groups, by specialists with experience of teaching pupils with special educational needs. Excellent and very good examples were seen in English. However, learning opportunities are reduced when groups composed entirely of pupils who have special educational needs, or individuals within mixed prior attainment groups are taught without additional classroom support. Withdrawal of pupils for additional support for reading is counteracted by their missing significant parts of lessons in English, creating an additional need for them to catch up. Pupils have opportunities to improve their reading skills by the use of computer supported learning programmes but have too little time allocated to benefit fully from the programme. They make satisfactory progress but it could be better.
- 25 The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good awareness of how pupils learn and provides appropriate guidance for colleagues through individual education plans and regular monthly meetings with heads of departments. The head teacher and senior managers are highly supportive. Pupils make good progress with reading and spelling. Pupils with more complex difficulties are supported by well-planned and well-maintained individual education plans. Most examples of targets included in these are specific, measurable and are achieved within given time limits, but some are not sufficiently short term or time related.
- 26 Pupils learning in English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Insufficient additional support prevents them from making the progress of which they are capable. Plans have recently been introduced to provide support for pupils who are identified as being gifted or talented. It is too early to measure pupils' progress in detail but there have been some successful developments, for example in drama, creative writing and music.

Sixth form

- 27 Overall, teaching and learning in the Sixth Form are very good ensuring that students achieve very well. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. During the inspection six per cent of teaching was excellent, 33 per cent was very good and 42 per cent was good. Teaching is very good in English, chemistry, physics and business studies and good in mathematics, and physical education.

- 28 Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and plan lessons very effectively so that students achieve very well. They have high expectations, especially in English, mathematics, science and business studies. Students are very well-managed and, as a result, they work productively and maintain their interest and concentration.
- 29 Teaching in English is very good overall with some excellent features. In an excellent lesson in Year 12 the range of teaching styles met the needs of the students who all gained very good knowledge and understanding. The teacher had very high expectations and infectious enthusiasm which inspired and challenged the students. There was an excellent balance of teacher and student activity and practical activities were relevant to their capabilities. Questions were used very effectively and enabled all students to contribute. The quality and use of ongoing assessment was excellent and students were very aware of their progress. The provision of individual tutorials is excellent.
- 30 In mathematics, teaching is good overall, with some very good features, and students achieve well. Teaching methods are very effective and students in Year 13 pure mathematics are given good opportunity to work independently. Lessons have very good pace and in some lessons information and communication technology is used well to support learning. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is very good.
- 31 The quality of teaching in chemistry and physics is very good. Lessons are meticulously planned and move at a very good pace so that students make very good progress in chemistry and achieve well in physics. The teacher's enthusiasm in chemistry contributes to the motivation of students who are supported very effectively during practical work. Detailed guidance is given by a very experienced teacher when students are analysing examination questions based on mark schemes.
- 32 Teaching in business studies is very good. Teachers have very high expectations of the students and plan lessons extremely effectively. They make very good use of questions, involving all students, and extending their knowledge and understanding. The pace and content of the lesson is varied to suit all students and, as a result, all students achieve very well. Relationships are very good in some geography lessons and students respond very well in these. In such lessons, the furniture is arranged so that students sit round an open table to make discussion easy. Homework is used well and is set to extend their knowledge and understanding. Teaching and learning in information and communication technology are satisfactory. Teaching methods are limited and there is insufficient monitoring of progress and advice on time management. Teaching in physical education is good. The teacher has good knowledge but there is insufficient opportunity for independent learning.

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

- 33 In Years 7 to 9 the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements and offers pupils a good range of opportunities for learning. In addition to the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, pupils follow a course in personal, social and health education, which includes modules on citizenship and information and communication technology. Additionally, there is very good provision for control technology, shared between teachers of design and technology, and information and communication technology. All pupils study dance and drama as part of an expressive and performing arts programme. The time allocation for most subjects is adequate although some subjects such as physical education and personal, social and health education are below the national average. This is of particular significance to personal, social and health education as the time allocated is not effectively extended during tutor time each day. The weaknesses in provision in Years 7 to 9 identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed.
- 34 The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are good. The curriculum is broadened by the addition of vocational courses. A good range of accreditation is used to certificate pupils' endeavours. Pupils are divided into three bands in order to provide best for their differing prior attainment and interests. Pupils in the Extended band follow all the National Curriculum subjects and choose two further subjects from option blocks. The options include intermediate GNVQs that are accredited as four GCSEs, in business and in information and communication technology. However, there is inadequate time for the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus to be covered in religious education. The school is failing to meet this statutory requirement for pupils in this band.
- 35 The smaller Enriched band has broadly similar arrangements and pupils choose two subjects from the options blocks that again include GNVQs. In this band GNVQs are available at foundation level, accredited as two GCSEs. The time allocation for religious education is adequate but the course followed does not allow progression to an AS course in the Sixth Form. In this band, there is less time available for a modern foreign language so pupils can only follow a Certificate of Achievement course unless they pursue the subject as an option. The Enhanced band provides for, at most, 24 pupils in each year group with special educational needs or who are disaffected. They follow a course that leads to six GCSE entries including English and mathematics, for each of which they have an additional period each week. They can choose two options, including GNVQ at foundation level. They are properly disapplied from the requirement to study science or a modern foreign language and instead follow vocational courses at the local college of further education and an ASDAN course. Pupils in all three bands follow a personal, social and health education course and a key skills information and communication technology course, which allows them to gain an additional qualification. The physical education course followed by all pupils is also accredited.
- 36 There is good provision for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy. Two in-service training days on literacy and one on numeracy have been held and the school has identified priorities for development in each area. In literacy, these are writing non-fiction; listening; note taking, and reading for information. In numeracy, the priorities are calculations; data handling, and measurement. Written policies are in place for the development of literacy and numeracy and an audit has been undertaken of the contribution of all subjects to the development of numeracy. Plans for lessons

in all subjects now have opportunities for development in literacy and numeracy specified and key words listed.

- 37 There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, available particularly at lunch times and after school. There is a good number of sporting activities and music and drama. Karate, judo and beauty therapy have been introduced with the benefit of external funding from the New Opportunities Fund. This also funds a mentor who is available to pupils after school. Most subjects also offer revision and coursework sessions in Years 9 and 11 at lunchtime and after school. The Learning Support Centre, which is not operating at present due to staffing difficulties, and the Study Support Centre, offer provision for pupils to do homework.
- 38 The school is committed to equality of access and opportunity. Its curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all pupils. However, in practice some pupils with special educational needs do not benefit as much from provision as they might. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is somewhat limited by the lack of in-class support. Pupils with special educational needs have access to all subjects of the National Curriculum and, in addition, have opportunities to follow courses in Years 10 and 11 which closely match their needs and are externally accredited. Pupils now in Year 11 are making satisfactory progress in the examination courses for which they have been entered. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. Very little additional help is provided for pupils who have English as an additional language. However, there is good racial harmony in the school and pupils from different minority ethnic groups mix and work well together.
- 39 Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. There is a comprehensive programme that includes statutory elements of health and sex education and education regarding the misuse of drugs. There were concerns about the quality of teaching in this area at the time of the last inspection. Since then, the school has developed a specialist team of teachers for the programme, including pastoral staff, and the quality has improved. However, the new arrangements make it difficult for form tutors to follow up personal, social and health education issues in the daily tutor time. As a consequence, this time is often not used to good effect.
- 40 An effective careers education programme develops from Year 9 onwards when pupils receive good guidance in choosing their course of study for Years 10 and 11. Separate careers modules are part of the personal, social and health education programme in Years 10 and 11. All pupils benefit from work experience in their last week of the summer term in Year 10. Pupils are carefully prepared for this and maintain a diary throughout their placement, which allows their learning to be followed up in the following term.
- 41 Community links contribute well to pupils' learning. There are some close curriculum links with partner primary schools that aid transition from primary to secondary education, particularly in science, mathematics and the expressive and performing arts. A senior member of staff visits all primary schools regularly to develop links across the whole of the curriculum. The school works in partnership with local colleges of further education in the curricular provision for pupils on the Enhanced course in Years 10 and 11. Good links with industry and commerce benefit pupils when they take up work placements.
- 42 The school's provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. In religious education there is a departmental policy for spirituality and it is clearly listed as a significant objective of the department. In lessons, there is evidence of faith informing life and its

decisions, and pupils show some grasp of concepts such as 'sanctity of life', 'stewardship of creation' and 'just war'. Also pupils write openly about their own beliefs. In Year 9, pupils talked, with some sensitivity, about the ultimate questions of life, such as death, suffering and 'Is there a God?' Pupils visiting the outdoor centre in Wales experience awe at the sight of a night sky devoid of ambient light and, often, their first experience of mountains. In one assembly, the purpose of Lent was considered. In others, with the prospect of war very much in the news, pupils were encouraged to reflect upon the theme of 'love your neighbour as yourself' and to consider what we see when we look at others, 'Do they see us as they are?'.

- 43 The school's provision for moral development is very good. The school aims to help pupils understand and respect the society and world in which they live. The pupils are encouraged to respect others regardless of backgrounds. There is a marked absence of oppressive behaviour and there is an atmosphere of racial harmony. In religious education there is very good consideration of rights and responsibilities, fairness and justice and an understanding of the law and this is also evident across the school.
- 44 The school's provision for social development is very good. The school works hard to develop the pupils' experiences and understanding of community. Before the pupils actually join the school, staff visit them in primary school, there are induction days at Wednesfield for pupils and meetings for parents. The residential days at the outdoor centre in Wales in the pupils' first term give many of them their first experience of being away from family. There are other opportunities to make visits away, from a return to Wales to experience rock climbing and water sports for Year 9, foreign language visits to France. There is an extensive work experience programme for Year 10 in conjunction with the Education Business Partnership. Within the school, particular emphasis is put upon the 'You can do it' initiative which pervades many threads of the curriculum and helps pupils to become more organised and to develop skills for later life.
- 45 The school's provision for cultural development is very good. The multicultural diversity of the school is addressed in some assemblies and a multi-faith service is organised, with other schools. Visits by musicians, dancers and poets enrich the pupils' perceptions of the many different cultures and there have been very interesting developments within the schools' own activities. There is a highly successful Gospel choir which has developed from its black origins to involve many other pupils. This exuberant choir, originally formed to promote self-esteem amongst pupils, performs to a high standard and is in much demand to perform within the locality. There have been similar developments in promoting Asian dance. There is much display around the school showing pupils' work and approaches to the study of, for example, aspects of twentieth century art. A display of two and three dimensional work inspired by Picasso greets visitors to the school in the entrance hall of the Lakefield building.

Sixth form

- 46 Curriculum provision in the Sixth Form is good. The school is careful to match the aspirations and potential of the students to the courses they offer. The Sixth Form offers a good variety of programmes catering appropriately for the needs of learners with very different levels of prior attainment. These programmes all offer clear routes of progression to more advanced study, or to enhanced qualifications that offer students better job opportunities. The majority of students following A-level courses, progress on to degree courses, often the first generation in their family to do so.
- 47 There is a full-time school-based course at GNVQ foundation level in Business for students whose GCSE grades are between grades E to G. For students whose GCSE grades are all between grade D and G there is a one-year course offered in partnership with the local college of further education. Two days each week are spent in school working to re-take GCSE subjects, including English and mathematics, and a certificated programme of Key Skills. Two days are also spent in college following one of four practical subjects at NVQ levels 1 and 2. There is also a one-day work experience placement linked to the college course. Students who achieve mainly at GCSE grade D can study for GNVQ intermediate level in business or information and communication technology, or health and social care. They can also re-take English and mathematics if they wish, and can then move on to the advanced GNVQ course in Year 13. For students who have achieved A*-C in at least five GCSE subjects there is a wide range of nineteen academic subjects available at A/S and A-level. There are also AVC courses available in business and health and social care.
- 48 There is some enrichment of this provision. All students work towards gaining a qualification in key skills. Some students, in addition to those who are taking the college-based course, complete periods of work experience. Physical education and religious education are available on Wednesday afternoons. The Community Sports Leadership Award is available to students following the physical education programme. Those following the course in religious education have the opportunity to debate and discuss a range of moral issues and gain an additional qualification. However, only a small minority of students follows the religious education course, and the school is therefore failing to meet the statutory requirement to provide religious education for all students in the Sixth Form.
- 49 The school's good links with other institutions have increased the range of curricular provision in the Sixth Form. The consortium arrangements with two other schools has enabled a wider range of subjects to be offered to students and an increase in this range, including an extension of enrichment activities, is already agreed for next year. Links with colleges of further education have enabled some students to continue in education who would not have had the maturity to manage a full-time college course, but can benefit from the part-time provision that the school has arranged. The successful GNVQ course in information and communication technology has been developed in partnership with a more distant school and is delivered via an on-line package.
- 50 Some Sixth Formers are trained for the responsibility of being able to counsel, particularly, Year 9 pupils who may, for a variety of reasons, not be achieving as well as they might. This 'Buddy' system is well advertised around the school and has been helpful, sometimes, to Year 9 pupils faced with decisions about making choices for courses in Year 10.

Sixth Form

- 51 Provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory. Following the death of a teacher they have helped raise funds for cancer charities and also for the air ambulance service, as a response to a fatal accident to a former student. A number of students make the voluntary choice of enriching their curriculum by attending the religious education course on religion and values at the partner school sixth form. The students were positive, enjoying the work and benefiting from the opportunities for enrichment presented to them. Some Wednesfield students made presentations on the Holocaust and on Icons and persuasion.
- 52 Provision for students' moral development is very good. The school has a developed a 'Buddy' system which encourages sixth formers to be trained in counselling younger pupils. This is particularly aimed at pupils in Year 9 who may have anxieties about making appropriate subject choices for Year 10, but any personal problems are open for confidential discussion.
- 53 Provision for students' social development is very good. Many students take an active part in the life of the school and the community. They contribute to the effectiveness of the School Council and, through a business studies initiative, run a school bank. Students have entered into a number of community and social projects. The school encourages students to be self-motivated and independent learners. Students are involved in further work experience and in Community Service placements, some are pursuing training for Duke of Edinburgh's awards.
- 54 Provision for students' cultural development is very good. For a number of years students involved in Business Studies have taken part in overseas visits to particular centres of business activity including a motor vehicle factory in Spain and a visit to financial centres in New York. The students have, in a variety of ways, financed these visits themselves.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 55 The school cares very well for its pupils and realises the importance of good relationships between staff and pupils in order to improve teaching and learning. Some pupils give evidence of experiencing difficult situations in their lives. There is little tradition of higher education in the area and some pupils suffer from low self-esteem and personal expectation. The school works hard to provide a positive influence, and a safe and secure environment in which to support them. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
- 56 A detailed health and safety policy and guidance is in place. Risk assessments have been carried out and the local authority health and safety officer visits regularly. The school carefully monitors: the problems resulting from the maintenance of a large site; a building programme, and the ingress of water affecting some of the floor tiles particularly in the biology laboratory. The present access between the two buildings presents difficulties in wet weather as areas of the school become wet, dirty and muddy. Regular cleaning takes place during the school day to try to combat this situation. It is anticipated that the new access will solve this problem.
- 57 Emergency evacuation procedures are rehearsed regularly and school understands the importance of recording accidents. There are nine members of staff qualified to administer first aid and two medical rooms with facilities and a bed. The school nurse visits almost on a daily basis and is available for consultations. The school has a very

good relationship with the local police who have inspected the school on two occasions and declared it drug free.

- 58 The procedures for child protection are very good and the school considers this to be an important area of care. The school follows the procedures laid down by the local authority and a number of staff take part in regular updated training which is then shared more widely. The school enjoys good relationships with social services and other outside agencies.
- 59 The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance for Years 7 to 11 are very good. The school spends a great deal of time on attendance issues and has a strong pastoral interest in the pupils. The services of a telephone call company are bought in to contact homes on a daily basis where school has not been notified of absence. Additional learning mentors have been recruited. There are letters home, home visits, and regular meetings to monitor attendance. There are attendance awards, and, in the lower school, the forms compete with each other. In the upper school, the winners of attendance awards are entered into a prize raffle. The Borough of Wolverhampton also issue certificates for attendance and three pupils who maintained 100 per cent over five years were invited to a celebration in the mayor's parlour. The school holds an attendance club once a week and the buddy system is brought in to assist where necessary. There is a breakfast club for the more vulnerable pupils to encourage them into school, in addition to the school breakfast club. The importance of regular attendance is addressed in the 'You Can Do It' education programme with the pupils, and is also discussed with parents on target setting days.
- 60 The school's procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are very good. The school is anxious to set high standards and to eliminate bullying and oppressive behaviour. Pupils are taught how to behave in school through: the personal health and social education programme; assemblies; tutorials; staff role models, and learning mentors. They understand the rewards and sanctions that are in place and know that inappropriate behaviour can be reported to their form tutor, or head of year, for rapid intervention. Careful monitoring exists both within departments and by year tutors, and those requiring additional support are quickly identified. There are weekly care committee meetings to discuss behaviour and attendance. Pastoral support programmes are initiated for pupils at risk of exclusion.
- 61 There is very careful monitoring of personal development and academic progress from the moment pupils enter school. In the first term, pupils are taken to Wales for a residential experience where they are helped to become more responsible; to get involved in new activities, and make new friends. Most pupils take advantage of this opportunity which provides an excellent start to their life in school. Comprehensive records are maintained and the staff know the pupils well. In some cases, form tutors remain with their groups for more than one year. Target setting days give ample opportunity for staff to discuss progress with the pupils and parents. Pupils are encouraged to work on their records of achievement which include both academic and personal success, in order to raise their confidence and self-esteem.
- 62 Procedures to monitor the academic progress of pupils are very good. A significant amount of work has been done in the past two years. The school makes very good use of national test results from the end of Year 6, average points scores, reading and mathematics test scores, behaviour and attendance grades and teacher assessments in each year to enable them to predict the achievement of each pupil by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. A substantial amount of data is collected and the

school benchmarks the information against schools nationally, and against similar schools, and analyses the progress by ethnicity and gender. A very vigorous system of target setting has been developed with the support of the Local Education Authority. The school has done a great deal of work in the past two years to moderate levels of attainment. Departments can use the data to compare the progress of individual pupils, and groups of pupils, in different subjects and to re-set groups. The system enables the school to track the progress of pupils as they move through the school very effectively. The system identifies pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils who are making insufficient progress can be identified very easily and given the support that they need. An annual target setting day enables parents and pupils to discuss targets with form tutors.

- 63 Use of the data is very good overall but, as yet, is inconsistent throughout the school as the system is relatively new. In English the system is well-used and there is very good cross checking between teachers to ensure that levels are consistent. However, the quality of marking is varied and is generally better for the groups containing higher attaining pupils. Very good procedures are in place for collecting baseline data from primary schools in mathematics and the department uses it to set realistic targets for Years 7 to 9. However, there is some inconsistency between teachers, especially in following the marking policy. The analysis of data and target setting in science is excellent. All test results are very well analysed, especially in Years 7 to 9, and the curriculum has been modified as a result. Assessment is good in art, history, and physical education. It is satisfactory overall in other subjects but the assessments in geography are inaccurate and over-reward pupils. In information and communication technology the use of assessment data in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory as levelling is not well-developed and assessments are not used to plan the curriculum.
- 64 The school provides very good information for parents of pupils with special educational needs about the support their children are receiving and the progress they are making. Parents are consulted about the details of provision and are invited to attend the annual reviews. Those who cannot attend make written or verbal comments about their child's progress.

Sixth Form

- 65 The school has very good procedures in place to care for its students. The secure relationships that exist within the Sixth Form offer support for those who experience difficult personal problems. School is very successful in raising personal expectations and many students are the first generation to experience Post-16 education.
- 66 The school provides very good support and advice for all the students from the start of the induction procedure in Year 11. The education programmes are selected with care and many students hope to go on to higher education. Academic progress and personal development are monitored continuously by subject tutors, heads of Sixth Form and the learning mentor. English and chemistry are particularly well supported and individual needs are very well provided for. There is consultation with other tutors in the consortium. The monitoring is rigorous and skilful. All concerns are picked up by the next day at the latest. Each student needs a different level of support and the school aims to provide this.
- 67 The attendance figures are low. However, the other schools in the consortium do not have electronic registration and this often means that the recording may not always

be accurate despite the school's efforts. The present paper system of registration between sites is inefficient. This often comes to light when those who are in receipt of a grant have to query the record. Attendance is better in Year 12 and some pupils in both years have very good personal records of attendance. However, the school now has very good procedures in place for improving attendance. In addition to the monitoring by departments, the school has the benefit of a learning mentor. The mentor has a large number of referrals and counsels not only those with attendance problems, but also with those where transition is too difficult, or where students have personal problems. In Year 13, the problems are mainly emotional, or related more precisely to those who feel they have outgrown school. In all these cases there is a danger of absence and underachievement which the school acknowledges and is determined to remove wherever possible. This is a new appointment which is welcomed by the students and parents.

- 68 Students are able to take advantage of very effective careers advice offered in school. There is a well-structured programme which starts in Year 7. By Year 11 the pupils are involved in the full programme and Prospects are engaged to give advice on interviews. In Year 12, there is a focus on leavers and those who need advice about further and higher education. The outside agencies of Prospects and Connexions become more involved in Year 13. A very high priority is given to this aspect in the Sixth Form by the staff, where the recommended time to be spent is exceeded. The school is proud of its careers library and the up-to-date materials available. The school is entering for the Black Country Careers award this year and is also part of a pilot project to further the Partnership for Progression which aims to send 50 per cent of pupils to university.
- 69 Procedures to monitor the progress of students in the Sixth Form are very good and good use is made of assessment information to guide curriculum planning. Target setting is in development and recognises where students are starting from and what career plans that they have. On target setting day the school identifies students' grades at GCSE and this is then correlated with predicted outcomes in A-level examinations in Year 13 and targets set accordingly. A good rolling programme of target setting throughout the Sixth Form identifies students who are at risk of not meeting targets. Any student at risk because of poor attendance or personal problems is well supported by a full-time learning mentor.
- 70 There is a good system of tracking students who are following courses at different sites of the consortium. A link member of staff for each subject ensures that grades are moderated and closely monitored. Assessment is excellent in English and business studies where teachers have substantial experience in examination board moderation. It is very good in mathematics; physics; chemistry, and physical education, and satisfactory in information and communication technology and geography.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 71 Those parents who responded to the parental survey indicated that they are very satisfied with the school's provision. Nearly all agree that the teaching is good and that school expects their child to work hard. Most parents feel that their child makes good progress and that school helps them to become mature. Nearly all feel that the school is well led and managed and would be comfortable about approaching school with any problems. A small number of parents do not feel that behaviour in school is good or that their child gets the right amount of homework, or that they are well

informed on how their child is getting on. However, nearly all acknowledged that their child likes the school.

- 72 Forty two parents attended the meeting held prior to the inspection. They all agreed that the school has improved markedly since the last inspection. The majority of the parents make it the first choice of school for their children. They feel that the present headteacher inspires confidence and that he has created a school which continues to improve. This is a very caring school and the pupils receive good support. The parents like the rewards system where progress and achievement, irrespective of attainment, are duly acclaimed and rewarded. This motivates pupils to make progress. Parents expressed their appreciation of how the school deals with absence and behaviour, where everything is done to seek improvement. Some parents are critical of the homework diaries which do not fulfil their role as a means of communication between home and school. The inspection found that this is often the case, and that more rigorous monitoring is required. Parents are, on the whole, dissatisfied with the amount and regularity of homework. It was found during the inspection that the setting of homework, and its amount, are often inconsistent across the school, including the Sixth Form. The parents, however, commend the pastoral system and praise the partnership which now exists between the school, pupils, and parents. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
- 73 The school has strong links with parents and works hard to make this effective. There is a lot of interaction with parents and school is anxious to involve them in their children's school life. Prospective parents first come into the school at the beginning of the autumn term and are shown round the school by pupils as part of the well-developed induction programme for Years 6 and 7. There are two drama productions each year and performances by the gospel choir and sporting events which are all well supported. The parents' evenings and target setting days are very well attended and valued by the parents. The school has a parents as learners group, PALS, rather than a parent teacher association. The purpose of this group is not fund raising, but it does attract funding to pursue its aims to link home and school. The members explore strategies for learning as well as organising theatre visits for the whole family. This is a fairly new venture which brings families into school and encourages parents to take an active part in their children's education.
- 74 The school prospectus is attractively presented and contains good information about the school in loose-leaf inserts. The governors' annual report to parents and many other communications are posted home in order to raise parental awareness. Home school agreements are signed as an indication of good parental support. The headteacher sends a letter at least each half term and there are termly newsletters. Parents are kept well informed. However, the pupil reports are not sufficiently well-focused on individual pupils. The school is aware that these should be developed to give more detailed information on progress, achievement, attainment, and targets. However, this information is given to parents elsewhere. The school is an Investor in Parents and aims to bring those parents into school who would not normally attend. This continues to be a developing area and school is working hard to improve the relationships between school, parent and child.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 75 The school has made considerable progress since the last inspection in improving attainment and raising standards over a range of aspects of school life. This improvement is due to the extremely positive and determined leadership of the headteacher, who has succeeded in communicating his vision to the whole school

community. There is a clear determination to improve performance which is shared by senior and middle managers and which permeates the whole school. The school's aims and mission are clearly seen in all aspects of the school's activities. The headteacher and senior managers have been strongly supported in their aims by a committed governing body which plays a significant role in the strategic leadership of the school. With the exception of the statutory provision of religious education to some pupils, the governors exercise their roles and responsibilities well in calling the school to account for its performance. Finances are well deployed in line with the school's planned development. Principles of best value are suitably applied to spending decisions, although the evaluation of the effectiveness of financial initiatives is not always as precise as it might be. Specific grants, such as the Excellence in Cities funding, are used effectively for their appropriate purposes.

- 76 The school's improvement planning systems are designed to ensure that the whole school community is directly involved in the development of the school. This has resulted in an extraordinarily wide range of improvement strands. These strands are individually monitored across teaching departments, and by other persons responsible for aspects of school life. However, the result is an improvement plan which is too unwieldy and diffuse to be as effective as the school would wish, and through which the core goals of the school become less clear. This makes the progress which the school is making more difficult to monitor, and the success of its planning impossible to evaluate fully.
- 77 The school has evolved sound systems for monitoring its teaching and learning. Departmental review and lesson observations by senior and middle managers are both used. However, there is still some way to go in the effective evaluation of the way the school manages other aspects of its performance. The organisation of the school day, and of the use of the two buildings, has an adverse impact on pupils' learning and on the contribution which the school can make to their personal development. Much time is lost by pupils' movement between the buildings, and the effectiveness of tutor time is severely reduced by its taking place at the end of the school day. The majority of subject departments are well-led. In English, mathematics and science, leadership provides clear educational direction. Management of departments is in the main sound and in some cases good.
- 78 The school has experienced some problems in recent times in the recruitment and retention of suitable teaching staff. A number of departments have been affected by long-term absence and temporary teachers, and this has had an adverse impact on the standards which have been achieved in some subject areas. At present, there are insufficient suitably qualified specialists in physical education and in religious education, and the school does not have enough learning support assistants to support pupils' learning in the classroom. There are, in some cases, teaching groups which have a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs but which do not benefit from the provision of appropriate help and guidance. Arrangements for the induction and professional development of teachers and other staff are very good, and linked closely to the needs and aims of the school.
- 79 Learning resources are generally satisfactory, and accommodation, although overall satisfactory in terms of teaching spaces, has an adverse impact on learning because of the distance between the two buildings and the arrangements made by the school for pupil movement between them.
- 80 Overall, the provision for special educational needs is satisfactory. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The new Code of Practice for

special educational needs has been introduced successfully and teachers have had in-service training to guide them in supporting pupils in lessons. The special educational needs co-ordinator has written well constructed individual education plans which are used to inform teachers of pupils' special needs, and identify targets for pupils to achieve. Some further improvement could be made to target setting by making more of the targets short term and with specified time limits. Although teachers are expected to continuously review the progress pupils make towards identified targets and revise them when necessary, there is insufficient monitoring of this at present by the special educational needs co-ordinator to ensure best use is made of the individual education plans. Accommodation, which is part of the study centre, reinforces the positive attitudes to learning of pupils. It provides a welcoming environment in which pupils feel comfortable and secure. However, there is no specialist teaching space exclusively for their use. Since the previous inspection, the new Code of Practice has been successfully introduced. Accommodation has been improved and now provides a stimulating learning environment. Individual education plans and their use have been improved. The key issue for action in the last report – to improve support within classrooms - has not improved and the withdrawal of pupils from national curriculum lessons remains a problem.

- 81 There is a need to: review the provision of in-class support for pupils with special educational needs; widen the range of focus for identifying special educational needs to take more account of difficulties other than reading and spelling, and to provide more frequent opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to improve their reading skills without withdrawing them from the same lesson, particularly English.
- 82 The school has more pupils than average whose first language is not English, and receives an increasing number of children from refugee families for whom special provision has to be made. The teacher responsible for helping these pupils to acquire language skills to cope with their schoolwork provides a welcoming, secure base in which they can learn at their own pace. They develop their confidence in understanding and speaking English, and from this base can make their first attempts at learning alongside their peers. Most pupils whose first language is not English make at least satisfactory progress, and some make good progress. The majority quickly acquire sufficient language skills to cope with the social and academic demands of being in school in Britain.
- 83 However, the school does not receive sufficient specialist input from the local education authority and other agencies. This inhibits the diagnosis of individual language need and the provision of support and guidance on how best to develop the language acquisition of individual pupils. Consequently, the progress which some pupils can make is not as secure as it might be. No specialist training in teaching English as a foreign language has been provided for the teacher in charge. She has to rely on her own teaching skills and good relationships with her pupils in order to take their language forward. The unit in which she works lacks space and has insufficient aids to learning which might help her more efficiently to provide for the pupils in her charge and make a more effective contribution to their language development.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

- 84 The school operates in a consortium arrangement with two other schools in order to ensure that it can offer a suitable range of courses of study Post-16. The system

operates to the benefit of young people in the area, many of whom are the first members of their families to continue their education beyond the compulsory stage. A significant proportion of students then carry on to university or other higher education courses. In general the consortium operates satisfactorily, although there are still logistical problems which make it difficult for the arrangement to be fully effective. Timetabling arrangements are not as yet uniform across the three schools, although there are plans afoot to make improvements in this area in the near future. Co-ordination of subject matter taught in some subjects is insufficiently effective.

- 85 Post-16 matters in the school are satisfactorily managed. There is a teacher designated Head of Key Stage 5 whose responsibilities are for the strategic management of Sixth Form affairs and links with the consortium schools, and a head of Sixth Form who deals with student matters in the school on a day-to-day basis. The Sixth Form undergoes the same regular health checks as other areas of the school's operation, through the observation of lessons taught by teachers from Wednesfield High School and an annual report which is presented to the governors and the senior management team. Shared quality assurance checks through the monitoring of teaching and other aspects of performance are planned across the whole of the provision shared by the consortium. Procedures for the monitoring and analysis of student attendance and punctuality, however, are at present unsatisfactory.
- 86 The role of the Head of Key Stage 5 is concentrated mainly on the partnership with the other schools, each of which has its own management structure. The resultant picture is that the leadership and direction of Post-16 affairs in the school is less clear than it should be. This is significantly exacerbated due to the Sixth Form having no direct representation on the senior management team of the school. Overall, the clarity of direction which the Post-16 provision in the school is impaired by this arrangement, and the Sixth Form as a whole does not have sufficient impact on the corporate life of the school.

Resources

- 87 Because of the consortium arrangements there are no problems of recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff to sustain the provision of a suitable Post-16 curriculum. Matters relating to the viability of group size are taken by the senior management team in the light of staff availability. Accommodation and resources for the Sixth Form provision within the school are satisfactory overall.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88 In order to improve the quality of provision and the standards attained by pupils, the governors, headteacher and staff should address the following:

- 1) the school's development planning needs to be improved by:
 - i) reviewing the format of the school improvement plan to clarify the link between the school's main objectives and detailed action plans;
 - ii) reducing the number and range of targets; and
 - iii) explicitly linking monitoring actions to the more sharply focused targets.
- 2) improve the identification and support for pupils with special educational needs, and those learning in English as an additional language by:
 - i) reviewing the provision of learning support assistants;
 - ii) improving procedures for identifying pupils' needs to ensure a broader range of needs is tested for; and
 - iii) provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to raise their standards of reading without withdrawing them from English lessons.
 - iv) reviewing with the local education authority the support for pupils learning in English as an additional language.
- 3) ensure the structure of the school day leads to the effective use of time by:
 - i) reviewing the timetable to reduce the number of times pupils have to move between sites; and
 - ii) review the quality and timing of tutorial sessions.
- 4) ensure the consistent setting of homework by:
 - i) introducing effective monitoring systems; and
 - ii) involving parents frequently in the process.
- 5) improve attendance by:
 - i) implementing the school's plans.
- 6) ensure statutory compliance for religious education is met in Years 10 and 11 by:
 - i) reviewing the allocation of time on the timetable for the subject.

Paragraph numbers:

- 1) 76.
- 2) 24; 26; 38; 78; 81; 83; 95; 104; 117; 143; 150; 159; 168; 188; 201, and 203.
- 3) 12; 33, and 77.
- 4) 15; 72, and 107.
- 5) 11; 17, and 59.
- 6) 34.

Sixth form

- 1) strengthen the contribution made to the life of the school by the Sixth Form by:
 - i) ensuring a senior manager has responsibility for the strategic development of the Sixth Form;
 - ii) reviewing the effectiveness of the co-ordination of teaching in some subjects across the consortium; and
 - iii) developing more opportunities for the Sixth Form to act as role models for the rest of the school.

- 2) improve attendance by:
 - i) improving procedures for monitoring attendance.

- 3) ensure statutory compliance for religious education is met by:
 - i) reviewing the provision of the subject within the timetable.

Paragraph numbers:

- 1) 15; 16; 84; 85, and 86.
- 2) 67, and 85.
- 3) 48.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	147
	Sixth form	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		67

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	9	36	51	43	7	1	0
Percentage	6	24	35	29	5	1	0
Sixth form							
Number	2	11	14	6	0	0	0
Percentage	6	33	42	18	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the Sixth Form as each lesson represents three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1,131	110
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	203	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	204	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	200

Pupil mobility in the last school year	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	36

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.8
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6
National comparative data	1.2

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	2002	109	100	209

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	67	63
	Girls	50	55	48
	Total	89	122	111
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	43 (60)	58 (63)	53 (58)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	13 (24)	30 (28)	21 (22)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	94	68	67
	Girls	92	65	55
	Total	186	133	122
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	89 (62)	64 (58)	58 (56)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	47 (22)	29 (23)	23 (25)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	107	94	201

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	29	83	92
	Girls	34	83	90
	Total	63	166	182
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	31 (29)	81 (93)	90 (97)
	National	50 (48)	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	22.1
	National	39.8

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	20	80
	National		

Attainment at the end of the Sixth Form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2003	22	10

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	22	10	32
	Average point score per candidate	189	124	168
National	Average point score per candidate			

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	22	9	31	8	2	10
	Average point score per candidate	135	148	139	244	90	213
National	Average point score per candidate						

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	896	40	
White – Irish	0		
White – any other White background	11		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	60	17	1
Mixed – White and Black African	0		
Mixed – White and Asian	8	1	
Mixed – any other mixed background	4		
Asian or Asian British - Indian	179		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	65	10	
Black or Black British – African	5		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0		
Chinese	3		
Any other ethnic group	0		
No ethnic group recorded	2		

The 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)	61
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	224.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73
---	----

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	-
Key Stage 3	27
Key Stage 4	27.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	3,409,460
Total expenditure	3,520,635
Expenditure per pupil	2,424
Balance brought forward from previous year	(16,806)
Balance carried forward to next year	(30,175)

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	24

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	4
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,241
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	56	5	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	54	7	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	14	54	17	10	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	37	17	19	10
The teaching is good.	36	53	5	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	54	20	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	39	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	42	3	2	5
The school works closely with parents.	32	47	15	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	34	41	7	2	17
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	56	8	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	53	7	5	20

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Standards of attainment are rising.
- Assessment of standards attained is accurate.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of day-to-day marking is inconsistent.
- There is insufficient sharing and monitoring of reasons for the best learning.
- More precise planning is needed for some lessons to ensure that pupils at different levels of attainment are appropriately challenged.
- Weaknesses of spelling and punctuation reduce the quality of writing.

89 Results in 2002 in the re-marked national tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 were below the national averages but are likely to be in line with the average for similar schools. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The trend of improvement is similar to the national trend.

90 GCSE results in 2002 were well below the national average particularly for the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C in both English and English literature. Pupils' results in these subjects were broadly in line with those in other subjects for which they were entered. The results in 2001 were closer to average and continued a trend of improvement which was disrupted by severe staffing difficulties which affected the 2002 results and have only recently been resolved.

91 By the end of Year 9, in lessons and work seen, standards were below average. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and usually to each other, particularly when working in small groups. When provided with opportunities to do more than offer short answers to questions asked by teachers, most pupils express ideas fully and clearly. Reading aloud is generally accurate and some read their own writing and that of others fluently and demonstrate good understanding. Pupils in the upper and middle ranges of attainment show that they can recognise significant features in their reading using techniques of highlighting and annotation. Lower attaining pupils usually need additional help from teachers to gain satisfactory understanding.

92 The quality of written work is more variable. Many pupils show pleasure especially in creative writing. They are pleased when their successes are brought to the attention of others, put on display, or even published, as happened last year with an impressive selection of poems written by boys. Pupils of a wide range of attainment experiment in their own work with techniques observed in the texts they read in lessons. They show ambition in vocabulary, use a variety of sentence patterns, and devices such as dramatic short sentences. Because most have been taught how to collect and organize material, they are able to write at length. Others write clearly enough to communicate at least their main ideas expressed in recognizable sentences and paragraphs. The positive qualities are off-set by frequent errors in spelling of words in everyday use, especially those with similar sounds such as 'to, too and two; where and were; mist and missed'. Technical terms and other 'new' words encountered in

lessons are usually spelled correctly. There are also faults of elementary grammar, sometimes associated with features of local speech such as 'we was.' Many pupils fail to use full stops and capital letters correctly. Efforts to develop the strengths and remove the weaknesses were seen in the work of several subjects, as well as in many English lessons but, although improvements are made, the work of many pupils continues to be marred by these faults.

- 93 By the end of Year 11, attainment is below average. The balance of strengths and weaknesses is similar to that of younger pupils. In some classes, however, including one in Year 10 aiming at early entry for GCSE, some pupils do not listen attentively to teachers and, especially, they do not listen to each other. All members of a lower attaining class of the same age, in contrast, gave total attention to all contributions to the lesson. This difference had a marked effect on the quality of learning of the two groups. Particularly in the writing of higher attaining pupils, there is evidence that pupils understand how to write appropriately for different audiences and different purposes. The organisation of longer pieces of writing continues to improve. Although there is clear evidence of attempts to improve, errors of the kinds noted in the work of younger pupils persist and continue to reduce the overall quality of their writing. Information and communication technology is used more frequently for word processing. This not only improves the presentation of writing but also reduces some of the inaccuracies.
- 94 Generally, pupils make good progress during lessons and over time. This is because they are well taught and have positive attitudes to their work. Most respond fully to the high expectations of teachers. There is an unwillingness among some pupils, especially some boys, to aim at the highest standards of which they are capable. This may be due to lack of confidence and fear of failure. It is not linked to levels of prior attainment. Very good and sometimes excellent attitudes and behaviour were noted among classes of lower attaining pupils in both Years 9 and 10 which contributed to very good progress.
- 95 Teachers have information about the problems of pupils with learning difficulties and seek to offer help and encouragement. Some are unsure of how they are expected to help pupils achieve targets identified in individual education plans and this affects the progress of these pupils. The pupils of highest attainment benefit from the open-ended nature of many of the tasks set. Particularly in mixed prior attainment classes, there is insufficient evidence that different provision is planned to provide appropriate challenge for pupils at both ends of the prior attainment range. The needs of such pupils are usually satisfactorily met but provision should be provided more precisely and to better effect. Lack of in-class support for pupils with learning difficulties occasionally reduces the quality of learning of these pupils. When pupils are withdrawn from English lessons to use computers to improve basic English skills, this creates a need for them to catch up on work missed and disrupts their own progress and that of others in the class from which they are withdrawn. Progress of higher attaining pupils is sometimes slowed because they have to wait for others to catch up before they can move on. Pupils learning in English as an additional language make less progress than they could due to insufficient additional support.
- 96 The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is often very good, sometimes excellent and never less than satisfactory. This represents a significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection when several unsatisfactory lessons were observed. In the better lessons, work is linked to earlier and future learning so that pupils understood its relevance. Teachers explain tasks quickly and clearly so that pupils begin confidently. Teachers establish a brisk pace so that pupils work

purposefully towards achievement of targets which teachers have identified in their planning. In these lessons, teachers make good use of questions to test the quality of pupils' understanding and to encourage them to develop their own ideas. They expect pupils to work purposefully and to achieve good standards and are quick to offer praise and encouragement. Pupils at all levels of attainment are appropriately challenged.

- 97 In less successful lessons, some of these qualities are missing. These are usually linked to uneven pace, too much talk by teachers and not providing appropriate challenge for different levels of prior attainment. Teachers have unusually good understanding of how pupils' work is assessed in public examinations. Several are examiners and increasingly use their experience to help pupils understand why they need to develop certain skills, and also to increase their confidence. The quality of marking of pupils' written work is variable. The best marking indicates what has been done well, makes a judgement of quality and advises on the means of further improvement. Marking below this quality is usually very brief, often identifies only weaknesses and is often found in the books of lower attaining pupils.
- 98 The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department is relatively new to the post. He has a clear view of directions to be taken and has begun to modify schemes of work to meet current needs. Targets in the development plan are prioritised and should be achievable within stated time limits. Despite the other responsibilities of many members of the department, there is a willingness to take a share in the management of the department. The department is rich in experience and should develop present practices for sharing that experience so that the most successful strategies and materials can be identified and used more consistently.
- 99 The contribution of subjects of the curriculum to standards of literacy is satisfactory. There are some strong features. Much work has been undertaken this year to develop the contributions of all subjects to the improvement of levels of literacy. Each subject has been asked to undertake an audit of what it does and to produce a plan for further development. The overall response has been very good but not universally so. In most subjects, in addition to English, and especially for example in history and science, there are now planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, to read printed and sometimes electronic text to develop research skills and to write at length with guidance from teachers. Most teachers are introducing pupils to the terms they need to understand and use in connection with their studies and expect them to spell them correctly. Some departments, particularly geography, have not progressed as far as they should and this weakens the overall effectiveness of provision. The library is a pleasant place in which to work and is well provided with computers. The stock of books is insufficient, as is recognised in the development plan.

Drama

- 100 Drama is taught as part of the expressive and creative arts provision. Attainment in Year 7 is above expectation. Pupils have gained from having a weekly lesson. They arrive at lessons with clear expectations of working hard and with enjoyment. They have good skills of improvisation and are confident in performance. The quality of teaching is very good. It is based upon having clear learning targets which are achieved by quick progress through a series of well planned activities. Pupils make very good progress because they remember earlier learning and build upon it with confidence and imagination.

- 101 Attainment in Year 9 is below average because most pupils lack confidence in performance and are reluctant to contribute to discussion of how presentations might be improved. Voice projection is weak. Pupils show good levels of interest and work sensibly in groups so that good progress is made without being over dependent upon direction by the teacher.
- 102 Attainment in Year 11 is above average. Pupils are confident and capable in planning and rehearsing for performance. They are able to identify possible means of communicating more effectively with an audience and to make appropriate decisions after experimentation. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is confident and pupils respond positively to high expectations of effort and achievement. Their attitudes to their work are excellent.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Good quality teaching with some very good and excellent practice.
- Very good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- To further develop the use of information and communication technology in lessons.
- To provide support for pupils with special needs.

- 103 Attainment on entry to the school is below the national average. By the end of Year 9, attainment in the 2002 national tests was also below the average for all schools. For similar schools, on the basis of prior attainment, the results are in line with the average. In 2001, results in national tests were higher and up to this time these were rising faster than the rate found nationally. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment in GCSE examinations are below the national average both for the percentage of pupils gaining an A*-C grades and A*-G.
- 104 The standard of work seen during the inspection was in line with national expectation throughout the school. This is higher than suggested by the national tests and examinations. These higher standards are due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the reorganisation of setting which has raised both teachers' and pupils' expectations. Pupils' standards are even across all aspects of the subject. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Their achievement is better where there is very good and imaginative teaching, coupled with in-class support provided by a teaching assistant. The provision of more support for pupils with special needs would raise the achievement of these pupils.
- 105 Teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent practice. All teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy with effective starter and plenary activities. Teachers are skilful in questioning pupils when explaining techniques and building understanding of concepts. They sequence the work with increasingly difficult examples. In the best lessons, teachers challenge pupils to explain their solutions and share mathematical ideas with the rest of the class. In a Year 9 lesson with pupils of higher attainment, the teacher took this a stage further and used pupils' responses to form hypotheses and asked the class to test them.

- 106 The highlighting of key words by teachers helps pupils to talk about their work with confidence and provides good opportunities to use the subject vocabulary in context. This is particularly helpful for those pupils learning English as an additional language. In a Year 11 higher attaining group, the teaching was carefully tailored to the needs of the pupils. Music was used to create a learning environment that helped them concentrate. The plenary activity was also especially designed to match the needs of the pupils.
- 107 Teachers generally make good use of homework to practise techniques and revise work previously covered. While homework is regularly set and marked there is some inconsistency between teachers in the quality of the marking. The use of information and communication technology in teaching the subject includes work with an interactive white board in one classroom and opportunities to use graphical calculators. For example, in a Year 10 class with pupils of average attainment, the teacher made effective use of graphical calculators to investigate changing values in the straight line graph equation. Overall, however, the use of information and communication technology could be further developed.
- 108 The department consists of a team of well-qualified specialist teachers, including an Advanced Skills Teacher, who work together effectively. They support each other, are highly committed and have high expectations of pupils. The team benefits from very good leadership and management from the head of department who leads by example and provides clear educational direction. There is a shared commitment to improving standards and teachers meet frequently to discuss and share successful teaching techniques and learning outcomes. Very good procedures are in place for sampling work, and lessons are observed by the head of department and other teachers with responsibility within the department. The tracking of pupils' progress against target levels and grades is very good. There is a good range of activities outside of lessons which includes revision and booster classes with opportunities provided for gifted and talented pupils.
- 109 Since the last inspection, very good improvements have been made. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced and new schemes of work have been written for Years 7 to 11. Setting arrangements have been reorganised and are now good. Attainment has improved and is consistent across all aspects of the subject. Assessment procedures have been developed and are effectively used to plan the curriculum and to provide feedback to pupils. The department is fully staffed with specialist teachers.

Numeracy

- 110 The standards of numeracy of the majority of pupils are good. The school has responded well to the National Numeracy Strategy and this is starting to impact positively on standards. Strategies for developing numeracy across the school are good. There is a written policy in place. A full audit of where departments contribute to the development of numeracy skills has been carried out. Whole school training for teachers has taken place with discussion to agree methods for numerical calculation and for the presentation of data. There is an effective ongoing dialogue which results in numeracy development across subject areas.
- 111 Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are making good use of number in a range of subjects. For example, in science pupils interpret and analyse graphs. They understand and consider the reliability and validity of data. In technology, pupils measure length and weight accurately making use of fractions and decimals. In art pupils use scaling and study perspective, and in 2- and 3-dimensional work, they

consider the difference between area and volume. When studying history, they make use of time lines and in physical education, there are further opportunities to use time in assessing personal performance.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

Strengths

- Pupils make very good progress in Years 10 and 11 because teaching is very good.
- The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well and pupils' communication skills are improving.
- Monitoring and recording of pupils' progress is very effective and pupils are very well informed about their progress.
- Very good management has resulted in steadily improving results and support for pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Raising the standard of attainment in tests and examinations, especially in Year 9.
- Reducing the variability in teaching, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Continuing to increase the use of information and communication technology by pupils during lessons by putting the department's plans into effect.

112 In national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, pupils' results were well below average in comparison with other schools. They were below average in comparison with the pupils' achievements in tests before entry to the school. The proportion of pupils gaining level 5 in the tests is the same as that nationally and these pupils have made satisfactory progress, fewer pupils gain higher levels and for this reason the results are well below average. Although results declined from those of 2001, improvement has been quicker than that displayed nationally since 1998. Boys and girls do equally well.

113 In GCSE examinations in 2002, results were below average. However, in comparison with their attainment at the end of Year 9, the results were satisfactory with pupils making satisfactory progress. Pupils do significantly better in science than in other subjects in the school, and in the dual award course they improved upon results in 2001. Overall, the results of boys and girls are similar, although they do vary from year to year. The school policy of accepting pupils with difficulties, and pupil absence from lessons, depresses the proportion of pupils who gain grades A* to C.

114 The standard of work seen in lessons, and in pupils' records, is below average overall but varies greatly. In Year 7, work about food chains and habitats, and practical work about rusting, was around the national expectation. However, it was below expectation when pupils had to filter dirty water. In Year 9 work about electromagnets, or about conduction and convection of heat, was around the national expectation, but pupils have good investigative skills and successfully changed variables and tabulated results. Analysis of data about cooling in Year 9 is above expectation. Some work about balanced forces done by higher attaining pupils was well above expectation but in other lessons for lower attaining pupils it was well below expectation. Pupils' understanding of the features of chemical reactions is below expectation.

115 Between Years 10 and 11 standards overall are below expectation. In Year 11, in a lesson about electricity and magnetism, pupils' understanding of the use of electric current flowing through a coil of wire to produce a magnetic field was above

expectation. Investigative coursework about enzymes is above expectation and higher attaining pupils' understanding of difficult concepts about genetics and inheritance, or about radiation and its uses, are well above expectation. The work of lower attaining pupils is well below expectation. For example, in a lesson about the yield from chemical reactions, pupils' understanding of the concept of a relative atomic mass was limited. Understanding of the reasons why the rate of photosynthesis can change, is below expectation during coursework about photosynthesis but pupils' practical skills are good and their learning about rates of photosynthesis represents excellent progress for the group.

- 116 Overall, teaching and the progress made by pupils are good. Between Years 7 and 9 they are good, and in Years 10 and 11 they very good. In Years 10 and 11 especially, there were many lessons that were very good or excellent, two lessons were unsatisfactory. Planning and choice of teaching strategies are excellent in the best lessons, for example, in lessons in Year 11 about photosynthesis or electromagnetism, explanations were very clear, teachers expectations were high, activities and demonstrations were interesting and kept pupils' attention so that they made excellent progress.
- 117 Relationships and classroom control are excellent and consequently pupils are confident that they can ask and answer questions. Explanations and demonstrations of how to use equipment are clear and ensure that pupils are successful when, in Year 7 for example, they filter water. Teachers make good use of models to explain how electric current flows through a circuit. Very good use is made of guidance for writing. Key words are carefully explained in many lessons so that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills improve substantially. In a well-planned Year 9 lesson, there was a good opportunity for pupils to use a data logger to learn about loss of heat energy from hot drinks. In the same lesson, pupils made their own decisions about the graph they plotted and made good progress in learning the skills of investigation. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. However, there are no support assistants present in science lessons to help them, and as a result their progress although satisfactory, is slower than other pupils. Boys and girls, and pupils from ethnic minorities, including those learning English as an additional language, make equally good progress. The teaching of ideas about cloning and inherited diseases makes a good contribution to pupils' moral development.
- 118 The great majority of lessons are well taught and pupils learn successfully. However, in lessons, particularly between Years 7 and 9, in which the quality of teaching is satisfactory, opportunities to engage pupils in their learning are missed. For example, in a lesson in which pupils examined information about chemical reactions they did not have an opportunity to discuss or present information to the rest of the class. Their progress, although satisfactory, could have been better.
- 119 Sometimes marking does not provide advice about how to improve and a minority of books are not checked regularly. In lessons that are unsatisfactory, teachers do not use effective ways of managing pupils' behaviour and in one lesson, use of sarcasm led to resentful and defiant behaviour by the pupils. In other lessons these pupils behave well. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good and is often very good. Pupils are careful and trustworthy with the equipment they use because teachers insist on this. Pupils listen carefully, although some have limited attention spans and are easily distracted; their willingness to take decisions and responsibility for their work are not well developed.

- 120 Leadership and management of the department are both very good. Teamwork is good and there is a strong commitment to raising standards through improving teaching so that standards are rising. This is supported by a very well-informed view about the structure of lessons and the reasons for using the methods they choose. For example, policies for improving pupils' literacy and numeracy are very thorough, highly professional and used very effectively in many lessons. Records of pupils' progress are thorough, and excellent use is made of them to support pupils, and to evaluate and change teaching plans.
- 121 Progress in these areas since the last inspection is good. However, illness amongst teachers, and difficulties in filling a vacancy, have made it hard to raise standards quickly, despite the very good teaching and very effective management strategies employed in the department. Much has been done to overcome these difficulties, good progress has been made in many areas of the department's work. Standards in examinations have risen steadily; teaching has improved; teaching of literacy and numeracy are very good; records of marks are excellent, and excellent use is made of them to improve the curriculum and to keep pupils informed about their progress. Pupils learning skills are not well developed and while good teaching improves these skills, examination performance is not as good as progress in lessons. Use of information and communication technology is well organised and is best in Year 7. However, a lack of computers prevents plans from being fully effective. There are clear plans to rectify this. Some laboratories are very shabby while others are very attractive and well kept. Curtains are inadequate, and some bench surfaces are in poor condition. Plans to renovate them will remedy this situation.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are very good, promoting a very effective learning environment in lessons.
- The management of the subject is effective in the promotion of high expectations and opportunities for all pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good and therefore progress is also good.

Areas for improvement

- To increase opportunities for computer aided art applications.
- To further develop strategies to improve the attainment of boys in the higher grades of GCSE examinations.

122 By the end of Year 9, the standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. Pupils experience a wide variety of creative experiences. As a direct consequence of the level of provision, combined with effective teaching, a majority of pupils show an interest in their work. A majority of pupils draw and paint with a reasonable degree of confidence; have experience of ceramics and print making, and some three-dimensional construction. They also increase their knowledge and understanding about certain artists and cultures. The overall achievement of the pupils by the end of Year 9 is good, when consideration is given to the below average prior attainment of the majority of pupils on entry in Year 7. Progress is also good from Years 7 to 9 and those with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language, or who are designated as gifted or talented, also progress well. Pupils are willing to discuss their work, and significant numbers show pride in their achievements as a consequence of good teaching. There are no significant differences in attainment by gender or ethnicity.

123 By the end of Year 11 standards of work seen were in line with national expectations. In the year 2001 and 2002 GCSE, results in grades A*-C were below the national average. Over the two years, well over 90% of pupils entered for GCSE achieved a pass. The attainment of boys, at the higher grades of GCSE, was significantly lower than girls and affected the overall comparison with national averages. Strategies have been adopted to improve motivation and raise the quality and quantity of work produced by boys. Raising achievement is also identified for action in the School Improvement Plan. A majority of pupils handle a wide range of materials competently and show a sound understanding of their progress. Research skills are satisfactory. For the majority the skills of drawing; the use and application of colour, and an appreciation of shape, scale, design and perspective is satisfactory. However, this requires further development in order to influence attainment in the higher grades of GCSE examinations. Progress is good for the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11.

124 Discussion is an important factor in all lessons. Throughout all year groups the majority of pupils are articulate when discussing their work, and many are capable of understanding, and using, technical language. Homework is used effectively and is improving research skills. The attitude of the pupils in all year groups is good, often very good. A majority of pupils demonstrate a good level of interest and are justifiably proud of their achievements. A minority find sustained concentration, independent learning, problem solving, and an understanding of aesthetics, difficult. A majority of pupils are more than willing to share materials and ideas and assist in the distribution and collection of equipment in lessons.

- 125 Teaching is good and often very good. The best lessons are challenging and well planned in order to provide all pupils with opportunities to progress and to attain levels of achievement commensurate with their abilities and aspirations. Pupils with special educational needs are well served through sensitive teaching and specially designed learning opportunities, which offer pupils the opportunity to succeed. Gifted and talented students would benefit from extension studies in order to provide them with additional challenges. Classroom organisation and management are very effective. The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are very good providing a pleasant atmosphere in the lessons. Regular references are made to the work of significant artists and cultures in order to raise creative and visual appreciation and awareness. Connections are established in many lessons to the school literacy strategy. Pupils are encouraged to read as part of their research into artists and cultures. All classrooms within the department, and certain public areas around the school, contain excellent displays of work. This provides an opportunity for pupils to appreciate the standards of work being produced.
- 126 Assessment is effective and is used as an influence on future curriculum development and lesson planning. Assessment includes a certain amount of pupil self-assessment and therefore, when questioned, the pupils were well aware of teacher expectations and their own strengths and weaknesses. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are given target grades for examinations and are capable of discussing their progress towards achieving their targets. Work is marked at periodic intervals, usually linked to the completion of a project. The marking of work is always reinforced by supportive comments by the teachers and therefore the pupils in all year groups are well aware of their level of achievement and what they have to do to make further progress. Pupils with special education needs are given individual learning targets, which are reviewed regularly by the teachers within the department and the special needs coordinator.
- 127 The management of the department is good, promoting high standards in lessons and giving clear direction. The teachers work as a very effective team. Department documentation and the recording of pupil achievement and progress is well organised and used effectively. Accommodation is good and made attractive by displays of pupils' work. Resources are sufficient for needs and used effectively.
- 128 Overall, improvements since the last inspection are very good. The last inspection drew attention to the influence of artists and cultures which was considered to be limited. This is no longer the case. All lessons are influenced by the work of significant artists and cultures. The quality of teaching was judged to be sound to unsatisfactory, teaching is now good to very good. The management of the subject has improved considerably. Resources are now good and the schemes of work are entirely suitable.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is satisfactory.

Strengths

- There is some very good and excellent teaching that promotes high standards and can be used as a model for others.
- All pupils will have the opportunity to be accredited for their work when they reach Year 11.
- Citizenship is a central feature of the school's vision for personal development.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work need to formalise the responsibility of other subjects for teaching relevant aspects of citizenship.
- An effective assessment and recording system is needed across all strands of citizenship, taking account of work in all subjects, and taking account of community involvement in and out of school.
- Opportunities to participate responsibly within the school need to be strengthened, including pupils' responsibility for the running of the school council.

- 129 The school has made a good start to implementing citizenship requirements. This is an emerging area and many aspects are still being refined. The long-term sickness of relevant staff has held back developments. Writing the schemes for lessons within the existing framework of personal, social and health education has been a priority and the schemes produced are of good quality.
- 130 It was not possible to judge the standards within the first three years as the relevant lessons were all due to take place after the inspection. Neither is it possible to report fully on standards at the age of sixteen, as most lessons seen were in Year 10, where teaching for the short course in citizenship has begun within the framework of personal, social and health education lessons. It was not possible to observe citizenship in other curriculum areas with the exception of one citizenship lesson for the Year 11 ASDAN group of lower attaining pupils. In that lesson, very good progress was made in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Role-play and information and communication technology skills were used effectively to learn about consumers' rights and how to make a complaint.
- 131 In Year 10 it is clear that, so far, achievement is satisfactory for pupils of all prior attainment, and attainment is broadly in line with expectation for the short course requirements. Most pupils do know what citizenship means. They know a little about the law and law making, and also about rights and responsibilities with regard to discrimination and employment law. Most are able to engage in discussion with thoughtful views. The attainment of boys and girls is similar.
- 132 It was not possible to judge the degree to which these pupils are participating in a responsible way in the community outside lessons, as this information has not yet been collated by the school. There is a need to establish systems to enable this to happen, and to take account of citizenship work in other subject areas. Senior managers are committed to citizenship and intend to ensure this does happen, so that the school can report fully on pupils' achievements and evaluate their standards.
- 133 In Years 10 and 11, behaviour is good overall. It was very good in several lessons where pupils were very responsive. Only in one lesson did some unsatisfactory behaviour occur.

- 134 Most teaching seen was very good, with one excellent lesson and one that was satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers have very good classroom management skills and they are able to engage and motivate pupils very well. Planning and preparation are very good and ensure that all are included in the lessons. Activities are used that encourage independence and problem solving and give good opportunities for discussion. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, progress very well in these lessons. In a group exercise to look at discrimination in the work place, the 'case' presented was complex with no obviously correct solution. It presented all pupils with good levels of challenge. The pace was very good, and time was made for an effective review of learning. Where teaching was not quite so strong, some of the boys were not working.
- 135 The citizenship teachers within personal, social and health education, and ASDAN, are a strong and experienced team. Resources are satisfactory overall, and the library has worked hard to ensure a good level of stock with much that can be cross-referenced across many areas when pupils are pursuing a theme.
- 136 The opportunities for taking responsibility need to be broadened and developed so that all are suitably included. The school council is well established, but pupils could take more ownership of the process, canvassing views, taking minutes and reporting back to constituents.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Good relationships between pupils and teachers.
- Clear priorities for future development.
- Good documentation to support teaching, and good analysis of data.
- Good standards in practical work.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring more formally across all areas of the department for consistency of practice and pupil progress.
- A narrow range of courses in Years 10 and 11.
- Modules of study do not always offer sufficient challenge to all pupils.

- 137 By the end of Year 9 standards are in line with the national average. From average attainment on entry pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 7 to Year 9. Practical work is usually good and the better design folders are neatly presented. Girls usually produce slightly better work than boys, but the difference in standards is not significant. Good work was seen in a Year 7 project when designing a note pad holder where good development of initial ideas, and good use of colour was seen in pupils' presentation. A Year 8 project demanded good research skills when pupils investigated advertising and packaging ideas for a promotional leaflet for the RSPCA. Good design specifications were created in a storage project in Year 9 where presentational skills were well developed. Achievement is satisfactory overall in written and graphical work, and good in practical work. Where the work is weaker it is mainly due to a poorer standard of presentation, both written and graphical; work not

completed; some drawings done in pen and not pencil, and a lack of detail in developing ideas. Some modules of work lack sufficient challenge for the pupils of higher attainment.

- 138 By the end of Year 11 standards are average overall. In practical work, including modelling of ideas, standards are good. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results in resistant materials and graphic products were well above the national average with food technology and textiles below the national average. Previous results have been broadly in line with the national average. Textiles is no longer offered at this level and child development has been introduced.
- 139 Good work was seen in all specialisms. For example: in graphics, good development of ideas was seen in the pop-up card project; good research was seen in the storage project in resistant materials, and a good blend of hand written and information communication technology work was seen in a food technology project investigating the characteristics of pastry. Good standards of presentation were evident in child study where physical, emotional and language development was considered in a child development project. Weaker work shows over-reliance on commercial material for ideas; lack of depth in research and development of ideas; work incomplete, or where information communication technology has not been used to improve presentation. There are spelling errors in some work which are not always corrected.
- 140 Pupils' attitudes are usually good and they respond well when suitably challenged. They work well in groups and help each other as necessary. There are occasions when pupils are off-task and do not readily listen to the teachers' explanations. In weaker lessons the noise levels are distracting. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory and the use of information communication technology is usually appropriate in pupils' work.
- 141 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In the best lessons, learning is increased and good progress made because teachers: use good subject knowledge to develop or expand ideas; share lesson objectives; use appropriate interventions when pupils misbehave, and have good pupil management. This was seen in a Year 8 control technology lesson where pupils were developing their understanding and knowledge of cell details and the use of Limit Switches. Again, in a Year 10 graphics lesson, with mainly lower attaining pupils, they increased their understanding of perspective drawing, and in a Year 11 resistant materials lesson where pupils were purposefully engaged in producing good quality practical outcomes in their coursework. In a Year 11 child development lesson, pupils engaged in class and group work when learning about the weaning of a young baby, and in a Year 10 lesson with lower attaining boys, pupils increased their practical skills when marking and cutting various wood joints.
- 142 Satisfactory lessons have many positive features but can lack pace. In these lessons, some pupils were unable to see the demonstrations clearly, or pupils were unsure of the concepts being taught. Some lessons are rather noisy and pupils are off-task on occasion, thereby affecting progress. Listening skills are weak in some lessons and teachers tend to talk over pupils. Assessment procedures are good and marking regularly implemented.
- 143 The recently appointed head of department is providing good leadership and direction for the subject. Management of the department is satisfactory. Good documentation and schemes of work are in place and a detailed analysis of examination performance is a good feature of the department. This information, however, is not

always readily available in a simplified form tracking attainment and progress over time and in each area of study. There are good relationships between colleagues who work well as a team, effectively overcoming the difficulty of rooms being in two different areas of the school. Teachers have good subject expertise and have a positive approach to using the new technologies. All have been trained in using the CAD/CAM equipment and control technology is a good feature of the work in the department. The head of department needs to monitor more formally across all areas of the department for consistency of practice. The range of courses in Years 10 and 11 should be extended. Pupils with learning or behavioural problems and those learning English as an additional language, integrate well and make satisfactory progress overall. Progress by these pupils would be strengthened with the advantage of learning support assistants in lessons. The head of department is enthusiastic and has a good vision for development of the subject.

- 144 Accommodation is in two parts of the school. Some rooms are good in size and quality of provision, others are in need of upgrading. Floor areas are not always clean, due to mud brought in by the pupils moving between sites. Resources are satisfactory with a good information communication technology suite in the department. Access to this is sometimes restricted due to sharing the facility with the information communication technology department. There is a shortage of information communication technology hardware in teaching rooms.
- 145 Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. There is a wider range of materials used; information communication technology including CAD/CAM is established; schemes of work are being reviewed, and a change of examination board implemented. Some issues remain including: planning work to suit the differing needs of the pupils, and increasing opportunities for independent study. The head of department is aware of the deficiencies and has clear plans to improve them.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good.

Strengths

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and often very good.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning are good.
- The quality of most pupils' written work is good. Pupils write independently, at appropriate length.
- GCSE results have improved over the last three years.

Areas for improvement

- Work is sometimes undemanding of gifted and talented pupils and too difficult for pupils of lower prior attainment.
- Pupils' work is sometimes over-generously assessed so that they do not understand how well they are achieving.
- Many pupils do not develop a sense of the scale and uniqueness of the areas they study through the use of stimulating resources such as video.
- Pupils generally draw poor quality diagrams that do not aid their understanding and from which they cannot easily learn.

146 Standards attained by pupils in the teacher-assessed tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above the national average. However, evidence from the inspection indicates that the assessments were over-generous and that standards are unlikely to have been this high.

147 By the end of Year 9 in lessons and in work seen during the inspection, standards attained by the majority of pupils are close to the standard expected nationally. They acquire and use, orally and in their written work, a very good geographical vocabulary. On occasions, however, particularly in tests, pupils are careless about using the correct vocabulary. Some pupils of low prior attainment know the words, but are unsure of the spelling or the precise meaning. Pupils have an appropriate range of geographical skills. They can competently interpret and construct graphs such as those showing climate or population data. They can identify significant geographical features on photographs and can draw diagrams to illustrate their written work. However, their diagrams are carelessly drawn and frequently have no titles, so they do not make processes as clear to pupils as they should. Their map reading skills are little developed after Year 7 so remain at a rudimentary level.

148 The written work of most pupils is good in relation to their prior attainment. They can read text for meaning and use it to support their independent writing. Pupils in Year 8 write clear, accurate accounts of the water cycle and the development of drainage basins. With the aid of well-structured questions, pupils in a Year 9 class wrote good accounts of Kenya's attractions for tourists in an appropriately engaging and lively style. Gifted and talented pupils in Year 9 can write lengthy and accurate accounts of the geography of Japan. The understanding of pupils with special educational needs is however, better expressed orally than in writing. Pupils in a Year 8 class had a good appreciation of how the present lives of the Inuit are very different to that of only forty years ago, but very few were able to express this in writing in more than single words or poorly-formed sentences.

149 Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in the GCSE examinations at the end Year 11 has risen steadily so that in 2002 it was only a little

below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-G was close to the national average, as it had been for the previous two years.

- 150 Standards of work in Years 10 and 11 seen during the inspection were close to the national expectation. The quality of work seen in lessons, and in most exercise books, was of a higher standard than that seen in test results. This is because many pupils appeared not to have memorised much of their work from lessons. Pupils in a lesson in Year 10 showed a good level of competence in information and communication technology and were able to access the Internet to gain additional information about the introduction of congestion charging in London. Using that information, and newspaper cuttings, their word-processed accounts showed a good understanding of the reasons for the introduction of charging, and of its effectiveness. However, a pupil with English as an additional language was handicapped by poor expression and would have benefited from more support.
- 151 Pupils in a lesson in Year 11 could all read and interpret a flood hydrograph and use their prior knowledge to reason out the relationship between changes in landscape and rate of water percolation to a river. The attainment of other pupils in Year 11 was reduced by their tendency to write about concepts and processes that they had copied accurately from the book but that they did not understand and had not checked with their teacher. The map interpretation skills of pupils in Year 11, as shown in an examination, are well below expectations. Their knowledge of very basic skills was insecure and there was no evidence of their development from Year 7. Pupils draw poor diagrams and are therefore unable to use them to help understand coastal and river processes in lessons, or explain them in tests. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- 152 Teaching and learning overall are good, although the quality ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent in Years 7 to 9. Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11. Where teaching is good or better; challenging tasks; clear and lively exposition, and the use of good resources, engage the interest of pupils and encourage them to work particularly hard and to achieve well. Questioning is used skilfully, involving all pupils and encouraging them to think, and integrating their prior knowledge and understanding effectively. Pupils will ask the teacher for help if required but are not over-dependent on the teacher. These features were all seen in an excellent lesson in Year 9. A well-chosen video film of an African Safari Park was used to make very evident the conflict between tourism and the preservation of the environment. Pupils with special educational needs were very skilfully helped through individual work set by the teacher, to meet the targets that she had devised.
- 153 Where teaching is less successful it is pedestrian in its approach and a limited range of strategies is used. Insufficient use is made of audio visual resources to give pupils a sense of place and of scale; of what places look like and might feel like, and of the huge impact that natural hazards can wreak upon the landscape. In some lessons, the level of challenge is too low and too little is expected of pupils. Higher attaining pupils learn much less in a lesson than they are capable of, and pupils with special educational needs get used to a slower and undemanding pace of work, often leaving work incomplete. Unchallenging questions on worksheets can encourage pupils to complete large quantities of writing without comprehending it adequately, or memorising it. In some lessons there is over-emphasis on the requirements of the examination which becomes the starting point for learning rather than the end point. This gets in the way of pupils enjoying these geography lessons.

- 154 Pupils' high levels of motivation and good behaviour contribute significantly to learning. Almost all pupils concentrate in lessons and waste very little time. Even when lessons are not stimulating, they are used to the methodologies employed, and so respond to directions to work with the minimum of fuss. With the best teaching they learn very well in relation to their prior attainment.
- 155 Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but there are significant areas for development. Appropriate opportunities for investigation work are built into the curriculum and information and communication technology is used, although it could be used more effectively and extensively. There are weaknesses in the scheme of work. Some parts are presented in handwriting that is very difficult to read. There are no references to planning for literacy, numeracy, citizenship or the use of information and communication technology. Strategies for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs, pupils learning English as an additional language and gifted and talented pupils are not well developed. The department follows the faculty assessment policy and is developing appropriate procedures, but the accuracy of assessment is not sufficiently well monitored and pupils' work is inaccurately assessed. Higher levels are awarded than are justified by the quality of work, and marks on assessed pieces of work are given for inaccurate or inadequate explanations and descriptions. The head of department monitors teaching, but the lesson observations are too brief for monitoring to be effective and to lead to improving practice. Staffing is barely satisfactory as a number of non-specialist teachers are used that adversely affect pupils' learning. Resources in the form of textbooks are adequate but each room does not have its own video player or the blackout to allow it to be best used. Accommodation is good and attractively decorated with fresh displays of pupils' work and subject-related materials.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths

- A strong team provides the energetic teaching which ensures good progress.
- A good emphasis on literacy.
- The good management of classes ensures a secure environment for learning for all pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Raising standards in GCSE results.
- Improved recruitment to the subject at the end of Year 9.
- An increased use of information and communication technology.

- 156 Standards in history are improving in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments indicate that the proportion of pupils attaining the level expected nationally is just above the national average. Since the previous inspection, GCSE results have fluctuated. In 2001 and 2002 the results were very low. Comparisons with the national average are not valid because of the small number of pupils entered for the examination. A growing number of pupils are now taking GCSE and the teachers' predictions of grades for 2003 are higher than the past.
- 157 Inspection evidence confirms that standards in Years 7 to 9 are in line with national expectation. Pupils understand the importance of evidence. They are beginning to evaluate this at first hand and make intelligent connections. Lower attaining Year 8

pupils understand the complaints of the Third Estate in revolutionary France. With guidance they write speeches putting the viewpoint of peasants or the urban poor. Higher attaining pupils are able to consider the economic causes of the French revolution. They understand and explain the implications if the interest on the Royal Debt is not paid. Some are able to explain political terms, for example, democracy. The great majority of pupils are able to follow instructions and apply themselves to the work set. Most are able to tackle exercises which require them to think.

- 158 In Years 10 and 11 attainment overall is in line with national expectation. Year 11 pupils have a good understanding of the political situation in Vietnam. They understand the propaganda value of 'television war'. They are able to discuss the reliability of film as historical evidence. A pupil with special educational needs made particularly astute comments on the film clip shown. Higher attaining Year 11 pupils are able to recognise and appreciate the importance of such skills as, for example, essay writing and research which they are gaining from their study of history. They are also learning to question everything they read and are developing a healthy scepticism. Many pupils have a practical approach to their studies. They appreciate the value of an academic subject and plan to continue history into the Sixth Form.
- 159 The majority of pupils enter the school with low prior attainment in the subject. This situation is gradually improving. The achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. The achievement of pupils by the end of Year 11 is satisfactory. Most pupils are increasing their historical knowledge and developing their historical skills. They recognise bias. Year 7 pupils considering the disappearance of the Princes in The Tower are able to explain why Shakespeare blamed Richard III. They understand why royal portraits can be unreliable evidence. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress. Teachers are aware of their individual problems. However, there is often no support teacher in classes where a large proportion of pupils need extra help. Some higher attaining pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. Extension exercises are available, but the work is often not difficult enough. In Year 8 their progress is advanced by the setting of groups. New advanced text books are now available for gifted pupils but the department policy is not yet fully implemented.
- 160 Teachers are very aware of the relationship between good progress in history and good literacy skills. The emphasis on literacy is a strength of the department. There is an element of reading and writing in every lesson. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud. Lists of historical terms are posted in history rooms. Each lesson begins with the definition of the key words for the topic being studied. The newly developed assessment procedures have had a positive effect on progress. Assessments are marked according to National Curriculum levels. Pupils know their current position and the levels they should be working towards.
- 161 Teaching is good overall. Teaching is always satisfactory and usually good. As a result pupils' learning is good. A group of experienced staff make up a strong team. In the best taught classes energetic teaching and varied activities ensure that all pupils are fully involved and their attention held. Teachers are particularly adept, usually by careful questioning, at involving all pupils in the lesson. Teaching is very active. Teachers are always prepared to give extra help. Explanations and instructions are clear. Pupils know what to do. The encouragement offered by teachers and the respect given to pupils' opinions help them to join in class discussion. Lessons are well planned. Classes are very well managed so that pupils feel secure and learning is very rarely interrupted and relationships between pupils and with teachers are good.

- 162 Learning is often made relevant. Year 7 pupils studying medieval crime and penalties first consider contemporary penalties. They have difficulty in comparing community service with Trial By Combat. Sometimes a teacher is prepared to risk an innovative approach. Pupils enjoy the challenge. Teachers do not always demand the best of pupils, sometimes accepting an answer when a little more persistence would produce a more accurate response. In other lessons, points which would result in a better understanding of the subject are touched on but not developed, for example, that historians frequently disagree.
- 163 Marking is regular and encouraging. It is not always precise enough for pupils to know exactly how they might improve. Pupils are given opportunities to show what they can do. They enjoy giving presentations. They listen attentively to those given by other pupils. Pupils are developing social as well as academic confidence. Classrooms provide an attractive environment conducive to learning and in most classes there is a very pleasant hard working atmosphere.
- 164 The department is well led and management is good. The history department is forward looking, receptive to change and committed to the improvement of pupils' academic achievement. Many pupils share their teachers' enthusiasm. The newly appointed head of department is given good support by the senior staff. Plans for developing the subject are wide ranging and achievable, for example, the introduction of Black history. Departmental documentation is meticulous. The humanities staff have regular formal meetings. Supply teachers are supported by full time staff. Assessment procedures are good and the data collected are used to inform the teachers' planning.
- 165 Since the previous inspection the department has made good progress. The head of department has a clear idea of future development. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Lessons are well planned. Lesson objectives are clear. History teachers are specialists. Sometimes teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. Higher attaining pupils are not being stretched. GCSE results have declined and teaching is not yet being monitored. There is not enough use of information and communication technology. These weaknesses are recognised by the head of department and there are clear plans to tackle these and some are being currently addressed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils are given a broad range of experiences of information and communication technology.
- Resources for the subject are good and enable pupils to learn effectively.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently in Years 7 to 9.
- There is not enough use of assessment information to plan lessons and to set short term targets for pupils.

166 Results for the GNVQ examination taken in 2002 were below average. This was the introductory year for the course and during that year staffing difficulties adversely affected achievement. There was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Since the last inspection standards have improved because of more stable staffing; improved quality of teaching, and improvements to resources and the broad range of experiences provided for pupils.

167 Standards in work seen were below average by the end of Year 9. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection when pupils did not have opportunities to learn about computer control technology. Pupils have satisfactory skills but their understanding of some applications, such as databases and spreadsheets, is insecure. Pupils have satisfactory word processing skills and combine text and images to present their work appropriately. Higher attaining pupils show creativity and have a good awareness of audience when they create school information leaflets. Pupils show satisfactory understanding of control technology when they write simple procedures to control lights in sequence. Higher attaining pupils add sound effects and are able to explain what is happening on screen and link it to lighting effects happening on models. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and is largely due to the good partnership with design technology staff who share classes, good teaching and a good range of equipment. Standards could be even higher if pupils were provided with more opportunities for independent learning to extend their creativity and understanding of the work through exploration and problem solving activities.

168 Progress through Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory compared to pupils' prior attainment. Pupils quickly learn to use the school system and improve the presentation of their work, using a range of features such as: different fonts; layout of text, and images, to communicate information clearly. They improve the accuracy of their writing because teachers help them by correcting errors and informing pupils how to improve when they mark work. Pupils make particularly good progress with learning about control technology because it is new to most of them and they find it exciting. They make less progress over time when learning about spreadsheets and databases because they do not understand the principles and find the work difficult to remember. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. This would be better if they had in-class support which would increase their rate of improvement, particularly for those pupils with behavioural difficulties.

- 169 Standards are below average overall by Year 11. Pupils taking GNVQ courses have adapted well to the new styles of learning for this course. More emphasis is placed on independent learning and most are reaching at least pass grade level by the end of the units. They build on previous work for presenting information and learn to add sound and special features to their work. Higher attaining pupils have a good sense of audience and present their work creatively. Other pupils following key skills courses have satisfactory practical skills but insufficient understanding of the wider applications of the work they do.
- 170 Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11 but better for pupils following GNVQ courses. Pupils make good progress with this course because they respond well to the teaching strategies which require them to be more actively involved in planning their work. Pupils are encouraged by seeing successful completion of units of work and this leads to even higher motivation in lessons. They make particularly good progress with presenting work effectively. Pupils make good progress with learning to use spreadsheets and databases because these are taught in meaningful contexts. Pupils following key skills courses make satisfactory progress with skills, but have only superficial knowledge of concepts and the wider use of information and communication technology in society.
- 171 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Progress over time has been adversely affected by staffing and curricular problems. However, this is now significantly better and in lessons seen, pupils made good progress. Teaching methods are effective and in the best lessons, such as in GNVQ classes, they are particularly effective and encourage pupils to learn independently and to solve problems. Expectations are high and teachers communicate their very good subject knowledge in a way that inspires pupils. This was seen in a lesson when pupils added sound tracks to their computer presentations.
- 172 Lessons are usually well planned, but in some lessons not enough account is taken of the different needs of learners so that occasionally the highest attaining pupils do not have sufficient opportunities for extension work. Teachers manage pupils well but occasionally, pupils with unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour require too much time and slow the pace of lessons and learning for others. Teachers plan activities which are challenging and motivating and require pupils' active participation so they learn effectively. Good examples of this were seen when pupils were learning about computer control. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and regularly and insist upon corrections and improvements being made so that pupils extend their learning. The very good relationships teachers have with pupils lead to co-operation and good learning.
- 173 Leadership and management of the department are good and have led to significant improvements to provision. The head of information and communication technology is supportive of staff who have recently joined the department and has established a good team spirit. Currently, there is not enough sharing of good practice but the determination of staff to raise standards is leading to a development of this. A strong partnership has developed with the design and technology department to share facilities and the teaching of control technology. This has benefits for the progress pupils make and the professional development of teachers new to teaching this aspect of the subject. The head of department has a good overview of the strengths of the department and those which need improving. Although procedures for assessing pupils are good, not enough use is made of assessment information to plan lessons and to set short term targets for improvement. In view of the

improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, curricular provision and resources, the department is well placed to make good improvements to standards.

Cross curricular information and communication technology

- 174 Provision and co-ordination of information and communication technology across other subjects are unsatisfactory. Responsibility for co-ordination has not yet been defined or allocated. Consequently, there is no monitoring of the range and quality of pupils' experience of information and communication technology. Because of this there are too few opportunities for pupils to put into practice what they have learned in separate information and communication technology lessons, or to appreciate the full value and relevance of information and communication technology in improving their work.
- 175 There is evidence, however, of effective contributions from some subjects to pupils' skills and knowledge of information and communication technology. The collaboration between design technology and information and communication technology to provide control technology for all pupils in Years 7 to 9 is effectively raising standards. There is a good range and quality of resources, and the technician, who is experienced in control technology, is usually available to support the communication of skills and knowledge.
- 176 Pupils word process their work in most subjects although computers are not always readily available in some departments. In these instances, pupils use the facilities of the study support centre which is an integral part of the library. Teachers of religious education aim to use computers at least every half term to complete work such as designs for Islam prayer mats and text-based work on animal rights. The science department have sufficient data logging equipment but have insufficient available computers to make full use of them. The mathematics department use computers regularly with pupils to support their information and communication technology and numeracy development. For example, by using spreadsheets and presenting numerical information as graphs and charts. Information and communication technology work in art and in English is currently limited by restricted access to computers. The music department have been successful in acquiring funds to send 40 pupils on a music course with a significant element of information and communication technology in it. Learning programs to support the development of reading skills for pupils with special educational needs are available but currently are not used sufficiently often for pupils to gain full benefit from them. Similar programs are provided for pupils to study mathematics and science in the study centre.
- 177 The school is aware of shortcomings and is gradually dealing with them as funds allow. The lack of co-ordination and management of information and communication technology in other subjects restricts opportunities for pupils to gain from structured provision to develop their skills and knowledge of information and communication technology coherently.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Most of the teaching is well-planned and has appropriate expectations of pupils.
- Pupils are well behaved and most have positive attitudes to language learning.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in examinations.
- Expertise is not well shared across the department.
- Information and communication technology to support languages learning needs to be further developed.

178 In 2002, the attainment of pupils in French was higher than in the previous year, but remained very low compared with the national average, and lower than other subjects in the school. Just over one in ten of the 73 pupils entered achieved grades A* to C in French and a little over three-quarters achieved A* to G grades. The results were extremely low not only in respect of the higher grades achieved, but also inasmuch as almost half of the pupils failed to obtain a grade or achieved grade G. There was little difference in the performance of boys and girls. All performed markedly less well in French than in their other subjects.

179 In German, GCSE results in 2002, were also very low compared with the national average, but they were considerably better than the results in French. Almost one in five of the 98 pupils entered achieved A* to C grades, and over nine out of ten of those entered achieved A* to G. However, as in French, there was a large proportion of pupils who achieved lower grades, with grades E and F accounting for over half of the pupils.

180 Girls performed significantly better in German than boys, although the proportion of girls attaining the higher grades was very low compared with the national average. Both boys and girls were well below the national average in terms of their performance compared with the other subjects they took. School data show that the majority of pupils entered for a modern languages GCSE examination in 2002 achieved well below what their attainment on entry to the school might have suggested.

181 In the work seen during the inspection there was a wide range of attainment relative to pupils' ages and prior attainment. This was almost invariably related to the quality of the teaching which they received. Some higher attaining pupils by the end of Year 9 were not making the progress which they should be making because the expectations of the teacher were not high enough, and learning was too passive. Whereas they could replicate model sentences in their written work with some accuracy, they were much less confident in producing spoken or written language of their own. Similarly, older pupils approaching their GCSE examinations were not confident in speaking French, and few could produce extended speaking on a topic. In these cases, the teaching did not provide adequate opportunities for pupils to rehearse and develop language under the direct guidance of the teacher, and pupils were asked to practise language structures which had not been adequately taught. In the recent past, most higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 have not made the progress they should because of staffing difficulties. However, they are now making at least satisfactory progress in lessons. Pupils of lower attainment are not making satisfactory progress at this stage because the course they are following is insufficiently demanding.

- 182 In most lessons in the lower school, pupils of all ranges of prior attainment are making at least the progress which might be expected. Here, the teaching is more challenging and lessons are well planned to develop pupils' confidence in producing more extended speaking. Many pupils are making good progress. In a Year 8 class of lower attaining pupils, the strategies employed by the teacher to include all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, ensured that all pupils made good progress. These pupils were able to tackle similar ranges of work to that seen in classes of higher attaining pupils. In a German class in the same year, pupils were enthusiastic about their learning and had made good progress through the course in their first term and a half because the teaching was challenging and lessons had pace and variety. Teaching and learning were better in the lower school than with older pupils.
- 183 In all the lessons seen in modern languages, the pupils were very well behaved and the attitudes which most pupils displayed were very positive. In most lessons, even those where they were not sufficiently challenged by the lesson content, pupils listened carefully, concentrated well and tried hard. In the very good lessons seen, pupils' attitudes were extremely positive.
- 184 The curriculum which the school provides for modern languages is good overall, especially for the younger pupils. The higher attaining linguists study two languages up to the end of Year 9, and can then choose which language they wish to study over the next two years. The option is there to continue with two languages to GCSE level, but no pupils have done this in recent years. Some older pupils who continue with their languages study after Year 9 are allocated less time and prepare for the Certificate of Achievement tests. These are insufficiently demanding for the majority of pupils following the course, and result in a lowering of motivation on the part of both pupils and teachers. The department does not make sufficient planned use of information and communication technology to support learning in modern languages.
- 185 The modern languages department, which has experienced considerable staffing problems over the past few years, is now fully staffed with suitably experienced teachers. It is well led by a head of department who is determined to drive up the standards which pupils achieve. The school provides a good range of data about pupils' prior performance, and their potential for the future. The department needs to develop strategies to use this information to better effect. There is some very effective teaching in the department which should be more effectively shared in order to improve the quality of teaching across the department. Accommodation for languages teaching is good and resources are at least adequate. However, there is a need for better access to information and communication technology facilities to support learning. The department has made satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

Strengths

- Standards at the end of Year 11 are very good.
- The teachers have very good subject knowledge and relate well to the pupils. As a consequence the pupils respond well to the subject.
- Departmental planning at all levels is very good.
- The analysis of assessments at the end of Years 9 and 11 is excellent.
- The pupils are very enthusiastic, and this is reflected in the high number of pupils taking music in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for pupils to broaden their curriculum through the use of computers are extremely limited.
- Pupils' ability to perform music independently of the teachers is restricted because of their lack of knowledge of conventional notation.
- Opportunities to participate in regular ensemble music making, both choral and instrumental are undeveloped.
- The present funding arrangements for instrumental tuition have been responsible for a substantial decline in the number of pupils learning instruments.

186 Teacher assessments indicate that standards in Year 9, in 2002, are slightly above the national average and show an improvement on the results of the previous year. As standards on entry to the school are generally below average, this represents good progress through Years 7-9. Observations of lessons during the inspection confirm that these standards are being maintained. In Year 9, the large majority of pupils have well developed keyboard skills and are able to use the technological facilities of the keyboards to record their work. They work productively in small groups and show a developing understanding of musical structures.

187 In Year 11, the results in the 2002 GCSE show standards in music to be in line with the national average; within the school, music was the best performing subject. The numbers of pupils taking GCSE music are high and this year's numbers in Year 11 show a substantial increase on last year. Observations of Year 11 lessons show that pupils' current standards are in line with expectation. Many are able to show that they can effectively listen to music and understand enough to be able to make the required answer to examination questions. Most pupils in Year 11 show good keyboard skills, although technique is limited. Only one pupil is actually learning an instrument other than keyboard. In all years, because of the way material is presented, most pupils are able to make very effective performances on keyboards and achievement is good overall. However, very few pupils, in any year, are able to read music, or have any adequate understanding of the conventions of musical notation. Consequently, they are very limited in their ability to understand any written music which has not been adapted for classroom use, and their independent access to music is restricted.

188 Pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn well. They are enthusiastic and well motivated and clearly enjoy their work. They work well together in paired and group activity. Some pupils show good leadership by taking responsibility for directing a group performance and can effectively count in the performers. There is a good working atmosphere in lessons and pupils are responsive to the musical challenges put before them. Pupils with special educational needs achieve equally as well as other pupils. Insufficient

support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language inhibits their progress.

- 189 The pupils learn well because the teaching is good. Lessons are characterised by good planning, they get off to a brisk start with teachers sharing the objectives of the lesson with the pupils. The teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good; in both a Year 7 and Year 10 lesson there were very good examples of teachers selecting and arranging materials which proved to be very accessible for the pupils. Preparing materials for pupils with special educational needs is undertaken well. In all lessons seen, teachers were particularly effective in promoting pupils' progress by working with small groups, often managing to get an encouraging response from even the most naturally reluctant pupil.
- 190 The teachers always relate well to the pupils, who respond with enthusiasm. In a Year 7 lesson, the teacher's skilful keyboard accompaniment promoted some vigorous singing, which was much enjoyed by the pupils. However, there is a need to refine the vocal tone and pitch control. Sometimes, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop independence because activities are too teacher-led. In order to encourage pupils' success in instrumental performance the teacher will provide the letter names of the notes and demonstrate the rhythms, rather than show the pupils how to work them out for themselves. Homework, which is regularly set, provides pupils with the opportunity to reflect upon the lessons by encouraging them to write-up reports on their practical lesson activities.
- 191 Leadership of the department is very good. Much work has been done since the previous inspection to improve the music curriculum and to raise standards. Documentation is very thorough and, at all stages, planning is good. This is a major factor in the promotion of the good teaching and learning. Resources have been developed well, and the technology of modern keyboards is exploited effectively in the practical work undertaken by the pupils. The department has only two computers, and they are old. Although they are in use, particularly in lessons in Year 9, they are inadequate to provide sufficient opportunities for broadening the pupils' experiences.
- 192 The department has come a long way since the previous inspection, improvement has been very good. The poor teaching has been turned round and there are very adequate keyboard resources. Assessment is well organised and used, so that teachers are informed about pupils' strengths and progress. Attainment is now good and in line with national expectations. This very real improvement in the provision for music is reflected in the unusually large number of pupils that choose to pursue their musical studies to GCSE in Years 10 and 11. However, since the previous report there have been considerable difficulties with the financing of instrumental teaching and, as a consequence, the number of pupils learning instruments has fallen away dramatically. Very little ensemble work is taking place. Opportunities to experience choral singing, on a regular basis, are also limited, with only a small junior singing group meeting at the time of the inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Leadership is very good with a clear vision for future development.
- Teaching is good overall and ensures that pupils learn effectively.
- Relationships are good.
- Standards are improving and are good and sometimes very good in GCSE dance and swimming activities.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are below expectation in Years 7 to 9, and in core activities in Years 10 and 11.
- Standards are improving in GCSE but are still well below the national average.
- The range of teaching strategies is limited and pupils are given insufficient opportunity to work independently.
- Lesson objectives are sometimes focused on what pupils are going to do and not what they are going to learn.
- Staffing is unsatisfactory, despite the best efforts of the school to recruit replacement teachers.

193 Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below the national expectation for their age but they make good progress in Years 7 to 9. Assessments made by teachers show that standards are below the national expectation in Years 7 to 9. However, targets for the percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level were met. In lessons seen, the standards are below expectation overall. However, in swimming and orienteering pupils achieve a good standard. In Year 7 gymnastics, pupils make good progress but their lack of previous experience means that standards are below expectation, and skills lack tension and control. Pupils in Year 8 rugby make satisfactory progress but their skills are below the expectation.

194 The percentage of pupils who achieved A*-C grades in the 2002 GCSE physical education examination were well below the national average. However, this was an improvement over the previous year. All pupils achieved an A*-G grade, and 11 out of the 17 pupils achieved better than their target grade. In the Certificate of Achievement physical examination in 2002 half of the pupils achieved a distinction and more than three quarters achieved a merit. Although there are no national averages for comparison, the results do represent a significant improvement since 2001. In lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 GCSE physical education and dance, the standards in practical activities are above expectation. Standards are always at least in line with expectation, and in half of the lessons are above. This represents good achievement over time. Year 10 boys swim at a very good standard and use several strokes with very good quality. In Year 10 dance, the overall practical quality is very good and a small number of individuals display excellent standards.

195 In core lessons in Years 10 and 11, standards are below those expected nationally at this age. However, standards are variable and there is a big difference between the higher and lower attaining pupils in the same Year 11 soccer and trampolining groups. Trampolining is a relatively new activity and pupils make good progress although their skills are basic and they lack control when linking movements. Pupils learn the qualities of the skills required, but their practical application does not match their intentions.

- 196 Teaching is good overall and ensures that pupils learn new skills and make good progress. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good in the majority of lessons and never less than satisfactory. Teaching is predominantly very good in GCSE physical education and GCSE dance lessons. Teaching by specialist instructors in GCSE lessons is always at least good but is excellent in Year 10 dance. In core lessons in Years 10 and 11, teaching is always at least satisfactory, and in more than half of lessons is good or very good. Teachers are mainly experienced and have very good skills and knowledge. This ensures that pupils learn well and acquire new skills which are technically correct. Lessons are well planned with clear progression which builds on previous learning. However, objectives occasionally identify activities, rather than what pupils are going to learn. Teachers use demonstrations effectively to ensure that pupils are aware of the high expectations for performance. However, the opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own performance, and that of others, is insufficient, and the use of new technology is not well developed. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress.
- 197 Relationships are very good and, as a result, attitudes and behaviour are very good. They are keen, stay on task and perform with good physical effort. Pupils work well together when in pairs and small groups. They display good sporting attitudes and abide by the rules and conventions of games. Standards of kit are good in Years 7 to 9. In dance lessons in Year 10, the girls really want to improve and the atmosphere in the class is very positive.
- 198 Leadership of the department is very good and there is a clear vision for future development including raising standards and improving teaching and learning. The quality of provision is reflected in the Sportsmark award that the school received in 2002. The department is well managed and documentation is of a very high standard. The department are working hard to put all the very good quality policies and schemes of work into practice. Despite the best efforts of the school, the department is understaffed. Monitoring of teaching is developing. Schemes of work are comprehensive and identify good opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Procedures to monitor the progress of pupils are very good but the use of the data is still developing. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good with individuals and teams gaining success in local and regional competitions. There is insufficient use of new technology. Accommodation is adequate but changing rooms are small. Improvement since the last inspection include: GCSE standards which are improving; improvement in teaching, and dance is now provided throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- The schemes of work and much of the departmental documentation are of very good quality and this helps the quality of learning in the classroom.
- There is very good support for non-specialist teachers, supply teachers and 'cover' teachers, so that they have the means to teach effectively.

Areas for improvement

- Statutory requirements for religious education are not met for some pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do not receive as much time as the others.
- Many higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are preparing for the GCSE entry level qualification which is inappropriate for them.
- Recruitment difficulties are affecting standards and attitudes adversely due to significant numbers of pupils receiving unsatisfactory religious education teaching.
- Resources are inadequate and this restricts the quality of teaching.

199 By the end of Year 9 and 11, standards are below national expectations and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. However, the time given for the subject is a little less than usual, and overall, the progress made by pupils of all prior attainment is satisfactory. In all years, pupils make significant gains in knowledge, understanding and skills and the opportunities for personal development, spiritual, moral, social and cultural are very good. Boys achieve similarly to girls in all years. The exceptions to this positive picture of achievement are those pupils who do not receive teaching from permanent staff as a result of the school's difficulties in recruiting staff. Their work does not get marked and their progress is very limited.

200 During the first three years, there is some planned consolidation of earlier learning, as pupils' previous experience of religious education is varied. By Year 9, most pupils have acquired a broad knowledge of different Christian traditions and the major world faiths. They can use the key words that arise from this study with reasonable accuracy. They are able to understand that people's beliefs affect the way they live and all the important decisions they make. They can express their own views on some of the 'ultimate questions' to do with the meaning of life, helped by what they have learnt. Higher attaining pupils can write some informed and detailed explanations; for example, of how Muhammad, (pbuh), responded to the message given to him by Allah, and they can write a letter of advice about drugs that illustrates Christian morality.

201 There is a wide range of attainment in Years 10 and 11. The work of some pupils of higher attainment was impressive and showed that they could write relevant and well-informed answers to questions about religious views on moral issues such as equality and prejudice, care of the natural environment, peace and justice, and medical ethics. Lower attaining pupils progress well in relation to their prior attainment where the teaching is good. Insufficient support for pupils with special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language, sometimes inhibits their progress.

202 In all years behaviour is good overall, and attitudes are satisfactory. This does include some noisy and poor behaviour by a minority of pupils in several classes. It also includes very good behaviour by some pupils who persevered remarkably when

surrounded by noise from other pupils. Many pupils are not enjoying this subject as much as they should.

- 203 Teaching is good overall. The range of teaching was from good down to poor, but most lessons were good. In the better lessons, teachers had very good subject knowledge, and the planning, methods used, and the marking of work, all enabled pupils to learn well. In one good lesson about discipleship in Year 7, there was a careful balance between the two attainment targets, learning about religions and learning from religions. As a result pupils not only learnt well about Jesus and his apostles, but also were thoughtful about the qualities needed for any commitment. In the weaker lessons, teachers had some difficulty managing pupils' behaviour. In one lesson, a teacher had fourteen pupils with special educational needs, including behavioural difficulties, and no support was available. Where teaching was poor, pupils were completing work set by other teachers and were given inadequate direction. Teaching does not promote pupils' enjoyment sufficiently. This affects their motivation and standards.
- 204 Teachers are using national guidance to assess pupils' attainment. This is helpful in monitoring pupils' progress and informing them about what they can do, and how to improve. But this assessment is not being used with sufficient accuracy, partly due to the difficulties faced by teachers who are not specialists, and so there are significant discrepancies in the data.
- 205 All pupils have the opportunity for accreditation in religious studies. As time is limited for covering the 'short' GCSE course, pupils are entered for Entry Level GCSE. This is not appropriate for most pupils. Assessment is based entirely on coursework with no examination. Higher attaining pupils have even less time than other pupils for this subject, not enough to meet local requirements, and the coursework becomes a burden disproportionate to the time allowed. This undermines positive attitudes, and so some pupils do not want to do this work. The most conscientious higher attaining pupils are the ones most adversely affected. Results have declined a little over three years, and in 2002, 84 percent of pupils entered for the certificate gained one of the three 'pass' grades.
- 206 Literacy is well developed for extending vocabulary but needs more attention to how to write well. Numeracy work is planned and is developing within lessons. Teaching pupils through information and communication technology is developing well with some classes experiencing good quality lessons in a computer room. The provision for basic skills has improved, schemes of work have been revised and are of high quality, and improvement since the last inspection report is satisfactory overall.
- 207 There are not sufficient good quality resources to support teachers in their lessons. Many books are old, there are not enough books and the range is limited. New Bibles are needed and more artefacts. The library has good stock for this subject, but because it is in the other building, insufficient use is made of it during lessons. Staffing is unsatisfactory in that there are not enough specialist teachers to meet the demands of the subject.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

GCSE, A Level and AVCE Courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	4	100	95.9	25	47.8	70	N/a
Biology	5	60	92.7	20	41.3	44	N/a
Chemistry	3	100	95.2	33	52.4	80	N/a
Design and technology Prod D	3	100	94.6	0	28.9	73	N/a
English Literature	10	100	98.9	10	47	68	N/a
Geography	3	67	97.4	0	40.8	40	N/a
Information and communication technology	14	64	89.1	0	19.2	30	N/a
Mathematics	4	100	93	75	50.1	70	N/a
Media	7	100	98.3	14	32.5	65	N/a
Panjabi	1	100	89.4	0	42.4	60	N/a
Physics	4	100	94.8	50	49.2	100	N/a
Sociology	2	100	95	0	39.1	40	N/a
Business Studies AVCE	8	88	89.6	37.5	20.7	125	N/a
Business Studies A level	10	100	92.5	30	25.7	74	N/a

GCE AS Levels

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Applied mathematics	8	63	67.9	0	9.0	17.5	N/a
Biology	5	80	85.9	0	39.4	24	N/a
Chemistry	4	25	87.8	0	43.6	5	N/a
Design and technology Prod D	6	83	89.2	17	29.1	33	N/a
English literature	20	60	95.3	0	37.2	14.5	N/a
Geography	8	50	88.3	0	35.7	17.5	N/a
Information and communication technology	16	44	76.8	7	16.5	87.5	N/a
Physical education	1	100	89.2	0	31.0	40	N/a
Physics	9	56	84.0	0	42.1	17.7	N/a
Psychology	2	0	81.4	0	29.8	0	N/a
Sociology	5	40	84.8	20	33.8	14	N/a

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	168	58		44			
Information and communication technology	66	43		24			

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

A-level mathematics; chemistry and physics were inspected.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- Teaching is good and as a result student achievement is good.
- Students taking A-level are mature and hardworking.
- Strong support and guidance is provided by teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Examination results are too low.

- 208 By the end of Year 13 in 2001, A-level results were below the national average with no pupils achieving A or B grades. These results were similar to the two previous years with only one pupil gaining a higher grade. In the 2002 examinations, however, 'A' level results showed a considerable improvement with all pupils achieving a grade and three out of four entered achieving A or B grades.
- 209 The standard of work seen in Year 13 on inspection was in line with the national expectation. This was as a result of very effective teaching of this group of students who were confident in their use of Algebra. They were able to recall earlier work on differentiation and were able to differentiate a variety of functions. They can integrate expressions and do this using the substitution method. In integrating a trigonometric function they were able to recall identities which they had previously learnt.
- 210 In the 2001 AS examination 73 percent of students entered achieved a grade and 18 per cent achieved an A or B grade. In 2002 results were lower with 46 percent achieving a pass and with no higher pass grades. There is no data to compare these results with national trends.
- 211 Standards of work seen on inspection in Year 12 are below average. This is because there are students on the course who have previously only achieved a grade C in the Intermediate GCSE examination. These students are, however, achieving well against their prior attainment and overall AS achievement is good.
- 212 Standards seen in the Sixth Form GCSE resit class are also below average. While the majority of students are working hard to improve their GCSE grade a good proportion of them are unlikely to gain C or better due to their low prior attainment.
- 213 Teaching in the Sixth Form is overall good with some very good features. Generally students achieve well as a result of this teaching. Teachers are well qualified and have very good subject knowledge. They give clear explanations and work is well structured for effective learning. In Year 13 there are very good opportunities provided for students to work independently. The teacher discourages students from copying examples straight from the board by quickly removing the working and asking the students to complete the work covered at home using the techniques demonstrated. In this lesson students are consistently encouraged to explain their methods and talk about their solutions. In a Year 12 lesson good use of information and communication

technology was seen where the teacher illustrated the idea of approaching the limit of a series using a spreadsheet. Teachers are aware of the need to revisit earlier work and use homework to do this effectively.

214 Teachers work together to deliver different modules of the A and AS level course which is well managed. The mathematics curriculum is appropriate to the needs of students and there are appropriate time allocations for the teaching of different modules. Generally, teachers are committed and enthusiastic about their work. Students are well supported by teachers in both Year 12 and Year 13. For example, extra help is always available outside of lessons for students experiencing difficulty with the work. There are also very good procedures in place to make students aware of their progress against their predicted grade.

215 Since the last inspection achievement in lessons has improved and is now good.

CHEMISTRY

Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is very good.

Strengths

- The subject is very well led.
- Teaching is consistently very good
- ICT is well used to support learning in the subject
- The curriculum is enriched by trips to further and higher education establishments

Areas for improvement

- Marketing in the partner schools is under-developed.
- The planned programme to further develop resources should be formalised.

216 Overall, standards in AS and A-level chemistry are close to the national average. Over the past 2 years the subject has achieved a 100% pass rate and all students who start the course complete it. Entry requirements in the past have been very low. These lower attaining students have been well supported to achieve the lower grades, while higher attaining students have been effectively challenged to achieve the higher grades. Progress made by all students regardless of gender; prior attainment or ethnicity, is very good. Entry requirements have been effectively raised over the last 2 years and the subject is well placed to see a rise in the proportion of students achieving the higher grades. In AS lessons seen, students were on track to achieve standards around the national average with half the group likely to achieve A-C grades and all students on track to pass. Due to university interviews it was not possible to observe the Year 13 student being taught. However, from a scrutiny of work, this student is on track to achieve one of the highest grades.

217 The highly conscientious approach to the subject adopted by the teacher is contagious. Students universally approach the subject with enthusiasm, interest and respect. They carry out practical work with great concern for detail, treating resources with appropriate levels of care. They move around the laboratory showing great respect for others and the equipment. They listen attentively to the teacher, and to answers given by their peers. They are keen to contribute to discussion. Regardless of their level of prior attainment, students feel sufficiently confident that their contributions will be valued, that they volunteer to come to the front and demonstrate answers on the whiteboard. Their perseverance across a double session is remarkable. They work without letting up for a moment. There is no off-task talk; all students apply themselves diligently from the start, to the very end of the sessions.

They are keen and willing to forego their breaktimes to work at chemical puzzles; research on the internet, or discuss career options and universities with the teacher.

- 218 The quality of teaching is consistently very good. Lessons are meticulously planned and this ensures that they are well-focused and move at a very good pace. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere, engendered in part by the high levels of subject confidence exhibited by the teacher. Students make very good progress as a direct consequence of the very good teaching, and all students are enabled to play a full, and demonstrably valued, part in the lessons, regardless of gender, ethnicity or level of prior attainment.
- 219 In one lesson on energy changes, students were encouraged to measure accurately and as a consequence they observed very carefully and took great care. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject is obvious to the students, and contributes to their levels of motivation. The teacher circulates well during practical work, supporting students very effectively. However, the dialogue and questioning of individual students could be further developed to probe and challenge the students still further. Good quality display in the laboratory encourages students to see the subject as a route to a career, and effectively raises its status. Literacy is supported by the display of a glossary specific to the subject.
- 220 The students' analysis of examination answers is very well supported by the detailed guidance given by the teacher, which is based on the examination mark scheme. This is made the more effective by the experience which the teacher brings as an examiner. This helps prepare students very well for their forthcoming examinations. In one lesson on energy changes, students' contributions to the class discussion were analysed point by point. As a consequence, they were left unambiguously clear as to what answer would achieve the highest marks, and why.
- 221 Homework is well used to support and extend the learning in lessons. Both commercial resources and well-produced worksheets are given to guide students' work at home. Parents are effectively encouraged to support the students by being given considerable detail regarding the requirements of the course, and the various deadlines for assignments.
- 222 Overall, the curriculum covered in A-level chemistry is very good. The work is based firmly on the examination specification. It is well-timed through the year to ensure students have good opportunities to revise and prepare for examinations. The curriculum is significantly enriched by trips to University departments to allow students to see techniques and apparatus beyond the scope of schools. Links with FE colleges are being developed with a view to extending the quality of students' opportunities for practical experiences. Information and communication technology is well used to support learning in the subject with CD-ROMS; research on the internet, and word-processed assignments all being scheduled into the work.
- 223 The subject is very well led. The subject has been very effectively marketed within the school and as a consequence numbers have risen dramatically this year. Numbers for next year are predicted to stay at this higher level. Given the very good provision for this subject, marketing in the partner schools could be further developed as there is currently only one student from outside the school. Informal, though extensive, careers guidance provided by the teacher has formed an influential part in the growth of popularity of the subject and has led to a raising of students' aspirations. Not infrequently, students going on to university are the first from their family so to do.

- 224 The chemistry teacher is well qualified and very experienced. He is the only chemist in the school. However, he has developed very good links with the examination board; universities and colleges. He regularly accesses material from the Royal Society of Chemistry and all these strategies ensure he is well-supported and keeps up to date with developments in the subject. Resources, such as glassware, are adequate for the curriculum. There is an informally planned programme to further develop resources. This should be mapped out over time to show the priorities, and costed. Such a plan would formalise the requests for funding from the science department and would address the likely growth in numbers of students more effectively.

PHYSICS

Overall, the quality of provision in physics is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching ensures that students make good progress in most lessons.
- Relationships between students and teachers are very good.
- Students receive good support from teachers through the system for recording progress and setting targets.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient opportunities for students to work independently.
- Insufficient use of information and communication technology.

- 225 In the A-level examination in 2001, students' results were well below average, but these students did significantly better in physics than in their other subjects. In 2002, all students gained A or C grades. While their results cannot be compared to national averages, they were nonetheless much better than those of 2001. AS level results in 2001 also cannot be compared with national averages because students did not choose to take an award. However, module test results show that some students gained the highest grades in 2001 but did less well in 2002. The majority of students who begin AS and A-level courses complete them, but the number that choose to study physics is small.
- 226 In lessons in both Year 12 and Year 13, the standard of students' work was below average. For example, in Year 13 students' ability to rearrange a formula to calculate the power of a lens is below average. Students can explain how stationary waves are produced and how these waves affect the amplitude of a sound, although their understanding of the way in which this affects the sensitivity of the ear is more limited. In Year 12, students' practical skills when using a cathode ray oscilloscope are around average. They can use it to measure the frequency of a sound, but their calculations of frequency and wavelength are done less confidently.
- 227 Teaching varies between very good and satisfactory. Course work about meteor impacts and the size of craters, and teaching about speed and momentum is well organised and thoroughly marked. Teachers' understanding of their subject is very good, and in the best lessons they use demanding question and answer sessions to ensure that students make very good progress, for example, about understanding waves. Very skilful use is made of electronic whiteboards and, as a result, pupils learn how to measure the velocity of a wave very effectively. When a circuit of activities is used, including practical activities and computer simulations, students make good progress in their learning because the activities are interesting and well matched to their needs. Questions were not used to check students' understanding of reflection and refraction. In this lesson, too much was led by the teacher and

students were not provided with opportunities to research or to present their ideas to the class. As a result, although well behaved, students were not sufficiently involved in their learning.

- 228 Students listen carefully, they are usually willing to ask and answer questions and their attitudes and behaviour are good. They co-operate very well during practical activities and take care of the equipment they use. Students and teachers respect each other and relationships with teachers are very good because teachers provide regular encouragement and consequently students are willing to explain their work although some are hesitant. Students are interested in learning but are less critical and more dependent on their teachers than usual especially when the teacher leads lessons. Much of the students' work is well organised and note taking about radioactive decay is efficient and useful for revision.
- 229 Leadership and management of physics teaching are very good; students are provided with excellent support through the systems for recording progress and setting targets. Teaching and the consortium arrangements in which teaching is shared with another school are well organised and students are given valuable experience of physics when trips to Institute of Physics lectures are arranged. Examination and test marks are evaluated to identify ways of improving students' performance. Information and communication technology is not used enough by students in lessons and access to rooms for private study is limited.

BUSINESS

Business education was inspected, and is offered as AVCE single and double awards, and to GNVQ Intermediate level in Year 12.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good and therefore the overall educational support available to the students is very good.
- The relationships between the teachers and the students are excellent.
- The quality of planning is very effective giving all students the opportunity to succeed.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient lap-top computers to allow students access to research facilities.
- Insufficient newspapers, and business magazines, to support knowledge and understanding of business in society.

230 By the end of Year 13, standards are average to above average in AVCE Business Studies. When the prior attainment of students on entry in Year 12 is considered, this represents good progress. The standards reached by the current students in Year 13, as seen in lessons and in their written work, show good to very good achievement and progress. In Year 12 AVCE, students make good progress in understanding the central ideas of the subject, including those relating to the economic environment in which business operates. Students in Year 13 also progress well in their current work. Their portfolios are well-organised providing evidence of good research skills and some analytical ability when dealing with hypothetical situations in business. In all lessons, but particularly in Year 13, there was evidence of students engaging in discussions on a range of issues which demonstrated well-developed skills in promoting and supporting ideas and opinions.

231 Students are articulate and use and understand technical language well. The majority of students in both years are generally adept in planning their own work when researching and completing assignments. The GNVQ Intermediate students' attainment is average, which represents very good progress considering their prior attainment. Portfolios are well organised and competence in the use of computers is evident. All assignments are submitted in typescript, students are capable of using a variety of fonts, importing graphics and illustrations, and extrapolating data into charts and diagrams.

232 Overall, the quality of teaching is very good, it is sometimes excellent. The teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, fostering interest and understanding in the majority of students through carefully planned lessons. Relationships between the teachers and the students are excellent, promoting high levels of mutual respect and understanding. Lessons are invariably designed around current events in the business world, such as the impact of the possible closure of Corus Steel on the local economy. Teaching strategies are carefully orchestrated to promote knowledge and understanding through whole class and small group activities. Expectations are very high and therefore the work is challenging, allowing students to experience the complex nature of business. The quality of education is also supported through extra-curricular activities. The department has previously organised visits to New York, the SEAT car plant in Barcelona, and the Stella Artois

plant in Leuven. Visiting speakers have been invited into school representing a variety of organisations including Price Waterhouse Coopers, and the Nat West Bank. Key skills are being developed by being integrated into the course structure.

- 233 Leadership and management are very good. A clear vision exists relating to the present and future development of the subject. The teachers work as an effective team, sharing ideas and monitoring all aspects of the work. The planning of the course content is detailed and very effective. Student assessment is used very effectively to influence the planning of lessons. Students have a clear understanding of their progress, attainment and future expectations. Students are also given quality advice on career development by the teachers. The students are appreciative of the support and guidance given to them. Improved access to computers would improve the flexibility of students to work outside their lesson time. The provision of newspapers and business magazines would improve research opportunities and students' appreciation of business within society.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus of the inspection was on advanced level information and communication technology. A lesson was sampled in Key Skills.

- 234 In the Key Skills lesson sampled in Year 12, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to enable students who have limited previous experience of information and communication technology to make good progress in the lessons and over time. Teachers keep detailed records to monitor the progress of students and they use these to provide very good support and guidance. Students know how well they are doing because they are actively involved in monitoring their own progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- There are good relationships between teachers and students.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment are too low.
- Students have insufficiently developed skills in organising coursework projects.

- 235 Examination results were below average in 2001 and provisional results for 2002 are also below average. A high proportion of students completed the AS examinations in 2001 and continued into A-level in Year 13. In 2002 most students completed the AS course but fewer than half continued into Year 13 because results were low and students decided to focus on other subjects.

- 236 Standards of attainment are below average in Year 12. Note-taking skills are average in higher attaining students and introductory statements to projects are clearly expressed and well structured. Most others are brief and descriptive with insufficient analysis. Students have a satisfactory understanding of health and safety issues for people who use computers for long periods of time in the workplace. They contribute to discussion confidently but rely on the teacher to guide them towards in-depth consideration of the issues.

- 237 Standards of work seen by Year 13 were below average. Most students understand the basic requirements for the course but approach work superficially. Because they do not have a good awareness of time management for projects, this work is behind schedule. Students show satisfactory understanding of the main elements of research but analytical skills are below average. Students have identified problems in real life as the basis for their projects in information and communication technology. For example, a computerised system to manage dental appointments. However, students have insufficient opportunity to discuss these with people in these situations. Higher attaining students have a satisfactory understanding of relational databases. Notes are well organised but tend to be descriptive rather than analytical, and so lack the depth needed to reach the highest grades. In practice test questions students show basic understanding of the work but answers lack sufficient depth and detail.
- 238 Achievement in Years 12 and 13 is satisfactory when the students' prior attainment is taken into account. Students' knowledge of databases is good but unsatisfactory project management is restricting overall progress. Writing improves and students show more accuracy and maturity of expression in Year 13. Students behave in a mature manner and have formed confident relationships with teachers and each other. However, their attitude to coursework deadlines is too relaxed, and consequently this work is not as far advanced as it should be at this stage.
- 239 The quality of learning and teaching is satisfactory and has some good features. In most lessons seen, it was satisfactory and occasionally good. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they communicate confidently and earn the respect of students. Teachers mark the work of students in detail and provide good guidance for improvement. There is good liaison between teachers contributing to teaching the course so that skills and knowledge are developed logically. Teaching methods are generally satisfactory but not enough time is spent on teaching the skills of coursework organisation and ensuring that students work to deadlines. Students show interest and concentration and a willingness to persevere to solve problems with practical work. Teachers manage classes with purposeful but friendly direction.
- 240 Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good support for teachers relatively new to the school. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to improving standards and have attended appropriate in-service training to keep up-to-date with the courses they are teaching. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. There is now a stable staff and good improvements to resources and accommodation.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education A-level was inspected.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The teacher has good knowledge which ensures that students achieve well and learn specific vocabulary.
- Relationships are very good.
- Planning is good and identifies clear objectives.
- Behaviour is good.
- Good links with other schools in the area.

Areas for improvement

- Numbers taking AS and A-level are small.
- Students are given insufficient opportunity to work independently.
- Information and communication technology is not used.

241 The number of students taking examination courses in the Sixth Form is very small but good links with other schools in the area enable courses to run. During the inspection only one lesson could be observed because of staffing problems.

242 In the 2001 A-level examination, three students sat the examination and two of them achieved an A-E grade. In 2002, only one student sat the AS examination and achieved a C grade. In the lesson observed one student from the school was in a group that included seven students from another school. The Wednesfield student made good progress in learning about the association and connection theories of learning related to the acquisition of skill, and achieved standards in line with expectation. His practical skills were stronger than his theoretical knowledge, but he is working at a level that should secure a pass. Literacy skills are average. The range of work in folders is very good and marking helps students to know how to improve. When responding to questions, students' use of subject specific vocabulary is good, but the answers are limited and not analytical.

243 Teaching is good and the teacher has good subject knowledge. Relationships are very good and the teacher manages the students very well. Planning is very clear and identifies the learning objectives and progressions. Questions are used to challenge students to give examples from their own experience. Explanations are good though much of the teaching is direct and students are given insufficient opportunity to work independently.

244 Students show good behaviour and are interested in the first part of the lesson. However, they are not prepared to be challenged to think deeply as the lesson progresses. Leadership and management are good and the teacher has good levels of expertise. Information and communication technology is not used to support learning. Resources are good and include worksheets and textbooks for all students.

HUMANITIES

Geography A-level was inspected.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Students can competently carry out individual research and investigation.
- Students are very self-motivated and take considerable responsibility for their own learning.
- Some teaching is very good and enables students to learn well.
- Students' understanding is good when work in lessons is presented in such a way that they are invited to respond.

Areas for improvement

- Students spend too much time copying material directly from the textbook, or writing dictated notes.
- Very little work for assessment is set in two areas of study, and that which is, is not always challenging enough.
- In some lessons there is an over-emphasis on the requirements of the examination at the expense of developing students' interest in the subject or their understanding of processes involved.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

245 In 2001, standards at AS and A-level were well below the national average. Those attained in the exams in 2002 were of a similar standard. In lessons and in work seen during the inspection, standards were higher than this. Students have assiduously covered a considerable body of work and are able to apply much of their learning effectively. Students in Year 12 have a good understanding of the factors affecting the shape of a flood hydrograph and can hypothesise effectively about the outcomes of variations in rock permeability, climate and vegetation cover. They are able to carry out independent research to make a good presentation to their group on the causes and effects of rural migration into Mega Cities such as Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro. Students in Year 13 showed good understanding in a lesson of the fragile nature of the tundra biome and how it can be destroyed. They use their good geographical vocabulary very accurately. In another lesson, their responses to issues about the impact of tourism on China were sensitive and thoughtful, and they had the confidence to challenge the teachers' point of view. When they are set written questions to answer, they do so competently, in line with the average. Some students of high prior attainment respond very well, integrating material from the Internet and producing detailed, accurate case studies, for instance on the processes of slope formation.

246 Students are aware, however, that they do not know, and cannot therefore remember, much of the work that they have copied from textbooks. They know that the process of copying does not necessarily lead to good comprehension. They are concerned that they will attain less good results in their A-level examinations than those of which they are capable or which they need for entrance to university. The AS examination results of 2002 support this concern. Four students who had pass grades at GCSE obtained only grade U and have not continued with the subject. Another student who had grade A* at GCSE also obtained grade U in the AS examination.

- 247 Too few students were following a geography course at the time of the last inspection for comparisons to be made between standards attained then and at present.
- 248 In lessons seen during the inspection the teaching overall was good, ranging from satisfactory to very good. The evidence of notes made from textbooks in students' files, however, indicates that much teaching is less good than this. The very good teaching maintains a brisk pace, is interestingly presented and demands that students do individual research and share their finding with others. Students from both consortium schools are equally involved and there are very good relationships between students and teacher. Students respond with interest, work hard and learn well. They complete an appropriate number of assessed tasks which are marked with helpful comments and numerical grades. Students know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. In lessons seen, where teaching is less good, it is insufficiently demanding of students. Relationships between students and their teachers in these lessons do not always encourage students to respond readily to questions. Students adopt a passive style of learning in which they are not able to learn from their mistakes. In some lessons there is an over-emphasis on the requirements of the examination at the expense of developing students' interest in the subject, or their understanding of processes involved.
- 249 Evidence in students' files shows that little work is set for assessment. Much of that which is set amounts mainly to a reordering of information from the text book, rather than responding to challenging questions that require thought and analysis. There are helpful comments on the assessed pieces of work, so students have some awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement. However, each of the three teachers uses a different form of assessment, and one does not use any grades, so students cannot easily compare their performance in different parts of the course. Students' files contain substantial amounts of, often very carefully presented notes, copied directly from the textbook. Students are interested in the subject and are very self-motivated. Much of the progress they make from this intrinsically unsatisfactory teaching method comes from their own initiative and commitment to do well.
- 250 Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. No scheme of work has been developed for AS and A-level courses and only the examination specification is available to guide teaching. There is no common policy on assessment. Communication between the two schools who are sharing the teaching is unsatisfactory. Students' concerns over the quality of teaching have not been resolved, and the schools have given the students different predicted grades for their A-level examinations.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was English literature. One lesson of media studies was sampled.

Students in Year 13 are achieving satisfactory standards in media studies. They show good levels of interest and are confident in their relationships with each other and their teachers. These factors, and their willingness to work hard, have led to good rates of progress and good levels of success at AS and A-level.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching and positive relationships between teachers and students encourage good achievement.
- Assessment of students' work and response to individual needs are excellent.
- Students contribute well to their learning.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion gaining grades A and B is too low.

251 Results in A-level examinations in recent years have been below national averages, particularly for the proportion gaining the higher grades, A and B. Standards are rising and in each of the last two years all students gained pass grades. Most students did better in this subject than in other subjects in which they were examined. Results of AS examinations in 2002 were too low, with few achieving the grades expected on the basis of earlier attainment. Retention rates have been good in recent years with most students completing their courses successfully.

252 Evidence from the inspection shows that standards in English Literature are in line with expectation. Students in Year 12 are confident in their relationships with teachers and each other. They work purposefully within groups, and as a full class, when exploring texts such as Ian McEwan's 'Enduring Love', and contribute well to discussion. They understand the need to make clear judgements and to support their ideas with evidence from the text. Standards of written work are generally good, although offset by faults of spelling and grammar in the work of some. Students benefit considerably from the provision of tutorial sessions. In these, students are helped by a teacher to evaluate work in progress. This results, for example, on identifying the need for a sharper focus on the question asked, and more concise expression.

253 Students in Year 13 also achieve average standards. Although not demonstrating the same levels of enthusiasm and confidence as Year 12, they have good knowledge and understanding of the texts being studied. They are experienced in annotation and highlighting. They recognise significant features of what they read and are often perceptive in commenting upon effects. Writing, particularly that of higher attaining students, is relevant, well-organised and leads to well-argued conclusions. The majority are able to arrive at personal judgements rather than repeating the views of others.

254 The quality of teaching is very good. It is sometimes excellent and is never less than good. Teachers have very good knowledge of the texts being studied. They are quick

to recognise problems being encountered by individuals and to suggest solutions. Teachers have very high expectations of students' effort and achievement. They plan lessons carefully, linking them to previous and future work and usually end with a review of what has been achieved. They conduct lessons at a challenging pace and require students to be active participants in their learning by contributing to discussion and arriving at judgements they can justify by reference to the text. They are skilful in using questions to test and also to develop understanding as well as to ensure full participation in discussion. They are quick to recognise students' successes and to offer praise and encouragement. Teachers have good understanding of how work is assessed in examinations and use this knowledge to reduce anxiety and identify appropriate means of preparation. The quality of learning matches the quality of teaching. There is evidence of good development of knowledge and understanding in lessons and in files of work. Students benefit from the positive relationships they enjoy with teachers and each other so that they grow in confidence. This is shown in their contributions to discussion and willingness to offer personal opinions.

- 255 Students work hard both within and outside lessons. They understand the importance of observing deadlines and manage their time effectively. Their positive attitudes raise levels of achievement so that they match or, more often, exceed expectation based upon the evidence of their earlier attainment. They make good use of information and communication technology, both for word processing and research.
- 256 The management of the course is good. The teaching is shared by a team of experienced and able teachers. They know their students well and recognise their different strengths and needs. There is good collaboration in evaluating and encouraging progress. Teachers build well upon the skills students have developed in earlier years and provide good preparation for any future study.