

# INSPECTION REPORT

**GEORGE DIXON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE**

Edgbaston

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103559

Headteacher: Sir Robert Dowling

Reporting inspector: John Ashton  
4492

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 January 2003

Inspection number: 252241

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:	Secondary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	City Road Edgbaston Birmingham
Postcode:	B17 8LF
Telephone number:	0121 434 4488
Fax number:	0121 434 3721
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Wright
Date of previous inspection:	20 – 22 November 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4492	John Ashton	Registered inspector	Biology	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
10361	Frank Evans	Sixth form co-ordinator	Religious education Drama	<p>How well is the sixth form led and managed?</p> <p>How well students are guided and supported</p>
9843	Sarah Drake	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> <p>Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development</p>
5910	Peter Fletcher	Team inspector	Mathematics	Numeracy Assessment
19056	Graham Leech	Team inspector	English	Literacy
20380	Neville Pinkney	Team inspector	Science Chemistry	Staffing

12885	John Hunt	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31129	Jeff Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design	Learning resources
32211	Brendan Geoghegan	Team inspector	Design and technology	Accommodation
31008	Pauline Rourke	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	
30794	Gillian Murray	Team inspector	History	
29178	John Connor	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages, French and Spanish	
20189	Jagat Nagra	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages, Urdu and Panjabi	
31660	Marianne Young	Team inspector	Music Citizenship	
30800	Betty Colley	Team inspector	Physical education	Careers and work experience
20081	Scott Fellows	Team inspector	English as an additional language Educational inclusion and race equality	
27082	Geoff Henshall	Team inspector	Business education	

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
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>8</b>
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	
<b>ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>17</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>	<b>85</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

George Dixon International School is an inner city, 11-18, mixed sex, comprehensive school in Birmingham. There are 950 pupils on roll, which is a 34 per cent increase in just the last two years. It draws pupils from much further afield than its immediate locality of Ladywood, largely from areas of severe social and economic disadvantage towards the city centre. Boys outnumber girls by a ratio of three to two. The pupils are from a very wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. At least half of them have English as an additional language, a proportion which is increasing almost daily. Well over 100 of these pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Twenty nine different languages are spoken by pupils at the school. Presently, the main home languages are Urdu, Panjabi, Somali, Farsi, French, Albanian, Arabic and Dutch. Many of these pupils are asylum seekers or refugees, most recently from Somalia, fairly recently from Eastern Europe (Kosovo), and earlier still from the Indian sub continent. Over 50 per cent of pupils, three times the national average, are eligible for free school meals. There are 135 pupils on the school's register for pupils with special educational needs, including ten in the sixth form. As a proportion of the school's roll this is at the national average, but is almost certainly an underestimate. This is because there are numerous pupils awaiting assessment as the school struggles to cope with such a large influx of new pupils, and also a large turnover of pupils. Twenty-two pupils, including two in the sixth form, have statements of special educational needs, a proportion that is a little above the national average. Increasing numbers of students, 130 at present, attend the widening range of sixth form courses.

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

George Dixon is a truly international, thoroughly multicultural school. This is both a strength and a challenge. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. Leadership is inspirational and, in consequence, the morale and also the expectations of all who work and study in the school are higher than they have been for many years. Attainment remains low because many pupils either have special educational needs or they are at an early stage in their mastery of English. The achievement of pupils, however, is better than might be expected, because the quality of teaching they receive is so good. The school gives satisfactory value for the funding it receives.

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

- Standards at the end of Year 9 are improving faster than standards nationally.
- In 2002, standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 were above average compared to schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school.
- The school's leadership and management are very good overall, that of the headteacher is outstanding.
- Pupils' and parents' attitudes to the school are very positive, and relationships are excellent.
- The monitoring and development of teaching, and the arrangements for recruiting and inducting new teachers, are very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for.
- The procedures for promoting good behaviour, and the resulting racial harmony it produces, are very good.
- The inclusiveness of the school is excellent. Every pupil is very well cared for and all are explicitly valued.

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

- GCSE standards compared to all schools nationally have fallen in the last three years and are now very low.
- Higher attaining pupils, including those who are gifted or talented, are not challenged sufficiently in some

subjects.

- Some aspects of the school's provision for pupils with English as an additional language need strengthening.
- The provision for music, and for information and communication technology across the curriculum, is weak.
- Some features of the accommodation are poor.
- One or two aspects of financial management need strengthening.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was removed from special measures in November 2000 since when it has made good improvement in the issues listed at that time. Sustained efforts have been made to improve pupils' progress and to raise their attainment, with more success so far in the national tests at the end of Year 9 than in the GCSE examinations in Year 11. The quality of teaching is much improved, the result of a wider range of teaching strategies, including varying tasks to meet the needs of most individual pupils. At the moment, however, the highest attaining pupils and those who are gifted or talented are not challenged enough. Systematic attention has been given to developing pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills. The teaching of mathematics in particular is much improved. The ethos of the school is much enhanced since the last inspection. Pupils' personal development is being helped a great deal by the much wider range of extra-curricular activities on offer, the better use of form tutor time and the much improved attitudes of students in the sixth form.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9, Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in national test results, GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
National test results	E*	E	E	B	well above average A
GCSE examinations	E	E*	E*	E	above average B
A-levels/AS-levels		E*	E*		average C
					below average D
					well below average E

Standards on entry to the school are very low in the core subjects English, mathematics and science, due in part to the influx of large numbers of pupils with little command of English and very varying educational histories. Nevertheless, the school's improvement in overall national test results by the end of Year 9 is faster than the national trend, although the standards are still well below average. When compared with the results for similar schools, the 2002 results are above average for mathematics and science, and average for English.

Overall GCSE results, on the other hand, have fallen recently against a rising national trend, and are amongst the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. When measured against similar schools these results are well below average in overall GCSE point scores, but broadly average in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving at least five grades A\*-C.

Average point scores for the very small numbers of sixth form students taking GCE A and AS levels remain very low, and moderate for most of those taking GNVQ courses. The school adds value to pupils' initial attainment throughout the school. Pupils were found to be achieving, against the odds, better than might be expected from their starting points in many subjects. The school fell short of its

targets for overall GCSE results in 2002. High rates of pupil mobility are just one of the reasons for this.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Parents and pupils are very positive about the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally very good. Pupils respond well to reminders to behave and can be trusted to conduct themselves sensibly even when not directly supervised.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good and relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is above average in Years 7 to 11, but unsatisfactory in Years 12 and 13.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Years 7 – 9</b>	<b>Years 10 – 11</b>	<b>Years 12 – 13</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good, including in all three of the core subjects, English, mathematics and science. The result of the good teaching is good quality learning overall, but slightly less so than the teaching. The reasons for this include the language difficulties of some of those students who are relatively new to English.

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in almost all of the 199 lessons inspected. In seven out of ten lessons seen it was at least good and in one fifth of lessons it was very good. Teaching in two lessons was excellent. No examples of poor or very poor teaching were seen.

Teaching that was at least good was seen in virtually every single subject. A reasonable proportion of very good teaching was seen in most subjects, but especially in: English, geography, history, Panjabi, religious education in Years 7 to 9, and in English, science, art, information and communication technology (ICT), and religious education in Years 10 and 11. All of this is a distinct improvement on previous inspections and is due to the school's major drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

The skills of literacy are taught well. There is also an increasing stress on the teaching of numeracy in subjects across the curriculum, the quality of which is satisfactory overall.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good throughout the rest of the school. There are some weaknesses in music and in the use of ICT in other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. They have access to the same curriculum as their fellow pupils, and are supported well in class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall, but with areas for improvement. It is best when the additional language support concentrates upon the topic pupils would have been covering in class, rather than teaching grammar in isolation.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent, and one of the major reasons why this school, which receives new pupils on a weekly basis, many of whom are also new to the country, operates as an exceptionally harmonious, vibrant and self-disciplined community in which happiness, mutual respect and acceptance are the norm.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All pupils are well cared for and safe in the school. Procedures for assessing their progress in subject areas are currently being strengthened.

The partnership with parents is good and plays a positive part in ensuring that pupils benefit as much as possible from the educational opportunities provided by the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good, overall. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Pastoral leadership is very strong. The leadership and management of curriculum areas are effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They support the school well through their regular meetings and the work of their committees.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance effectively against all the relevant criteria.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are deployed well and focused upon the school's priorities for improvement.

The school's overall staffing provision is good. Learning resources have improved since the last inspection, are now satisfactory overall and in some respects are good. Accommodation is satisfactory overall with some unsatisfactory aspects. The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value, in for example, comparing its performance with other schools, and researching the wisdom of buying a new language teaching laboratory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
Their children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• like school;</li><li>• are taught well and are expected to work hard;</li><li>• are being helped to become more mature and responsible;</li><li>• Parents also feel that staff, particularly the headteacher, are always willing to speak with them and help to resolve any difficulties.</li></ul>	Some parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think the school could offer more extra-curricular activities.</li></ul>

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive comments, but also note that the school now offers a wider range of extra-curricular provision than is usual in most schools. The poor sports facilities, however, restrict many sporting activities.

## **ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM**

## **GEORGE DIXON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The sixth form of this 11-18 comprehensive school has 130 students on roll. Overall there are more male than female students, with 30 students in Year 13 and 100 students in Year 12. As the number of students following GCE A and AS-level courses declined significantly in recent years, the school has radically changed the courses now on offer. In Year 12, for the first time this year, a good proportion of the students follow the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) programme or a range of vocational courses. In this way the school seeks to offer an imaginative range of relevant and creditable opportunities for learning to students, who enter the sixth form with a wide range of prior attainment. The students in the sixth form represent a rich diversity of ethnic and faith communities. A further substantial proportion of overseas students, approximately one fifth of the present Year 12, joined the school in September 2002.

### **HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

The sixth form is effective in meeting the needs of students. Its cost effectiveness is satisfactory. Although many students enter the sixth form with lower levels of attainment than is usual, their achievement is good. This is reflected in two ways. In the school records, which show increasing numbers of students continuing on to higher education courses and in the achievement of the present students and the popularity of the IB programme. The leadership and management of the sixth form are purposeful and rigorous.

#### **Strengths**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The curriculum in Year 12 is increasingly relevant to students' needs and, through the International Baccalaureate Diploma initiative and the GNVQ courses, provides each student with an appropriate pathway to learning and an opportunity to gain accreditation.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning. They particularly like the IB programme.
- The ethos in the sixth form reflects that of the school and encourages the students, who feel valued and supported, to thrive in an atmosphere of harmony and mutual respect.
- The quality of the pastoral and academic support is good.
- Resources and facilities for ICT are much improved.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Procedures for assessment and monitoring of attainment and progress are much more rigorous than they used to be.
- Students have a mature outlook because the school has helped them to gain confidence and grow in self-esteem. They want to make the most of the opportunities the school now offers them.
- There is a rich ethnic diversity in the school and in the sixth form, which is valued highly by the students.

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

- Attendance in the sixth form is unsatisfactory.
- Students are not yet sufficiently independent learners.
- Religious education, a legal requirement, is not completely satisfactory in the sixth form.

*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	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is good teaching from enthusiastic and caring teachers. Students are hard working and make good progress. The wide range of courses on offer meets the varying needs of students. There has been limited success in external examinations in recent years. The use of ICT is not yet developed fully.
Biology	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is good, with corresponding effects upon students' learning. Students have very positive attitudes to their work and are developing well their ability to plan and work together on practical projects, as part of the new International Baccalaureate (IB) course. They are just beginning to make effective use of ICT. The subject is well co-ordinated. Success in external examinations has been moderate in recent years.
Chemistry	<b>Good.</b> Students are enthusiastic about the IB course, which is relevant to their learning needs. Individual learning skills are developing well but students do not yet have full support materials for the new course. Numbers of students taking external examinations have been small in recent years and results have generally been in line with GCSE performance.
Business	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is good and supports the wide range of attainment of the students. Students enjoy the subject. The IB course has improved the numbers of students following courses in the subject. Results in external examinations have been moderate with small numbers of students. Students on the IB course are making progress. Frequent use is made of ICT both in learning and in presentation of work.
ICT	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is good and students have very positive attitudes to the subject. The attainment of most students following various courses in the subject is below average but their achievement is better than expected. Good quality computer resources support learning well. In external examinations, most students achieve pass grades. Leadership of the subject is good.
Art	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching and learning are satisfactory and students are making satisfactory progress. Relationships are good. Students enjoy the course and work hard although they are sometimes too reliant on the teacher. Results in the external examinations in recent years have been moderate overall but a few students have gained higher grades. Leadership of the subject is good.
English	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and delivered energetically. Students have positive attitudes to the subject and enjoy contributing in lessons. They have good word processing skills. Students on the new IB course work well but are sometimes too dependent on the teacher's input. In recent years, small numbers have been entered for external examinations and the results have been in the lower grades. Leadership of the subject is very good.

French	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching is satisfactory. Students are committed to the IB course and work hard in lessons. There are good opportunities for students to use information and communication technology to help them in their work. Assessment procedures are developing as staff become more familiar with the requirements of the course specification.
Spanish	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Students are studying Spanish for the first time as part of their IB programme and are making progress. Teaching is good and the students are consolidating their growing language skills. Students are enthusiastic and appreciate the support offered by the teachers.

Work in some other subjects was sampled. This included a lesson in each of IB design and technology (where the teaching and learning were satisfactory), GNVQ health and social care (good), Panjabi AS level (very good) and an English class for those students for whom it is an additional language, where the teaching was excellent. Scrutiny of pupils' work in psychology showed evidence of the students having been well taught and achieving well.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
How well students are guided and supported	Students are very well guided and supported. Personal relationships between staff and students are excellent. Good advice on courses or opportunities for higher education is readily available. Students value this advice highly. The form tutors have the confidence and support of the students.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The leadership and management of the sixth form are good, and are purposefully and rigorously raising students' aspirations. There is a more sophisticated use of assessment, monitoring and target setting to promote higher achievement. Form tutors and sixth form managers work hard to develop students' self confidence and build on their maturity and good will. Consequently, the atmosphere in the sixth form is one of joy, optimism and work.

## 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"> <li>• The headteacher.</li> <li>• The ethnic diversity of the school creates a sense of unity and harmony.</li> <li>• The teaching and the support of the staff.</li> <li>• The warm, friendly and helpful atmosphere.</li> <li>• Excellent computer facilities, especially being able to borrow laptops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The canteen facilities.</li> <li>• The gymnasium.</li> </ul>

The strengths identified by the students are well founded. The headteacher is known to all of them and he, in turn, knows them and their parents well. He listens to them and consults them. They hold him in great respect. The atmosphere in this very inclusive multi-cultural sixth form is harmonious, optimistic and happy. The canteen facilities are in need of refurbishment and this is in hand.

## 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. The strong indications are that standards on entry to the school are very low overall. Judgements to this effect are not helped by the difficulties of assessing the attainment of a large proportion of the pupil intake. This is because many of the pupils have special educational needs and / or are new to the country. They did not arrive at the beginning of a school year, or into Year 7, the normal year to begin a secondary school, and they have poor command of English. The school consequently administers its own tests, but finds this difficult because of the sheer numbers of pupils involved and the very wide range of country of origin and educational background.
2. At the end of Year 9 in 2002, the average point scores in the national tests were well below national averages for all three of the core subjects, English, mathematics and science. Results in these end of Year 9 tests have, however, risen faster than the national trend of increasing results in recent years. For example, both the 1999 and 2000 results were amongst the bottom 5 per cent of schools in the country. To have risen to 'well below average' in 2001 and 2003 is a positive achievement. When compared with the results for similar schools (those with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals) the 2002 results were above average for mathematics and science, and average for English. The 2002 tables of value-added achievement at the end of Year 9 give George Dixon School a score of 98.6 which is just outside the range described by the Department for Education and Skills as 'broadly average'. Compared to similar schools the score is above average.
3. Girls and boys usually perform equally well at this stage, but not in every subject and not always when national differences for boys and girls in England are taken into account. In almost every other subject, teachers' assessments of standards in 2002, by the end of Year 9, are at least below and, in most cases, well below average. Generally in lessons seen, and in pupils' written and practical work in Year 9, standards matched the national test results and teacher assessments.
4. Overall the school's GCSE results in Year 11 rose between 1998 and 2000 but they dropped again since then compared with rising national trend. This was mainly because of the influx of large numbers of pupils with English as an additional language. For the past two years (2001 and 2002) the average GCSE point scores have been in the bottom five per cent of all schools in the country. Both girls' and boys' overall results were very low compared to the national average. Even when compared to schools with similar measures of disadvantage the average GCSE point scores are well below average. On the other hand, the proportion of five A\* to C grades match the average. An important fact here is that the proportion of pupils achieving no GCSE grade (25 per cent) is very high, reflecting the numbers of pupils deemed not ready for assessment, because they are so new to the school, or the country.
5. There are several reasons, therefore, for this difference between overall results at the ends of Years 9 and 11, especially in the light of such a recent improvement in the quality of teaching in the school. The turnover of pupils in this school is much higher than average. For instance, so many pupils were admitted in the term preceding the inspection that a completely new timetable had to be constructed to begin just one week before the inspection began in January. This is the second such timetable revision already this academic year. More pupils start from a lower or completely different educational base in this school than is usual elsewhere. Another 60 pupils from a very wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and countries were due to be

admitted in the week following the inspection. The influx of pupils into the middle and senior years, rather than into Year 7 is greater than that usually found elsewhere. For example, 46 new pupils were admitted to the present Year 10 in September 2002 and others were admitted since then. Of the 170 pupils currently in Year 10, only 30 per cent of them began the school in Year 7. Many of this continual stream of newcomers have poor command of English. Added to this, some pupils were entered for the GCSE examinations one year later after they had time to catch up, but their success was then not counted to the credit of the school because they were in the wrong age group.

6. Standards in listening are generally at least satisfactory. Standards in speaking are below national expectations, partly because of pupils' low levels of prior attainment on entry and partly because English is an additional language for so many. Pupils generally listen well in most subjects, though they are more focused in modern foreign languages as a result of the planned activities in lessons. They follow instructions with little need for repetition, if given with clarity and a suitable choice of vocabulary. Generally they are polite and attentive to their classmates. They respond co-operatively to questions in most lessons, and are often eager to volunteer. Higher-attaining pupils can engage in dialogue but many contributions are relatively brief. Pupils can use the technical vocabulary of subjects, as a consequence of constant emphasis.
7. The standard of pupils' reading is generally well below national expectations, as a consequence of low levels of prior attainment or lack of familiarity with English. They access satisfactorily the reading content of subjects across the curriculum because of the help given, in many cases, by the provision of modified texts and suitably adapted worksheets. They have opportunities for reading aloud in a number of subjects and are quite willing to do so. Only a minority, however, does so with confidence, fluency and expression.
8. The standard of pupils' writing is generally well below national expectations. Pupils write for a suitable range of purposes and make steady progress towards the extended writing required in many subjects in Years 10 and 11. Good use is made of structured writing guides to assist pupils, particularly those of low levels of prior attainment, to organise their writing. The process of drafting and revising coursework pieces enables pupils to improve their fluency and accuracy, although grammar, spelling and punctuation are often insecure. Handwriting and presentation are generally satisfactory, however.
9. Standards of numeracy are overall well below average. Pupils' numeracy attainment is low on entry. Many pupils have difficulties with numeracy, and often have to work out number facts that they should be able to recall. They are not yet able to discuss strategies for calculating or to use known results to deduce unfamiliar ones. Progress in subjects other than mathematics is not generally limited by poor numeracy skills since work in these subjects does not usually demand high levels of computation or number awareness. Some pupils have difficulty with measuring in physical education, and in interpreting graphs in science. In business studies, pupils are not confident in creating charts and graphs to make comparisons or recognising when the computer carries out the wrong calculation.
10. It may be surprising in the light of comments above to note that pupils' achievement is judged to be good in most subjects and with one exception, satisfactory in the rest between Years 7 and 9. In other words, their achievement was found to be better than might reasonably be expected from their starting points in English, science, citizenship, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, physical education, religious education and Panjabi. The good quality of teaching, high expectations, good support systems and excellent leadership in the school are responsible for this good achievement. The one exception is music, because the school is between music teachers and this subject has not been on offer in Years 7 to 9.

Pupils' achievement was found to be as expected between Years 7 and 9 in mathematics, art, French, Spanish, Urdu and drama.

11. For similar reasons, pupils' overall achievement between the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 was found to be at least as expected in every subject except music, despite the relative fall in overall age related GCSE point scores over the last three years. Pupils were found to be achieving, against the odds, better than might be expected from their starting points in some subjects, for instance in English, science, art, citizenship, design and technology, geography, ICT, religious education and business education.
12. In work seen during the inspection the achievement of pupils with special educational needs in Years 7 to 9 was at least satisfactory in all subjects and good in most. There is evidence of under-achievement by gifted or talented pupils in English and science in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002. Nearly one fifth of pupils attained level 6 or above in mathematics while less than half that proportion attained at that level in English and science. In most subjects, in work seen during the inspection, gifted or talented pupils in these years are not being sufficiently stretched.
13. At the end of Year 11 in 2002 the proportion of pupils with special educational needs who gained one or more GCSE qualifications was in line with the school's expectations. A further ten other pupils with special educational needs gained vocational qualifications through an arrangement with the local College of Further Education. In work seen during the inspection the achievement of pupils with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11 was at least satisfactory in all subjects and good in most. There is sound anecdotal evidence of pupils who have failed in other schools achieving well in their comparatively short time in this school.
14. The attainment of gifted or talented pupils at the end of Year 11 in 2002 was good in the community modern languages, Panjabi and Urdu, as over one third of pupils entered gained grades A\* to B. Attainment was satisfactory in mathematics as over one tenth who were entered gained grades A or B and in religious education as one sixth of those entered gained grade B. In all other subjects, gifted or talented pupils did not attain as well as they could for very few pupils attained these higher grades. Overall a higher proportion of girls attained higher grades than boys. Work seen during the inspection indicated that gifted or talented pupils were not being stretched as well as they might be in some subjects.
15. Pupils who have English as an Additional Language make good progress overall. In Years 7 to 9 their rate of progress is good and on a par with other pupils, with good examples being seen in English, science and ICT. There are signs in work seen that progress slows in some groups in Year 10, where lesson content may be less demanding or, on occasion, inappropriate. Analysis of the relative progress of different ethnic groups is hampered by the rapidly changing ethnic composition of the school, and the changes in the ethnicity groupings. When this analysis was last carried out, in December 2001, Indian and Sri Lankan heritage pupils were the largest groups of pupils in Year 11 and had the highest average GCSE point score (26.7). The numbers of pupils of Pakistani origin were increasing (average score 26.6) and Jamaican / Trinidadian pupils had an average score of 23.5. Girls overall were outperforming boys. The ethnic composition of the school is now different and still changing rapidly. More and more pupils are from the Caribbean countries, from Somalia and other African countries and from Kosovo. The rate of increase and the high turnover rate makes it very difficult to draw out any meaningful differences which would not be complicated by the varying degrees of command of English.

16. The school fell short of its GCSE performance targets for 2002 because these were based on the prior attainment of the students then on roll. The targets are set two years in advance and were not met because of the increase in numbers joining the school into Years 10 and 11. The school's targets for 2003 are lower and more realistic, reflecting the further increase in numbers of pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs being admitted to the school and the high pupil turnover rate.

### **Sixth form**

17. The standards achieved by students in the sixth form are very low by national standards. Numbers of students following sixth form courses at GCE AS or A2 levels are small and have been so for some years. There are 30 students in Year 13. A small group follow A-level courses, the remaining students following various vocational programmes, but few students in recent years have achieved more than moderate pass grades, except in Panjabi and Urdu where grades have been high.
18. The average points score of students who took two or more A level examinations in 2001 was 8.1, which is well below the national figure of 17.5 except that ever- decreasing numbers of students now follow A-level courses (16 students in 1999; 12 in 2000; 6 in 2001; and 5 students in 2002). The five students taking A level examinations in 2002 had an average GCSE point score per pupil of 36.1, which represents a lower starting point for advanced level studies than is usual.
19. The present Year 12 is much larger than Year 13. In both years there are more males than females. In the last three years the number of pupils pursuing sixth form courses at the school has increased from 42 in 1999, to 50 in 2001, and then to 130 in this academic year. A significant factor, however, is that over half of these students have arrived in the country within two years of joining Year 12. Many of these students who come from overseas have experienced educational systems very different to that in the United Kingdom. Additionally, many of those who joined the school in Years 10 and 11 had significant English language difficulties. However, although there are some students in the sixth form for whom English is an additional language, by Year 12, most students have a sufficient command of English to be able to cope, and indeed, to thrive. English as an additional language students make good progress in the sixth form.
20. The introduction of the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme (IB) in Year 12 is the school's well considered response to the particular educational challenges it faces. The IB programme offers a clear and relevant pathway to accredited learning for students at George Dixon. A significant proportion of this year's Year 12 students follow the IB Diploma programme. Other students follow GNVQ, AVCE or ASDAN courses. This wide range of courses reflects the school's determination to offer a sixth form education that responds to the particular learning needs of students who enter the sixth form.
21. The present Year 12 students, the first cohort following the IB Programme, have a wide range of prior attainment and are adjusting well to the demands of the course. Inspectors report an increased take up in many subjects. At this early stage in the course, students are meeting the requirements of the IB programme and are persevering with their studies. The course is popular with students and they are working hard.
22. However, the overall attainment of students is affected by their below average attendance levels.

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

23. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school, high standards of behaviour and they form exceptionally good relationships with their peers and staff members, all of which contribute to the creation of a welcoming environment in which good quality learning can take place. Through responding very positively to the opportunities that the school provides for them to grow in self-confidence, all aspects of pupils' personal development have improved since the previous inspection. This is all the more impressive when remembering that the number of pupils has grown significantly in the past two years and that for many of the new-comers, this is their first experience of living and learning in Britain. The headteacher and other staff are fully justified in the pride that they express about their pupils.
24. Pupils are well-motivated, paying good attention in lessons, trying their best, offering answers and getting involved in discussions. They generally show pride in their work and achievements and are happy to discuss them with others. On occasion, some pupils, particularly younger ones, are too ready to chatter when they should be listening and, at other times, some pupils act as receivers rather than active learners. Overall, however, they are keen to take part in activities, to work quietly and sensibly and generally help to create a relaxed yet business-like atmosphere in the classroom. They make good use of opportunities available outside lessons. For instance, as soon as the library is opened at 7.30 in the morning, pupils are there, working at the computers, while at lunchtimes they can, again, be found in the library or in deep concentration over a game of draughts or playing energetic games of table-tennis in the hall.
25. Behaviour in lessons and around the sprawling site is very good. Pupils respond very well to reminders to behave and can be trusted to conduct themselves sensibly even when not directly supervised. They are very courteous, for instance moving to one side on the narrow pathway between buildings, and wait most patiently for their turn in the queue for lunch or to pass through a doorway. Most pupils have a deep religious sense which means that they behave in a calm, respectful manner in assemblies. They treat resources with respect so that there is no evidence of graffiti or vandalism around the buildings. A few pupils do, inevitably, behave badly on occasion but it is well-known that the school will not tolerate violence of any sort and staff are consistently vigilant in their questioning of minor transgressions which means that, usually, small incidents remain just that. The number of exclusions is low compared with schools of a similar size and type. Of the one permanent and sixteen fixed period exclusions in the last school year, almost all relating to violent incidents, only two pupils were excluded on more than one occasion, indicating that the action taken was highly effective.
26. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and make a major contribution to the special atmosphere found at the heart of George Dixon International. It is a school characterised by smiles and acknowledgement of others. Pupils of different ethnicity, age groups and capability mix with each other very well, demonstrating an appreciation of each others' skills plus an exceptional sensitivity to their needs. Pupils, staff and parents all say that bullying is very rare. In lessons, pupils share ideas, listen to what others think, collaborate over tasks and willingly help each other particularly, for instance, if another pupil is encountering difficulty in understanding exactly what is required due to their limited knowledge of English. Pupils are skilled at understanding the fine line between relaxed friendship with their teachers and showing them respect. They will, for instance, warmly greet and joke with the headteacher as he moves around the school but will also make sure that, before they do so, they remove any offending item of clothing. They have a dignity and self-confidence which allows them to see beyond their own needs and to, for example, gently point out to an inspector that he is looking at the wrong page in the text book. They understand what it means to be responsible young people and are very willing to contribute to their community.

27. Pupils' attendance at school has risen consistently over recent years and, although it was well below the national average in the most recent academic year, it is now good. In the term just past (Autumn 2002), the attendance of all groups between Years 7 and 11 was above ninety-one percent and the average for the term, at over ninety-two percent, was well above the national average. Almost one quarter of pupils in these year groups attended for ninety-nine percent or more of possible time while less than a quarter had attendance below ninety percent. This is unusual and the result of much hard work on the part of the school. Pupils' punctuality in arriving at lessons is less good with some taking an excessive amount of time to move between rooms, even allowing for the difficulties caused by the split site.
28. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Although some are recorded as having behavioural problems, these are rarely evident in lessons. If minor, very occasional, misbehaviour occurs it is well managed by staff. Pupils with special educational needs are as enthusiastic in their attitudes to learning as other pupils. They concentrate well in lessons and try hard to complete their work, seeking assistance when they need it from teachers and teaching assistants. They participate fully in question and answer sessions in most lessons.
29. Pupils who have English as an Additional Language work collaboratively with their peers. Their behaviour is very good and they are keen to learn and make progress. They show respect for their teachers and each other.

### **Sixth form**

30. The very good attitudes demonstrated by younger pupils extend to the sixth form students. The great majority of those who returned the questionnaire, and all those spoken with during the inspection, were positive about what the school has to offer them and would recommend it to their friends. They appreciate the accessibility of their teachers, the support provided to help them settle and work independently, and that their work is thoroughly assessed. In lessons, students sustain their concentration well and, especially those who are studying for the International Baccalaureate, find the work enjoyable and interesting. They behave well and are diligent in continuing their studies outside formal lesson time although a few show lack of self-confidence and not enough personal drive. The development of students' study skills is, rightly, a school focus for this year, to ensure that they conduct more independent research and take greater responsibility for their own learning than many do at present. Senior students are proud to have been chosen as role models for others and are both happy and competent to take on responsibilities, such as helping to sort out problems on the buses or leading the school council. The Macmillan coffee morning event, organised by Year 12 students in the autumn term, was a great success. As elsewhere in the school, the very good quality of relationships among students and between students and staff, makes a big contribution to the quality of the learning environment.
31. Attendance in the sixth form is unsatisfactory and considerably below that elsewhere in the school. At eighty-one percent it is better in Year 12 than Year 13, but more than a quarter of sixth formers have the equivalent of one day's absence a week away from school. The main reason for this is not inertia, it is that some students need to work because they do not qualify for an educational maintenance grant and have to support themselves through the sixth form. This has a big impact on the progress they can make in their learning and the standards they achieve, despite their keenness, shown by their attempts to catch up missing work at lunchtimes and after school.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

32. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and much improved since the last inspection. The subsequent quality of learning is also good overall, but slightly less so than the teaching. Passiveness in the case of some pupils is sometimes the reason for this, but more often it is due to language difficulties in the case of some of those students who are relatively new to English. The `passiveness` is often cultural, the result of experience of educational systems elsewhere in which teaching is more didactic than in the English system, and pupils are not used to student-centred learning which expects more active participation.
33. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in almost all of the 199 lessons inspected. In seven out of ten lessons seen it was at least good and in one fifth of lessons it was very good. Teaching in two lessons (one in English with Year 12 pupils with English as an additional language and the other in a Year 7 science class) was excellent. In only one case, an isolated example of an inexperienced teacher failing to prevent some lively pupil behaviour hindering the learning of others, was there any teaching that was unsatisfactory. No examples of poor or very poor teaching were seen.
34. Teaching that was good or better was seen in virtually every subject. A reasonable proportion of very good teaching was seen in most subjects, but especially in English, geography, history, Panjabi, religious education in Years 7 to 9, and in English, science, art, ICT, and religious education in Years 10 and 11. All of this is a distinct improvement on previous inspections and is due to the school's major drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
35. The better teaching seen, which is promoting the better learning, is memorable for many things. For instance:
- The well-planned lessons in English, with a variety of activities which stimulate pupils and maintain their interest;
  - Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and keep the lessons moving along well in drama;
  - The good plenary sessions in mathematics, as well as the use of number cards and fans, to give everyone an opportunity to respond to questions;
  - The well paced lessons in science where pupils are well managed in group activities and during practical sessions;
  - The energetic, knowledgeable classroom assistants providing very good support for pupils in, for example, art and drama;
  - Pupils are encouraged to use their own personal knowledge of different cultures to contribute to discussions in the citizenship parts of personal, health and moral education lessons;
  - The good subject knowledge of design and technology teachers is used well to support pupils in design and make activities;
  - Geography teachers, especially, are very careful to ensure that pupils who have English as an additional language understand what they are taught and take opportunities to reinforce the learning of English as well as geography;
  - Pupils in history learn always to support opinions with evidence;
  - Group work during ICT lessons is frequently supported by good quality handouts provided for the pupils;
  - In French and Spanish lessons, teachers make the most of opportunities to speak the foreign language, often using it for routine purposes as well as for practice;
  - The teachers of Urdu and Panjabi are native speakers and have a good knowledge of their subjects;
  - There is a good range of extra-curricular groups which enable many pupils to enjoy music making, despite the lack of formal music lessons;

- Teachers in physical education try to encourage pupils to become good citizens by insisting on sportsmanlike behaviour;
  - Religious education in this school takes into account the diverse religious beliefs of the pupils, encouraging them to learn from and to respect each other in a tolerant, thoughtful and courteous atmosphere;
  - All members of the business departmental team are specialists with a detailed knowledge of the various aspects of their subject.
36. The teaching and subsequent learning in some lessons, whilst satisfactory overall, had one or more shortcomings which the school should take account of in planning future sessions of its already good programme of in-service training for teachers. For instance:
- The teaching in some English lessons is less effective than it might be because it lacks pace and energy and does not engage pupils sufficiently;
  - In some drama lessons, teachers do not intervene purposefully enough to shape the emerging drama;
  - The use of ICT in the teaching and learning of science and a number of other subjects, is very under-developed;
  - Homework sometimes fails to challenge the higher attaining pupils in art, and it is not yet used effectively within design and technology to extend learning;
  - There is an over-reliance on printed worksheets in personal, health and moral education and citizenship sessions;
  - Insufficient extended and independent writing is expected of pupils in many subjects, including geography;
  - In some subjects, higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted or talented are not given difficult enough work to make the progress of which they are capable;
  - In many subjects, including ICT, pupils arrive late to several classes, the result of having to walk from one teaching block to another between the lessons, and doing so more slowly than is helpful;
  - Areas for improvement in physical education lessons are not sufficiently highlighted by teachers for pupils in practical and theory work.
37. The skills of literacy are taught well. Pupils enter the school with standards of literacy which are well below national expectations. The need to develop those standards to meet the literacy demands of the whole curriculum is recognised in a school policy. Departmental schemes of work feature literacy development and there are many examples of good practice, informed by staff in-service training. The English department has revised its scheme of work to accommodate the new literacy strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and oracy, reading and writing are integral to the programme of study. Subjects display and emphasise the use of key words. In a number of subjects, structured sentence frameworks are used to help pupils to organise their writing. There are opportunities for reading aloud in many lessons. Good use is made of question and answer strategies and many teachers require pupils to respond in sentences. Teachers are generally very sympathetic to and supportive of pupils with language difficulties, and are patient and painstaking in their presentations.
38. There is an increasing stress on the teaching of numeracy in subjects across the curriculum, the quality of which is satisfactory overall. The mathematics department is committed to improving standards of numeracy and is adopting ideas from the Key Stage 3 National Strategy. There has been improved liaison with primary schools. Lesson plans based on the National Framework objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and the three-part structure is widely used. Plenary sessions are used well to review the lesson content and to check understanding. Introductory sessions are not brisk enough to give a wide range of mental activity in a short time and to make sure that all pupils participate, although in some

classes simple number equipment makes it possible for all pupils to respond. The teaching of numeracy in other subjects includes, for example, discussion of the process of calculation in business education before using the computer to carry out calculations using spreadsheets. In geography, pupils are encouraged to try calculations without resort to the calculators. In physical education, pupils measure distances when setting up equipment, and in fitness activities they calculate effort, display results using pie charts and use stop watches. In design and technology and science, pupils measure length, weight and time, and display and analyse data. In geography, pupils use co-ordinates, scales and graphical display. In media studies and history pupils encounter timelines and data analysis. Work in ICT includes arithmetical and algebraic work with formulae in spreadsheets and databases. Art includes scaling and pattern. Pupils in modern foreign languages calculate restaurant bills, identify dates and make good use of the 24-hour clock.

39. On the other hand, the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is too variable from subject to subject, and is unsatisfactory overall. In Business education it is very good and in English, French and Spanish it is good. Pupils have good access to resources in these subjects and make planned and effective use of them to support various aspects of their work. There is much less use in a number of other subjects. For example, the limited use in science and the lack of data-logging work means that the statutory requirements for this aspect are not currently being met. Although mathematics is increasing its use of ICT, it also remains limited. Good use of graphic calculators is, however, made in this subject. There is only very limited use of ICT in art during Years 7 to 9 and as a result the statutory requirements for this subject are not currently being met. There is no use of ICT in the community languages Panjabi and Urdu. The school is aware of the limited use of information and communication technology in a number of subjects and plans to use the European Computer Driving Licence qualification to raise staff expertise and confidence.
40. Pupils who have English as an additional language have satisfactory or good learning opportunities in nearly all lessons seen. They benefit from the additional English teaching groups where work done is linked to subject work done elsewhere and taught using correct methodology, though this is not the case in all groups seen. Support staff who work with these pupils are committed and hard working. The best practice seen minimises the use of grammar exercises out of context and maximises the stress on using as the context work being done in other classes.
41. Pupils with special educational needs are taught by subject specialists in ability related sets and experience the same good quality of teaching as other pupils. In many classes there are teaching assistants who support pupils' learning very well. Teachers plan the work of the assistants, and their particular role, in advance of the lessons. Directions are given in writing so that the assistants are clear as to what is expected of them and can give very effective support to a large number of pupils. As their role is that of teaching assistant, and few are nominated to work with individual pupils, they work with any pupil in a lesson who needs assistance and avoid particularly identifying pupils with learning or language difficulties.
42. Gifted or talented pupils do not learn as well as they could. Teachers know which pupils are on their subject's register for gifted or talented pupils and refer to them in their lesson planning. However in practice they are rarely provided with more challenging work than the rest of the class. They often complete their work within the allocated time, then sit with little to do while the teacher checks, with the whole class, work that they have already completed correctly. Extension or enrichment activities are not well used.

## **Sixth form**

43. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. It is never less than satisfactory in the lessons seen. In three-quarters of the lessons it is at least good and in one in six lessons it is very good, occasionally excellent.
44. The quality of teaching was excellent in one English lesson for students for whom English is an additional language. The students' learning was very much better than expected because the teacher adopted very clear learning strategies, had a good knowledge of language acquisition and knew how to promote very effective learning.
45. In general, teachers in the sixth form have secure knowledge of their subjects and very good relationships with their students. They clearly understand their students' learning needs and plan and structure their lessons well. This, together with the students' very positive attitudes to their work promotes better than expected learning. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the specification of the IB programme and are ensuring that at this early stage in the Diploma course, students are making good progress. In Business Education, students are developing independent research skills. However, these skills are not yet being fully developed in other subjects.

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

46. The curriculum is good overall. It is designed to meet the needs of the very wide range of pupils recruited to the school. These include pupils with special educational needs, a high proportion with English as an additional language and the gifted or talented. There is a particular need for the provision to take account of the very high proportion of pupils that join the school after the start of Year 7. An increasing range of learning opportunities, including a number of vocational courses, is available as the pupils progress through the school. The extent to which the curriculum is successful in meeting the diverse needs of the pupils is a particularly notable feature.
47. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. The quality and range of learning opportunities are generally satisfactory. Subjects and the time allocation given to these are generally at the average levels for secondary schools. Particularly distinctive features of the provision at this stage are the options provided for those pupils with English as an additional language and for those with poor literacy skills. A lack of specialist staff means that the school does not make any provision for music during Years 7 to 9. Statutory requirements for aspects of the curriculum for ICT are not fulfilled and although acts of collective worship do take place, this is not on every day.
48. The curriculum during Years 10 and 11 is good. It is designed to meet the needs of individual pupil groups. Options allow pupils to take varying numbers of GCSEs and an increasing range of vocational programmes is being introduced. Applied GCSEs in ICT and business now operate in Year 10. General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) in ICT, business and in health and social care are offered in Year 11. Ten pupils spend one day per week outside of the school undertaking a work-related curriculum leading to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). The ASDAN alternative curriculum programme is also followed by a number of pupils at this stage. A lack of specialist staff means that music is not available during Year 10, and severe competition from the new vocational courses has meant that history has no takers as a GCSE option during either Year 10 or Year 11. The school continues to provide a specific option for those pupils with English as an additional language. However, this

arrangement means that pupils wishing to follow a double science option can only do so by attending classes which take place after school. Statutory requirements for ICT are not fully met at this stage either, and again a collective act of worship is not always provided on a daily basis.

49. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities in the school, including substantial opportunities for additional study support. These mainly take place at lunch time but some also operate after school or on Saturday mornings. Additional payment can be made to staff to enable them to undertake some of these activities. There is a good range of visits and trips undertaken by both staff and pupils including those overseas. Cultural issues mean that occasionally there are difficulties for Asian girls being allowed to travel to and attend events taking place outside of the school. Additionally, some pupils have difficulties in meeting the costs involved with some visits and trips. There is an increasing number of sporting activities and a drama club has recently mounted a successful production. The school choir is extensively involved in the community through links with a local church and performances at a variety of venues throughout the city. Too limited a range of extra-curricular activities was a key issue at the time of the last inspection in 2000. Activities available have since been significantly extended. Also there is now much improved use of form tutor time.
50. Links with outside organisations are good. Although there are no specific primary schools from which large numbers of pupils join the school there are developing links with a number of schools. Some primary schools arrange visits to the school and subject links particularly for ICT are strong. The school has good links with a range of community organisations. English language classes have been operated for parents in the school. Additionally a family literacy project involved some parents working with pupils in the school. A graduate-training scheme has led to good links with the University of Wolverhampton. The school also works closely with six other local schools as part of a collegiate arrangement.
51. Pupils' knowledge and skills are being satisfactorily developed by the school's well co-ordinated programme of personal, health and moral education programme, which is making good use of the form tutor times at the beginning of those days when pupils are not in assemblies. This area is well monitored by heads of year and regularly reviewed at Pastoral meetings. It includes an effective programme of sex and drugs education. This involves, for instance, work in single sex and mixed groups, sex education conferences with other schools, and the good use of previous students to share their experiences of pregnancy with pupils still at school. The police play an active part in the useful drugs education programme. There is a satisfactory programme of careers education. Placements for work experience for all Year 10 pupils are well organised by the pupils and the school with the assistance of the local authority's careers service and the local education authority's database of employers. Form teachers are involved in checking their form pupils on work placements. Pupils with English as an additional language are also given special assistance and are frequently placed in supportive settings for work experience.
52. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the same broad and balanced curriculum as their fellow pupils. Some provision meets the needs of older pupils particularly well. In Years 10 and 11 some are guided into a very practical course which is suitable for a wide range of pupils and, in the sixth form, the GNVQ Foundation course is available. The grouping of pupils into ability sets allows pupils of broadly similar attainment to be taught together to ease the provision of suitably modified teaching. In their schemes of work, subject departments plan to meet the needs of these pupils and the use of modified tasks, materials and strategies are built into their short and long term curriculum planning.
53. There is little additional curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. In Years 7 and 8 as an alternative to the second foreign language pupils have a literacy class,

based on the National Literacy Strategy, addressing specific targets. Progress Units are to be re-established in the near future. Very small numbers of pupils, with particular reading difficulties, are withdrawn from the morning tutor sessions for a structured reading programme. There is a valuable session for a small group of pupils to learn to read alongside their parents on Thursday afternoons. However, in spite of the very low reading ages of some pupils there are no other intervention strategies to develop their skills more rapidly than is possible in mainstream lessons.

54. The full range of extra-curricular activities is open to pupils with special educational needs and they are particularly involved in music and sporting activities. They also participate in residential and other visits, often with the financial assistance of the school.
55. The school is participating in the Excellence in Cities initiative to improve the attainment of gifted or talented pupils. There is a well-developed school wide policy in place and departments all identify provision for these pupils in their schemes of work. The school has organised a significant programme of extra curricular enrichment and extension activities for them. The activities have covered the whole of the curriculum including visits to theatres, a cricket school, the Football Academy, a living history exhibition on the English civil war, master classes in geography and visits to universities. However, the most important form of provision for these pupils is through challenge in all their lessons which is not yet being sufficiently widely provided and the demands made on them in lessons are not generally very different to those made on their fellow pupils.
56. The curriculum provided for pupils who have English as an additional language is good. Specialised teaching in some of the additional English classes, together with in-class support, provide good opportunities for pupils to have access to the full curriculum. Pupils are included wherever possible in mainstream teaching classes.

### **Sixth Form**

57. Curricular provision in the sixth form is good. As in the main school it is particularly successful in meeting a wide range of students' needs and in building on their prior attainment. Very few students now follow traditional GCE AS and A2 programmes. There is a good range of options in most subjects, including GNVQ and, in Year 12, the International Baccalaureate courses. Provision for religious education in the sixth form is not yet fully met. The school is continuing to think about how it can provide for sixth form religious education. It has offered very well planned one day events, called 'immersion days' but these do not completely fulfil the entitlement to religious education.
58. Provision for careers education in the sixth form is good. Students have easy access to information including prospectuses for college and university. Students report strong support from the Connexions Service. They are given useful information on college and university open days and most students travel to these independently.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision**

59. The provision to promote all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is truly excellent. It is one of the major reasons why this school, which receives new pupils on a weekly basis, many of whom are also new to this country, operates as an exceptionally harmonious, vibrant and self-disciplined community in which happiness, mutual respect and acceptance are the norm. This provision was identified as a strength of the school's work at the time of the previous inspection, since when it has been further developed

through making better use of form period time and by introducing more opportunities for pupils to involve themselves in activities outside of lessons.

60. Assemblies, which are held for both specific year groups and for larger groups of pupils and students, are led with total commitment, openness and, frequently, inspiration. Whatever the theme - during the inspection these were *Courage* and *Making choices* - or whoever the individual delivering the assembly, the assembly is skilfully directed to the pupils' own experience. There are very high expectations of behaviour so that pupils enter in an orderly fashion and sit quietly reading their books until all are settled, so that a suitably calm atmosphere, supported by music from a variety of cultures, is established before the speaker even begins. As necessary, the school is prepared to consider and reflect on extremely difficult and sensitive issues relating to the local community, always returning to the fact that it is each individual who makes the difference and that 'Life is about the way that we organise it'. Towards the end of the assembly, the speaker allows time for quiet, personal reflection and an opportunity to 'have a thought of love and ask your own God' to look after those in particular need of it, as well as the listener's own family. Although they do not always include an act of worship, the form periods led by tutors also encourage pupils to develop their thinking about moral, social and cultural issues, such as rights and responsibilities, race relations or conflict resolution. This requires pupils to develop spiritually by exploring their own values and beliefs. These thought-provoking sessions at the beginning of the morning, to which pupils respond whole-heartedly, set the tone for the rest of the day.
61. The school has conducted an audit of where each subject makes a specific contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, and these elements form an intrinsic part of many schemes of work. The topics chosen for study, for example poetry from a wide variety of cultures, or scientists from different periods and countries, or immigration into *favelas* in Sao Paolo, broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of different societies, cultures and ways of thinking. However, it is also in the manner that teachers respond to pupils both in and out of lessons that their personal development is strengthened. Teachers make very good use of pupils' different experiences. For example, in history teachers drew on the experiences of recent arrivals from Zimbabwe, or in German the observation from a Somali pupil that the working week in that country runs from Saturday to Wednesday. In a Year 11 science lesson, the teacher showed great respect for the possibility of pupils' sensitivity to the dissection of a heart but also very effectively generated in them appreciation and wonder at the complexities of its structure. Mathematics displays include not only subject specific language and examples but also relevant humorous poetry that lifts the spirits. In most subjects pupils are regularly invited to consider why things happen, what are the consequences of actions and to understand that, for instance, slavery is not just confined to the past but happens today. They are also encouraged to understand that decisions taken by business leaders can have a big impact on the lives of many individuals far removed from their own sphere of work.
62. In their dealings with both colleagues and pupils, staff provide very good role models as shining examples of the positive benefits of respect, honesty and co-operation. This, together with the school's emphasis on personal responsibility, ensures that pupils are very clear about the difference between right and wrong. In lessons there are many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups. Outside lessons they can take part in activities such as year group forums and the school council. The opportunity to become prefects and senior students allows older students to practise using their initiative, to develop their understanding of how communities work best and to make their personal contribution to improving the quality of life for all. Staff work in partnership with pupils to, for instance, maintain a safe and peaceful environment and pupils are very helpful in highlighting potential problems to staff before they cause an upset. They are very aware of the needs of others and are generous in using their time and talents to support charitable activities. Although the school does not currently teach music

to most pupils, other musical opportunities through, for instance, the soul-stirring singing of the gospel choir or the playing of contemporary Spanish or classical music in assemblies, do broaden their experience of the cultural influences of different peoples. Displays also contribute to their awareness of others' ways of life, whether those in the north hall that illustrate the different ideas about God held by different communities or those in the textiles room where pupils' work clearly shows the different influences that they have brought from their own cultures.

63. The emphasis placed on the importance of forming good relationships permeates the life of all those who work in the school, creating an exceptional community in which respect for self and others allows each individual to blossom in self-confidence and responsibility.

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

64. One of the reasons for the school's success in creating such a harmonious community, despite the exceptionally high numbers of pupils who arrive or leave at times other than is normal, is because of the very good quality care provided for each pupil as an individual. Staff know the pupils well, take pleasure in seeing them grow in self-confidence and maturity and provide them with good quality support to help them succeed. As yet, the monitoring of their personal development is, essentially, informal but these procedures and those for assessing their progress in subject areas are currently being strengthened.
65. Each new pupil and their parents or carers are personally interviewed by the headteacher or senior staff member who shows understanding of their circumstances but also sets out very clearly the school's expectations. There is an induction mentor whose job it is to assess the pupil's level of English and standard of work, to help with the paperwork related to admission and to find a buddy, if possible in the same year group and speaking the same language, to help the newcomer through their first days and beyond. She remains as a highly visible source of support for any pupils and their parents who wish for help, and ensures that individuals become integrated as swiftly as possible. Once they are settled, pupils receive good quality support from their form tutors but also from heads of year, key stage co-ordinators, deputy heads and the headteacher, not to mention classroom support assistants, learning mentors, the social worker and administrative staff. The school sees pastoral care as the responsibility of all staff and they work together extremely well in carrying out this role.
66. The procedures to promote good discipline and eliminate oppressive behaviour are exceptionally good. They result in the school operating as an orderly, optimistic and cheerful community, in which pupils say that they feel safe and can learn without disruption in lessons. This is despite the fact that the school has a difficult site plus an ever-changing pupil population drawn from areas of the city suffering from severe economic and social disadvantage. The 'trick' to this is staff members' skill in being highly visible and consistent about challenging pupils if they see any slight antisocial tendency whilst at the same time showing interest in individuals and being very approachable. Most teaching staff undertake lunchtime supervision duties but see this as an opportunity to get to know pupils rather than to reprimand them. Even the use of megaphones to chivvy pupils' movement between buildings is done in a good-natured, albeit determined, manner. Because of the good relationships, pupils want to please their teachers and sustain the community spirit and so they rise to staff members' high expectations and let them know if any trouble is brewing so that it can be nipped in the bud. Where there are individuals who misbehave, they are monitored carefully and appropriate steps, including the involvement of parents, are taken to improve matters.

67. The procedures relating to attendance are also very good and have brought about a steady improvement over recent years. Using an electronic system, heads of year are diligent in monitoring and challenging individuals to good effect. Since September, the school has employed its own education social worker who works in collaboration with those provided by the local authority and other members of the pastoral team. Using her analysis of individual and year group trends, she has focussed her attention very specifically and, through persistence and reasoned argument, has brought about an impressive and sustained increase in attendance. Learning mentors also have a part to play with attendance as well as providing good quality support for those who need extra help to perform to the best of their ability.
68. The social worker is also, now, the named person with responsibility for child protection and children in the care of the local authority. She has tightened the procedures considerably and they are of good quality with suitable guidance for staff and confidential noting of concerns. The school is aware, however, of the need for whole staff training in order to ensure that they all feel confident about their responsibilities in this area of care. Over the past three years, the school's health and safety procedures have also been much improved so that they are now very good, with a clear policy, comprehensive risk assessments, good guidance which is put into effective practice and suitable involvement of governors.
69. Annual reviews of pupils with statements of special educational need are carried out in accordance with statutory requirements. Provision for these pupils is made in line with the requirements of their statements. The school enjoys a good relationship with a wide range of external support agencies, some of whom visit the school regularly to advise. These include teachers for visually and hearing impaired pupils and the behaviour support service. The special educational needs co-ordinator has produced, for teachers, an extensive list of practical and useful strategies to assist the teaching of pupils with special educational needs.
70. The school uses a variety of procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Many pupils are identified by their primary schools, the school uses a series of internal and external assessments and, subsequently, subject teachers may identify pupils. Subject teachers must identify the support strategies that they have tried to implement with pupils before they are put on the register for special educational needs. It is likely, however, that there is considerable under-recording of pupils on this register. Three times the national average of pupils in the school are eligible for free school meals whilst the proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register is only at the national average. Pupils who should be on the register, but are not, lose the support that an individual education plan can bring and may fail to attract additional funding. The school is aware of under-recording but finds it difficult to manage the large numbers involved. Many pupils who should have been identified by their primary schools have not been identified. This, and the very high level of mobility amongst pupils, creates a constant flow of pupils waiting for assessment and subsequent preparation of individual education plans, which over-taxes the resources of the school.
71. Individual education plans are in place for all who have been identified as needing them. They have been carefully constructed, involving pupils in agreeing their targets, and identifying ways for parents to support their children's learning at home. Pupil's progress is formally assessed through the twice-yearly review of their individual education plans. There is a tendency for the same targets to recur that may de-motivate some pupils and few individual education plans identify strategies to improve pupils' numeracy.
72. Three learning mentors, funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative, work with twenty-four pupils. They meet with them regularly to review their progress, occasionally monitor them in lessons and help them meet their targets for attainment and behaviour. They also successfully

help some to improve their reading and enhance their self-confidence. The Excellence in Cities initiative also funds the school's programme for gifted or talented pupils. Twelve per cent of the school's pupils have been carefully identified and placed on a register, their names disseminated to all staff and parents informed. A good range of extra-curricular enrichment activities has been developed for these pupils. The school has had to work hard, but successfully, to encourage parents from a number of minority ethnic groups to allow their children to participate in some of these activities.

## **ASSESSMENT**

73. Whole-school approaches to assessing pupils' work and monitoring their progress are good overall. Marking is generally effective and regularly done. Teachers encourage pupils with supportive comment, but do not give enough advice about how to improve. Comment is often descriptive rather than evaluative although, in geography, marking usually includes clear advice about how to improve. With some pupils with limited English the emphasis is on oral discussion rather than written comment. Pupils understand the school's procedures for grading progress, although they are not used in routine marking in all departments. Procedures for determining the levels of the National Curriculum achieved by pupils are still developing in many subjects. In some subjects, pupils have limited awareness of how their work is graded, although this is made clear in science through record and target sheets given to each pupil at the start of units of work.
74. Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop a range of statistical methods for measuring progress and determining target levels. Performance data are analysed by senior managers to identify the performance of different groups within the school, including different ethnic groups. The transient nature of the school population has sometimes made it difficult to determine overall measures of progress. A high proportion of pupils arrive at the school without validated measures of prior attainment, many not having taken the national tests in Year 6 or Year 9. The school has a variety of standardised methods of testing to establish a baseline measure and set targets. There are good systems for ensuring that class teachers are aware of pupils with special needs and those who are gifted or talented. However, the arrangements for assessing and tracking the progress of pupils with English as an additional language are not completely satisfactory.

### **Sixth form**

#### ***Assessment***

75. The assessment of students' work in the Sixth Form is good. The overall assessment of students' attainment and progress/achievement in the sixth form is now more rigorous and informative. Work is well marked in most subjects, and there is a developing strategy of enhancing students' skills so that they may assess some of their own and each other's work. Work is graded using exam board guidelines. Effective assessment is integral to the various new International Baccalaureate and vocational courses, and staff are developing a greater awareness of the standards. In the most effective practice, students calculate their own targets from previous achievements, adjusting them in the light of the formal assessments. Careful records are kept of what levels students have achieved and what criteria they have satisfied. Sound advice about what is required to improve is given and targets are agreed with the students. An increasingly sophisticated database is being built up which will shortly be able to integrate all information on each student, including their prior and present attainment. At present, progress is reviewed thoroughly three times a year but this is planned to increase to six times per year. This will enable sixth form management to monitor progress and identify underachievement more closely. This is a crucial development to help raise achievement in the

sixth form given the fractured educational experience of some overseas students. Sixth form managers, including form tutors, conduct regular review days with students and action is taken if students are not achieving their target grades.

***Advice, support and guidance***

76. Very good advice, support and guidance are offered to students in the sixth form. What the students receive is regular, rigorous and supportive. All prospective students and their parents are interviewed by the headteacher or head of sixth form. Students speak very highly of the availability, accessibility and friendliness of their teachers, in whom they have complete confidence. In particular, they mention the headteacher, whom they hold in great respect, because ‘ He seems to know when we need to speak to him.’ Contacts between students, parents and sixth form management are recorded and outcomes noted. The deputy head attached to the sixth form and the sixth form strategy manager know the students well. Together with the sixth form tutors, they are close to the students, and the relationship contributes greatly to the well being of the sixth form community. Advice and support for higher education applications are good. Tutors work closely with students to complete personal statements for university entrance or further education placements. Resources in the library are good. Careers guidance is good. Students remark on its quality.
77. Provision for careers education in the sixth form is good and valued highly by the students. They have easy access to information, including prospectuses for college and university. Students report strong support from the Connexions service through individual interviews and their presence at Parents’ Evenings. Students are given information on college and university open days and most students travel to these independently.

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

78. The previous report noted that the school’s partnership with parents was improving and this improvement has continued so that now all those parents who volunteered an opinion, including those with children in the sixth form, expressed very positive views about the school. More than half the returned questionnaires were entirely positive and most of the rest noted only minor dissatisfaction. Parents and carers are most pleased that their children like school, receive good quality teaching and are expected to work hard. They also appreciate the fact that staff, particularly the headteacher, are always willing to speak with them and help to resolve any difficulties. The provision for extra-curricular activities caused a little dissatisfaction, probably due to the restricted sports activities available which are affected by the unsatisfactory accommodation.
79. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. The school works hard to communicate with those for whom English is an additional language and benefits from the fact that it has members of staff who speak a wide range of different languages and who are more than willing to act as interpreters when necessary. The prospectus and the governors’ annual report are both welcoming to parents and reasonably informative. Newsletters are similarly welcoming and are attractively produced but the language used is not readily accessible to all parents and they do not include much information about the life of the school. As yet, teachers do not provide parents with an outline of what their children will be learning in their subject during the coming term.
80. The school sets much store by face-to-face communication with parents and conducts two review meetings during the year in addition to a traditional parents’ meeting. At the review meetings, parents meet with their child’s form tutor to discuss their overall attitude and progress and to set targets for the coming term. At parents meetings, they meet with subject teachers and discuss the written report. Pupils’ progress reports are unsatisfactory. They do

not give sufficient written information about their specific strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of the subject, nor, in most cases, sufficiently tightly focussed targets for improvement. Comments such as 'Sarah can improve by researching topics more thoroughly' do not give enough guidance on how to set about doing this. Also, the reports seen contained grammatical and spelling errors and had not been compiled to any clear pattern so that there was no logical sequence of subjects.

81. Parents attend meetings and other school events, such as award evenings and performances, in large numbers and they are very responsive to requests to discuss any problems throughout the year. They support the school's efforts to improve behaviour through, for instance, monitoring their children's behaviour plans, and by ensuring that they complete their homework tasks. Parents encourage their children to attend school regularly and have been very supportive of the introduction of a new school uniform. There has been a promising response to the introduction this year of a Parent Staff Association. Overall, the partnership with parents is good and plays a positive part in ensuring that pupils benefit as much as possible from the educational opportunities provided by the school.
82. Parents are informed when their children are put on the special educational needs register. There is then regular and frequent contact between the special educational needs co-ordinator and parents of pupils with special educational needs, often at the parents' instigation. The attendance of parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs at the annual review meetings is good. The school has developed a successful Family Literacy programme on one afternoon each week for a small group of pupils and their parents to learn to read together.

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

83. Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. His inspirational lead, his sky-high expectations of pupils and staff and his remarkable capacity for enthusing everyone connected with the school are amongst the most significant factors in its continuing improvement. The school day begins with his greeting pupils and parents at the far entrance and ends with him seeing them safely off the school site. In between, and with remarkable energy and persistence, he visits every classroom at least once and often more times each day. This is not only to give moral support to the teaching staff but also to monitor the quality of learning taking place and the standard of pupils' behaviour. The result is a very well-ordered and very safe school, an exceptionally happy and friendly environment conducive to good learning, a school where teachers can teach and pupils can flourish. Mutual respect and a very good level of racial harmony are now notable features of the life and work of the school.
84. The headteacher's example is followed by all staff. Senior staff in particular are very visible around the school. They meet very regularly and work well together as a team. All staff take responsibility for ensuring that the lead from the front is reinforced. Staff morale is high. Teachers' attendance records are exemplary. No voices are raised in classrooms and corridors. A gentle buzz of quiet activity is the order of the day. Senior post holders are 'singing from the same hymn sheet', pulling in the same direction. Gradual re-allocation of duties is widening the experience of some of them and strengthening the management of the school. One or two senior staff remain overloaded, however, and some important management and administrative tasks would be better tackled by senior non-teaching staff appointments, allowing key professional teaching staff to focus more on curricular matters.

85. The governing body is almost completely new since the inspection that placed the school into special measures in 1998, and with its proactive, strengthened and determined leadership, it supports the school well through its regular meetings and the work of its committees. Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Particularly supportive of their relatively new headteacher, they gave him their full backing in his successful drive to lead the school out of special measures. This the school achieved in 2000.
86. Some statutory duties are not satisfactorily fulfilled. Not all pupils receive their full entitlement to ICT in some subjects; pupils do not experience acts of collective worship on every day, although those acts of worship they do experience are certainly excellent examples of what collective worship is meant to be. Religious education in the sixth form barely covers the minimal requirements of the local agreed syllabus, although the theory of knowledge part of the new International Baccalaureate course contains a great deal of material that would be found in a religious education course.
87. Pastoral leadership is very strong. The strong and capable group of year heads and their teams of tutors are co-ordinated well by key stage co-ordinators and by two of the deputy headteachers. One of their recent joint achievements is the effective revamping of the use of form tutor time on the days when pupils are not in assemblies.
88. The leadership and management of curriculum areas are effective. They are at least satisfactory in every subject or faculty, in most cases they are good, and in some instances (English, science, geography, business education and religious education) very good. Formal monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards are now regular features of departmental and faculty practice.
89. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The school implements the principles of social inclusion to a very high level. The special educational needs co-ordinator is part of the senior management team and meeting the special educational needs of pupils has a high profile in the school. However, the significant numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the school make very considerable demands upon the limited time of the co-ordinator. The quality of provision is monitored through first hand experience of observing pupils' learning in lessons as well as through reviews of their individual education plans. The focus of the whole school review of teaching last year was whether effective use was made of teaching assistants. This led to much improvement in the effectiveness of their use.
90. There is an effective link teacher system that helps secure good communication between all subject areas and the special educational needs co-ordinator. The school enjoys the benefit of well-qualified and experienced teachers of pupils with special educational needs – ten of them have special needs qualifications and/or substantial prior experience. The school has insisted on employing teaching assistants who are well qualified and experienced and has ensured that they have been kept up to date with in-service training.
91. The management of provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is good. The head of English and the deputy head for curriculum work jointly and effectively to create a cohesive strategy for provision across the school. The school's plan for raising achievement correctly identifies several issues related to this area of provision as priorities, as does the race equality policy. However both action plans are, as yet, low on detail and short of time lines or named personnel matched to responsibilities.

92. The problems the school has recently experienced in this area, both with the recruitment of a head of department and staff turnover, have placed a heavy burden on existing senior and middle managers who have worked very hard to ensure that the quality of provision has been maintained. Inevitably however, through sheer pressure of work, coupled with a large influx of new arrivals, some areas of assessment, resources and record keeping have suffered. The school is endeavouring to tackle staffing and resourcing of this provision as a matter of priority, especially in the light of the continuing rate of new arrivals, so many of whom have little command of English.
93. The school's overall staffing provision is good, the result of much proactive work by the headteacher. The balance of gender and ethnicity reflects well the pupil population. Over the last two years there has been a large staff turnover at a time when pupil numbers have been rising considerably, and recruitment of new staff has been problematic in some curriculum areas. An imaginative recruitment drive has been successful in attracting and retaining sixteen teachers from the Caribbean. All are graduate teachers but not yet formally recognised as qualified teachers in this country. They will all receive professional training through the University of Wolverhampton, leading eventually to their achieving qualified teacher status. A very good programme for mentoring these teachers via team teaching and lesson observations is in place, and they are making a very valuable and significant contribution to the teaching in the school in several subject areas.
94. Failure to secure a satisfactory appointment for a music teacher has produced the unsatisfactory situation that music is not currently taught in Years 7 to 9 and not offered as an option in Year 10. A music teacher from a link school in the collegiate group of schools, plus an instructor based at George Dixon School, currently support pupils in Year 11 to complete their GCSE music course. Peripatetic teachers provide some instrument tuition. The absence of a bursar/finance officer in the school impinges on the overall efficiency of senior management who have to take on this role.
95. Learning resources have improved since the last inspection. They are now satisfactory overall and in some respects are good. The school has spent well above the national average in improving its stock of computers, books and consumable materials. The information technology department has an above average stock of computers. The English department has two rooms furnished with good quality computers and pupils in business education have access to 130 computers and 30 laptops. The modern foreign languages department enjoys a new state-of-the-art digital language lab and forty computer workstations. There are good text books in the English, history and mathematics departments. The art department is in need of improved access to computers and specialist software so that pupils might have full access to the National Curriculum. The library is a well-used facility, with an enthusiastic, helpful, full-time librarian. It is open from seven-thirty each morning, remaining open after school for homework and reference purposes. It has a stock of 10,000 books and 12 computer workstations linked to the Internet. There is a satisfactory range of up-to-date reading for pleasure books and reference books but books in foreign languages are more limited. Whilst there are Albanian, Somalian and Arabic dictionaries and some reading for pleasure books aimed at the Somali pupils, there is a shortage of reading material in the main European languages. There are plans to increase the size and nature of the library by building a second floor for information technology and by enlarging the careers library.
96. Accommodation is satisfactory overall with some unsatisfactory aspects. Each department has its own area. In general, these areas are enhanced with colourful and stimulating displays of information and examples of pupils' work. The school has an ongoing plan for improvement with some projects such as the new food technology room finished, some about to start and some part-completed. The dining facilities are unsatisfactory and their replacement will take

place shortly. Repairs to many of the windows of the 'Ritchie' building have been started but the windows at the rear are still in a poor state of repair. The site has a number of buildings and this involves pupils walking between them out of doors. This hinders the start of some lessons and presents a significant problem with 'mud' being walked into the school. The cleaning and caretaking staff work very hard at each lesson change to ensure that entrances are kept clean and safe for pupils. Paths between buildings are currently being improved to resolve this situation. The physical education department is unable to use the hard court areas for health and safety reasons, and changing facilities are very cramped. A number of teachers have to carry resources to classrooms away from their main or usual teaching base.

97. During the past three years the school has had to manage its financial resources extremely creatively and competently in order to enable it to cope with a large influx of pupils and staff and to improve the level of resources. It has received good financial support from the local authority and the extra money provided through initiatives such as Excellence in Cities and New Opportunities Funding. It also receives funding which relates to the high number of pupils with special educational needs and the fact that it is designated as a school in Challenging Circumstances. This means that the total income per pupil is higher than average. It has been difficult for the school to stick to strategic plans, because of the need to react to frequently changing circumstances. The headteacher has had to make much use of the chair of governors to ratify expenditure and agree the reallocation of funds from one area to another in order to ensure that the school could keep operating. The school's financial procedures were audited just prior to this inspection and the report raised no major concerns.
98. The governors' finance committee meets regularly and has a robust attitude towards the use of money. The allocation of funds to departments is decided on a historical formula basis and heads of department have to justify any requests for supplementary funds. The governors are fully involved in making decisions about large investments and are keen to ensure that they operate the principles of best value. For example, together with the relevant staff they carried out extensive research before deciding which language laboratory system to buy. Specific moneys are used suitably for their designated purposes, for instance the Induction Mentor's post has been funded through the local authority's mobility project. However, the school does not yet have sufficiently rigorous systems in place by which to evaluate the benefits received from its spending decisions or to identify areas where savings could be made. The involvement of the headteacher and one deputy head in overseeing finances on a day-to-day basis creates a heavy and unnecessary burden on them and takes them away from their professional educational duties. Despite this weakness in its evaluation systems, the school provides satisfactory value for money because of the high quality of education it offers to its pupils and sixth form students. This is underpinned by the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision, which enables pupils to grow in self-confidence and thus benefit from the good quality teaching. As a result of this, pupils make good progress, from in many cases a very low starting point. They achieve well and leave the school well-equipped to make the most of life's opportunities and to contribute to society.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

99. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. One of the school's deputy heads plus the recently appointed sixth form strategy manager work as an increasingly effective and proactive team. Procedures in the sixth form are now much more rigorous than they were at

the time of the last inspection. The 'casual' attitudes of students then referred to are no longer in evidence. Regular assessments are made of students' attitudes, attendance and progress. Realistic individual targets are set for each student. The sixth form centre participates in externally assessed value added schemes to give a clearer picture of student progress. Students who are a cause for concern are monitored closely by form tutors and by the sixth form management. Students who fail to improve are advised of alternative courses or leave to seek employment. There is a clear understanding of where the sixth form should go and students are very well supported personally and academically.

### ***Resources***

100. The sixth form is well resourced. The sixth form centre is a lively place. Displays around the walls and the notices on the flip chart show that there are opportunities for students to be involved in the life of the school and that high standards are expected. Private study space in order to encourage independent learning skills is in very short supply, but students feel secure in the sixth form. They especially value the use of the laptop computers.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

101. In order to improve the quality of education and raise standards higher, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Continue to strive to raise pupils' standards in national tests and examinations, especially at the end of Year 11, including by:
  - Making the school's approach to literacy absolutely organic to the teaching of all other subjects;
  - Endeavouring to stabilise the rate of influx of new pupils into the school.  
*(Paragraph 5)*
  
- (2) Ensure that higher attaining pupils, including those who are gifted or talented, are challenged more in some subjects, including by:
  - identifying more clearly which pupils would benefit from extra challenge in each particular subject;
  - ensuring that work more suited to their levels of attainment is available in all lessons.  
*(Paragraph 14)*
  
- (3) Strengthen provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), by:
  - Sharpening assessment procedures to ensure the proper identification of the skills and needs of EAL learners;
  - Ensuring that work done in all additional English classes is linked directly to work done in other subjects and that teaching is delivered by staff who have been trained in EAL strategies;
  - Broadening the range of in-class support linked to individual learning plans for targeted EAL learners.  
*(Paragraphs 101-107)*
  
- (4) Improve the curriculum, particularly in music and ICT, by:
  - Appointing a suitable teacher of music as soon as possible;
  - Ensuring that all departments make greater use of ICT to deliver aspects of the National Curriculum in their subjects.  
*(Paragraph 39, 94, 193-198)*
  
- (5) Improve the accommodation (particularly the facilities for physical education and the dining arrangements), by:
  - Using the funds available to replace the present poor dining facilities;
  - bringing the school's sport facilities up to standard, as soon as further funding is available.  
*(Paragraphs 96, 199-208)*
  
- (6) Strengthen further the management of the school, by:
  - improving the arrangements for day-to-day financial administration;
  - removing the need for two of the most senior teaching staff to carry this day-to-day responsibility;
  - tightening up the school's methods for evaluating the cost effectiveness of spending decisions.  
*(Paragraphs 84, 94, 98)*

## **Sixth form**

- (7) Improve attendance in the sixth form, including by:
- monitoring more closely students' attendance records;
  - diagnosing the reasons for particular patterns of absence;
  - deploying the school's key support staff to concentrate more on individual students' personal circumstances, with a view to advising them of any funding they may be entitled to.
- (Paragraph 31)*
- (8) Strive further to make more students truly independent learners, including by
- focusing more on the development of key skills, including study skills.
- (Paragraphs 30, 45)*
- (9) Improve provision for religious education in the sixth form, including by:
- building upon the increasing popularity of the subject in Years 10 and 11;
  - allocating more time to it and, where possible;
  - linking it more to the theory of knowledge sections of the IB course.
- (Paragraph 57)*

## **Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)**

102. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) is satisfactory overall and good in the Sixth Form. The school lists 117 pupils on its EAL register between Years 7 at 11 and 7 students in the Sixth Form. The register records a range of 29 different languages spoken by this group, many of these languages having only one or two representatives in the school. The number of languages on the register is changing almost daily, reflecting the increasing rate of arrivals of EAL pupils, especially asylum seekers and refugees.
103. The school has made robust efforts to meet the challenges posed by the influx of such a large group of pupils who speak little or no English, by means of providing additional English classes during the school day, English clubs before and after school and by adapting mainstream teaching to meet their needs. The pattern of raising teacher expectation and effective teaching of this group of pupils noted by HMI in 2000 has continued to develop, resulting in the satisfactory and good learning opportunities seen across the school at present.
104. The initial assessment of most pupils is satisfactory, although gaps such as the identification of learning potential and likely learning difficulties should be addressed as soon as possible. The school's efforts to collate assessment data on this group are hampered by the rapidly changing ethnic composition of the school.
105. The current system of targeting support would benefit from additional staff with the necessary skills and expertise. The school should look towards developing individual learning plans for EAL students.
106. The management of provision for pupils who have English as an Additional Language is good, with the head of English and deputy head (curriculum) working together effectively. There is a clear vision for the direction in which provision for this area needs to go. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning, they work together and are ready to help one another, noticeably so in the sixth form. Behaviour is almost without exception good and pupils are polite and courteous. This good behaviour is a reflection of the caring and committed attitude of teaching and support staff, sometimes in difficult circumstances, which is a strength of the provision as a whole. A noticeable example of this caring ethos is found in the special arrangements the school has made to induct and support asylum seekers and refugee pupils.
107. This positive picture of EAL provision is, however, under constant pressure from inadequate staffing levels, staff training and shortage of appropriate resources including ICT. The school's senior management have struggled to keep abreast of the changes caused by the recent rapid rise in EAL pupil numbers and the available local education authority funding. These pressures have been caused by a combination of insufficient targeting of available funds into the provision and the recent rapid rise in EAL pupil numbers which have left the school's senior management struggling to keep abreast of the changes needed. There is now an urgent need to address the strategy of resolving this area of provision to ensure that current examples of good practice are capitalised upon to assure the continuing quality of teaching and learning for these pupils.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 to 11	159
	Sixth form	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		70

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 to 11</b>							
Number	1	30	78	49	1	0	0
Percentage	1	19	49	31	1	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	1	5	26	10	0	0	0
Percentage	2	12	62	24	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 more than two percentage points.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	817	134
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	471	60

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	20	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	125	10

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	453

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	192 +
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	131 +

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	7.8

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
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	2001	58	40	98

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	14	24	18
	Girls	19	16	16
	Total	33	40	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	34 (21)	43 (29)	36 (29)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	7 (1)	17 (11)	13 (5)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	16	23	18
	Girls	21	16	16
	Total	37	39	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	39 (5)	41 (37)	35 (34)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	9 (0)	20 (12)	14 (6)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	82	62	144

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	7	40	49
	Girls	15	49	54
	Total	22	89	103
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	15 (21)	62 (79)	72 (91)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	20.2
	National	39.0

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

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	1	8	9

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	1	8	9
	Average point score per candidate	0	3.1	2.8
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4

		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	3	9	12	2	3	5
	Average point score per candidate	8	8.1	8.1	12	16	14.4
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

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

### *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	29	2	0
White – Irish	6	0	0
White – any other White background	30	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	30	3	0
Mixed – White and Black African	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	87	2	1
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	104	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	34	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	223	5	0
Black or Black British – African	53	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	121	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	37	7	0
No ethnic group recorded	172	11	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

### *Financial information*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 - 11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	55.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6

#### **Education support staff: Y7 - Y11**

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	695

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 - Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.6
---	------

#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y11**

Key Stage 3	21.7
Key Stage 4	20.0

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	2,989,259
Total expenditure	3,228,377
Expenditure per pupil	3,476
Balance brought forward from previous year	692,972
Balance carried forward to next year	453,854

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	22
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	40
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	16
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	953
Number of questionnaires returned	47

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	38	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	57	34	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	30	2	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	64	23	6	2	4
The teaching is good.	60	34	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	30	4	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	38	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	19	0	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	55	36	6	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	53	38	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	38	2	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	26	21	2	11

## **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**

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Relationships in the classroom are good.
- Teachers work well together, sharing a commitment to improve standards.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE are well below national standards.
- The use of National Curriculum levels in the assessment of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 is not fully implemented across the department.

### **Standards and achievement**

108. Standards of attainment in English in the national tests for pupils in Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average. They were, however, above the average for similar schools and better than the standards in previous years. Boys achieved slightly higher standards than girls did – the reverse of the national situation. Attainment in GCSE English language in 2002 was well below the national average at grades A\* - C but above the average for similar schools. Attainment at grades A\*- G was broadly in line with the national average. A smaller proportion of pupils than is the case nationally was entered for the examination. The level of attainment has varied over recent years but has improved since the last inspection. Girls did better than boys, as they do nationally. Attainment in GCSE English literature in 2002 was well below the national average and a significantly smaller proportion of pupils is entered for the examination than is the case nationally.
109. The standards of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 seen during the inspection were in line with the standards achieved in the national tests at the end of Year 9. Pupils are mostly attentive listeners. They follow instructions with little need for repetition and are a polite audience to their classmates. Oral responses are often enthusiastic though many pupils, particularly of lower levels of prior attainment, those with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language, speak briefly and colloquially. Higher attaining pupils volunteer answers articulately, as did a Year 7 class explaining different poetic forms. Pupils are willing to read aloud though many do so slowly, stumbling over unfamiliar words, hampered by well below average reading skills or because English is their additional language. They can extract information from and respond to texts, though many need help to understand at more than a simple, factual level. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9 develop an understanding of the story of *Macbeth* through its presentation in the form of a graphic novel while pupils of higher prior attainment study the play text in preparation for a character study of Lady Macbeth. Writing skills are well below national expectations. Higher attaining pupils write at length, generally correctly, though spelling can be uncertain. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs write at less length and have difficulties, but even pupils of the lowest levels of prior attainment communicate meaning more or less legibly. The process of drafting and revising helps improve pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils

complete a good variety of increasingly extended writing through good teacher help and the provision of frameworks.

110. In lessons and work seen, the standards attained in Years 10 and 11 were in line with the results in the examinations at the end of Year 11. A significant proportion of pupils are unable to meet the requirements of the GCSE, either through low levels of prior attainment or because English is their additional language and they are at the early stages of language development. Some gain accreditation through the Certificate of Achievement, if they can be entered. Pupils listen actively and respond to opportunities to contribute to group and class discussion. Higher attaining pupils are fluent speakers. Lower attainers and pupils unfamiliar with English are articulate with encouragement, though limited and often colloquial in their contributions. Pupils' reading skills are generally well below national expectations. They respond to a wide range of media pieces and literary and factual texts both orally and in writing through good teacher support. Higher attainers in a Year 11 lesson showed good understanding and insight in a poetry study lesson, independently identifying the humour in William King's *The Beggar Woman*. Low attaining pupils reading Sujata Bhatt's *Search for my Tongue* needed the guidance provided by the teacher to articulate their responses, though they had all learned what an extended metaphor was. Writing standards are generally well below national expectations. Pupils complete a range of extended pieces, however, which benefit from the provision of a good range of support materials and frameworks upon which all but the higher attainers are dependent. There is good attention to drafting and revising, and some pupils use word-processing well. The drafting process generally deals with problems of correctness in the writing of pupils of lower levels of prior attainment and those unfamiliar with English, though many responses are brief, with a limited range of vocabulary.
111. Pupils' levels of attainment on entry to the school are well below average overall. Achievement from Years 7 to 9 is good. Good attention is paid to the development of literacy skills and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is having a positive effect. In comparison with schools nationally whose intake is similar, the results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above average. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is also good. A majority of pupils enter for GCSE English or the Certificate of Achievement and most obtain a grade, despite the fact that, for many, English is an additional language and some entered the school at an early stage of language development. In comparison with schools nationally whose results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were similar, the GCSE results were above average. Setting arrangements, additional literacy and language development classes and materials and presentations adapted to meet pupils' particular needs aid progress. The only pupils whose needs are not well met are the gifted or talented. They are identified on class lists and lesson plans recognise their needs in references to extension activities but in practice their experience in lessons is only the same as that of their classmates.

### **Quality of education**

112. The teaching in English is good, overall. In all of the lessons observed it was satisfactory or better and in nearly four fifths it was good or very good. Lessons are well-planned with a variety of activity which stimulates pupils and maintains their interest. Teaching is strongly committed to raising standards and is informed by a thoroughly-revised scheme of work which follows the National Literacy Strategy and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and of the GCSE. Relationships in the classroom are good. Pupils are managed in a firm but good-humoured manner and treated with consideration for their particular needs. The learning of a low-attaining Year 10 class, for example, was very well-promoted by a well-paced and painstaking presentation. Understanding of the poem they read was ensured by constant reinforcement, the provision of different worksheets to meet pupils' differing needs and unobtrusive individual support by the teacher and the classroom assistant. Teaching is less

effective when it lacks pace and energy and does not engage pupils. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and helpfully, with points for improvement identified though at present there is not full use of National Curriculum levels in the assessment of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9.

### **Leadership and management**

113. The department is very well led. The head of department has a good understanding of developments in the subject and in a relatively short time has achieved a great deal. Quite considerable staff changes have been accommodated, common practice has been established, and responsibilities have been properly delegated. A team of teachers of varied length and nature of experience has been brought together to work co-operatively, share good practice and contribute to the process of planning and development. The new framework for teaching English in Years 7 to 9 has been successfully adopted in a new scheme of work, incorporating information and communication technology activities. Teaching and learning are very well monitored and there is good support for teachers new to the school. There is good practice in the recording of pupil data to inform the process of target setting and modification of teaching strategies. The department is revising the way it assess although the use of National Curriculum levels in the assessment of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 is not fully implemented across the department.
114. Progress since the last inspection is good. Standards of attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE examinations have improved. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. In the last inspection, insufficient use of information and communication technology (ICT) was observed. The department now uses it well and class activities involving computers are being incorporated in the scheme of work.

### **DRAMA**

Overall, the provision for drama is **satisfactory**.

#### **Strengths**

- Drama is now an established part of the curriculum.
- Teaching is well planned and structured.
- Pupils enjoy the subject.
- Drama is now offered in Years 10 and 11 and is part of the IB programme in Year 12.

#### **Areas for development**

- Some pupils have difficulties in learning and using the disciplines of the subject.

### **Standards and achievement**

115. Drama has been re-established in the school for the last two years and is now taught to all pupils in years 7 to 9 and offered as an option in Years 10 and 11. The present Year 11 class is the first cohort to study GCSE Drama for some time. Some pupils in Years 9 and 10 have limited experience of drama. The school is now committed to developing drama and has resourced the subject well. There is an adequate drama studio, which has ample space and a classroom where space is limited. Drama is now offered in Year 12 as part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme. (IB)
116. At this stage in Year 9, standards are improving but are still low by national standards. Pupils are learning to make and shape drama but, because of their previously limited experience of drama, they are insecure when working together and have not yet developed the self discipline

that is important to individual development. For example, in one Year 9 mixed ability class, pupils began to explore the Derek Bentley case. The unit of work is well organised and structured and the subject absorbed them. Pupils of various levels of attainment understood the situation and followed the teacher's very clear explanation and instructions. However, when they began to improvise they experienced difficulties because they lack a sense of stagecraft and found moving from a situation into dialogue challenging. Pupils in Year 7 are more confident working on some basic exercises in using and defining space, and are learning the skills required for making and shaping drama.

117. Standards in Year 11 are also low but improving. Pupils work hard and enjoy the subject. Their preparation sheets show they understand the basic elements of characterisation. They work energetically in groups but their final characterisations lack confidence and a sense of performance. Their notebooks show a wide range of attainment.
118. Given the difficulties the subject has encountered in recent years and the low attainment of pupils on entry to the school, overall achievement is satisfactory at this stage. Pupils do work hard, even though some of them have difficulties in learning and using the disciplines of the subject. The present Year 11 pupils have obviously made progress despite their limited experience of drama. Year 7 pupils are being given a very solid base in the conventions and skills of the subject and this promises well for the future.

### **Quality of education**

119. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It was good in one third of the lessons seen. Lessons are well planned and structured, reflecting good subject knowledge plus an understanding of what the pupils know, understand and are able to do. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and keep the lessons moving along. What marked the good lessons was the effective use of time and facilities. For example, Year 7 pupils created a meaningful piece of drama based on a Victorian street scene. They managed to build up a sequence of activities to create an atmosphere of menace. Where teaching is only satisfactory, it is because time is not used as effectively as it might be and the lesson ends leaving little time for evaluation. The evaluation that happens is good but is not developed enough. In some lessons, teachers do not always intervene purposefully to shape the emerging drama.
120. Pupils' learning is satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils have opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. They understand the technical terms of drama. There is a growing sense of characterisation. Pupils usually behave well, although occasionally they lack self-control and have to be redirected by the teacher.
121. The basic problem in drama is that many pupils have a disjointed experience of what drama involves. Teachers have to work hard to teach the skills and disciplines of the subject in order to create the right atmosphere to allow pupils to be creative and imaginative within a structured environment.

### **Leadership and management**

122. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There are two specialist teachers of drama, ably assisted by a learning support assistant. The head of department, who was appointed two years ago, has developed a good scheme of work. Levels of attainment are being used effectively and are being rewritten in more accessible language. Planning is good and assessment procedures are sound. The school gives strong support to drama and the drama studio is well equipped. Drama is an improving subject. Improvement since the last inspection

is satisfactory so far. There is a clear understanding of how the subject needs to develop and the department has the capacity to do so.

## **LITERACY**

### **Standards of literacy**

123. Standards in listening are generally at least satisfactory. Standards in speaking are below national expectations overall, partly because of pupils' low levels of prior attainment on entry and partly because English is an additional language for many. Pupils generally listen well in most subjects, though are more focused in modern foreign languages as a result of the planned activities in lessons. They follow instructions with little need for repetition, if the instructions are given with clarity and a suitable choice of vocabulary. Generally they are polite and attentive to their classmates. They respond co-operatively to questions in most lessons, and are often eager to volunteer. Higher-attaining pupils can engage in dialogue but many contributions are relatively brief. Pupils can use the technical vocabulary of subjects, as a consequence of constant emphasis.
124. The standard of pupils' reading is generally below national expectations as a consequence of low levels of prior attainment or lack of familiarity with English. Pupils have opportunities for reading aloud in a number of subjects and are quite willing to do so. Only a few, however, do so with confidence, fluency and expression.
125. The standard of pupils' writing is generally below national expectations. Pupils write for a suitable range of purposes and make steady progress towards the extended writing required in many subjects in Years 10 and 11. Good use is made of structured writing guides to assist pupils, particularly those of low levels of prior attainment, to organise their writing. The process of drafting and revising coursework pieces enables pupils to improve their fluency and accuracy, although grammar, spelling and punctuation are often insecure. Handwriting and presentation are generally satisfactory, however.

### **How well the skills of literacy are taught**

126. Overall, the skills of literacy are taught well. Pupils enter the school with standards of literacy which are well below national expectations. The need to develop those standards to meet the literacy demands of the whole curriculum is recognised in a school policy. Departmental schemes of work feature literacy development and there are many examples of good practice, informed by staff in-service training. The English department has revised its scheme of work to accommodate the new literacy strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and oracy, reading and writing are integral to the programme of study. Subjects display and emphasise the use of key words. In a number of subjects, frameworks are used to help pupils to organise their writing. There are opportunities for reading aloud in many lessons. Good use is made of question and answer strategies and many teachers require pupils to respond in sentences. Teachers are generally very sympathetic to and supportive of pupils with language difficulties, and are patient and painstaking in their presentations.

### **The effectiveness of the strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy**

127. Overall, the strategies for teaching literacy skills are good, although the particular needs of the large number of pupils with English as an additional language will be better met when the school is able to appoint a specialist teacher/co-ordinator. A newly-appointed literacy co-ordinator is actively engaged in working with subject departments to build upon and disseminate good practice. In English, literacy development is integral to the teaching of the

subject. In the curriculum there are additional lessons for selected pupils to assist their literacy and language development.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Standards in the national tests at Year 9 and in GCSE have been rising and compare well with those in similar schools and with the other core subjects.
- Teachers are caring and committed and eager to do their best for all the pupils.
- Pupils respond well and relationships are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Matching courses more closely to the prior attainment of pupils and target levels.
- Developing a wider range of teaching and learning activities to promote discovery and discussion.
- Reducing the sharing of classes between different teachers and improving the distribution of lessons on the timetable.

## Standards and achievement

128. Standards attained in mathematics at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average but were above the average for similar schools. Mathematics results compared well with those in English and science. Results have improved steadily over the last four years, at above the national rate. Girls' performance has been above that of boys over this time.
129. During the inspection, the standard of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 was in line with results gained in national tests. Overall, attainment in classes is below the national average, and many pupils have limited numeracy skills. Pupils' attainment when they first come to the school in Year 7 is well below average, but comparisons are difficult because of lack of national test data for many pupils. A large proportion of the pupils did not take the national tests in Year 6, but the department tests all new pupils using recognised tests in order to establish a baseline and set targets. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9. However, the work covered is not sufficiently carefully matched to entry levels or to target levels. This means that some gifted or talented pupils do not make sufficient progress, while some pupils with special needs are working at too high a level to master the work covered, although the progress of pupils with special educational needs overall is satisfactory. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported in class and make satisfactory progress.
130. GCSE performance has improved over recent years, and although the percentage of pupils gaining A\* - C in 2002 was well below the national average it compared well with results in English Language and science and with the results of the same pupils in other subjects. Boys did much better than girls. More pupils were entered in mathematics for GCSE than in the other core subjects and most pupils gained at least grade G, which demonstrates satisfactory achievement for most pupils and good achievement for many pupils with special educational needs. Results in 2002 were a considerable improvement on previous years. They were enhanced by good results in statistics, obtained in one year in an after-school class. All pupils gained grade F or better and half of them gained grades A\* - C.

## **Quality of education**

131. The quality of teaching is good overall. All teaching seen was at least satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 about half was good, in Years 10 and 11 most of the teaching was good. Teachers are caring and concerned to do their best for the pupils and relationships are very good. The department is committed to improving standards of numeracy and to introducing aspects of the National Numeracy Initiative. Lessons are well planned with a three-part structure from the national framework. Objectives are shared with pupils. There are some good plenary sessions in which pupils explain what has been done in the lesson, but introductions are sometimes not brisk enough and do not have a wide enough range of questions. There is some use of resources such as number cards and fans, to give everyone an opportunity to respond. The department makes insufficient use of ICT, although an interactive whiteboard has been acquired and a set of graphical calculators is available for use. Marking of pupils' work is generally good, and approaches to assessment are effective. Homework is used regularly to consolidate and extend classwork.
132. Pupils respond well, behave well and co-operate fully. They are very enthusiastic about number challenges and puzzles and in one class, following a practical activity, there was a very good discussion about the angle properties of polygons. Except in GCSE coursework activities, lessons rarely involve extended discussion or activities which will interest pupils or will enable them to find out aspects of mathematics for themselves.

## **Leadership and management**

133. The department benefits from good leadership from the head of department, who has successfully improved many aspects of its work since recent inspections, including the standards achieved, the quality of teaching and its monitoring. Many teachers in the department are not mathematics specialists. New teachers receive effective in-class support, but the large number of part-time teachers who teach outside the specialist accommodation restricts the day-to-day monitoring and support the head of department can offer. Aspects of the timetable including the sharing of teaching groups and the allocation of time in the week limit the continuity of pupils' learning. The department is making a significant contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through planned provision in the scheme of work and interesting display in and outside the mathematics rooms.

## **NUMERACY**

### **Standards**

134. Standards of numeracy are overall well below average. Pupils' numeracy attainment is low on entry. Many pupils have difficulties with numeracy, and often have to work out number facts that they should be able to recall. They are not yet able to discuss strategies for calculating or to use known results to deduce unfamiliar ones. Progress in subjects other than mathematics is not generally limited by poor numeracy skills since work in these subjects does not usually demand high levels of computation or number awareness. Some pupils have difficulty with measuring in physical education, and in interpreting graphs in science. In business studies, pupils are not confident in creating charts and graphs to make comparisons or recognising when the computer carries out the wrong calculation.

## **Teaching**

135. The mathematics department is committed to improving standards of numeracy and is adopting ideas from the Key Stage 3 National Strategy. There has been improved liaison with primary schools. Lesson plans are based on the National Framework: objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and the three-part structure is widely used. Plenary sessions are used well to review the lesson content and to check understanding. Introductory sessions are not brisk enough to give a wide range of mental activity in a short time and to make sure that all pupils participate, although in some classes simple number equipment makes it possible for all pupils to respond. There is an increasing amount of numeracy teaching in other subjects, for example, in business education there is discussion of the process of calculation before using the computer to carry out calculations using spreadsheets, and in geography pupils are encouraged to try calculations without resort to the calculators.

## **Curriculum provision**

136. The mathematics department has led effective whole-staff training and several departments have considered how they can contribute to the development of numeracy and refer to this in policy documents. There are many opportunities for pupils to apply mathematics across the curriculum. In physical education pupils measure distances when setting up equipment, and in fitness activities they calculate effort, display results using pie charts and use stop watches. In design and technology and science, pupils measure length, weight and time, and display and analyse data. In geography, pupils use co-ordinates, scales and graphical display. In media studies and history pupils encounter timelines and data analysis. Work in ICT includes arithmetical and algebraic work with formulae in spreadsheets and databases. Art includes scaling and pattern. Pupils in modern foreign languages calculate restaurant bills, identify dates and make good use of the 24-hour clock.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good, providing a clear sense of direction and purpose.
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are good.
- The level of support for pupils with special needs is good.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment are well below average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is not fully imbedded into the scheme of work.
- Teachers do not systematically incorporate an effective end session into lessons to review progress and inform future planning.
- Pupils identified as gifted or talented are not regularly challenged with extension material.

### Standards and achievement

137. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average but were above average in comparison with similar schools. Since the previous inspection the results have improved and the rate of improvement in the last two years has been at a rate much greater than the national trend. GCSE results were well below the national average in 2002 but have improved steadily since the previous inspection. Almost two-fifths of pupils in the year group were not entered for double award science since they were recent arrivals to the school and either had very limited English or their background in science was inadequate to meet the examination requirements in time.
138. During the inspection, the standards of pupils' work seen in Years 7 to 9 was well below the expected level and generally reflected the national test results. Pupils' progress in lessons is generally good but their ability to assimilate knowledge and recall basic facts from previous lessons is very limited. As a result they do not develop confidence in apply their thinking in new situations. With prompting, Year 8 pupils recalled the basic food types but were not able to use this knowledge confidently in selecting foods for healthy meals. Year 9 pupils recognised the presence of chlorophyll in diagrams of plant leaf cells but were not able to recall the role of the chlorophyll or details about photosynthesis. Pupils' investigative skills do develop quite well in Years 7 to 9. They record their observations and measurements accurately and present their data in suitable graphical forms. Setting arrangements enables work to be suitably modified to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils and those with limited English. Pupils receive good support and guidance and reach standards in line with their ability. Pupils generally achieve well in Years 7 to 9 considering their low levels of attainment on entry to the school. Those identified as gifted or talented, however, are not regularly challenged to strive for higher standards.
139. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection generally reflected the GCSE results of 2002. Higher attaining pupils are reaching the expected level and occasionally exceeding it in lessons. However, most pupils have low attainment levels due in large part to the regular influx of new students into these years whose language competence is low and who have very little background in formal learning in science. These pupils are given very good support and achieve well in relation to their background. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are

rising, and this is particularly seen in the increased confidence of the higher attaining pupils. Higher attaining Year 11 pupils showed good understanding of forces, predicted how the extension of a spring would vary with the applied force, and sketched a graph of the results before undertaking the experiment. They understood about elasticity and the elastic limit of materials. Overall, pupils generally achieve well in Years 10 and 11 in relation to their prior attainment.

### **Quality of education**

140. The quality of teaching overall is good. It was good and better in just over half the lessons and in one lesson it was excellent. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the subject and language needs of pupils, although pupils identified as gifted or talented are not regularly challenged with extension material. Teachers are confident in their delivery and use questions well to assess pupils' progress. Lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are well managed in group activities and during practical sessions. There is a clear emphasis on developing language skills in most lessons. Pupils in Year 7 carrying out a project on invertebrates used resources extremely well to gather information and then gave oral presentation of some interesting facts to the whole class. However, opportunities for free writing are limited and not always well guided. Teachers know their pupils very well and they work efficiently with support staff to ensure pupils with learning problems receive the assistance they need to make progress. Pupils respond well to their lessons. They are attentive, generally keen to learn and maintain good focus in lessons. Although time in lessons is generally well used, teachers do not consistently plan sufficient time for an effective plenary session to review learning objectives to inform the planning of future lessons. The use of computers in teaching and learning remains very under-developed. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has improved.

### **Leadership and management**

141. The subject is very well led. The head of department is very committed to raising standards and has developed a dedicated team of teachers who share this vision. The work of the department is very effectively monitored. The department shares good practice in teaching through lesson observations. Recent staffing difficulties have been alleviated by the recruitment of three graduate but unqualified teachers from overseas. They have received excellent mentoring by the department, are undertaking professional training through the University of Wolverhampton and are making a valued contribution to the teaching programme. A new scheme of work has been developed for Years 7 to 9, and is proving successful in meeting pupils' needs. The recent decision to move to the single award science programme for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is understandable, based on the regular influx of pupils into these years from overseas. Higher attaining pupils have the option of the double award course. This is timetabled for current Year 10 pupils but Year 11 pupils have to attend classes outside normal school time to receive the additional material. The take-up rate for this is good. Assessment procedures are good. Regular testing ensures that pupils' progress is carefully monitored through the school, and the data collected is effectively used to set realistic but challenging targets. Booster classes for pupils in Year 9 are timetabled this year, but those for Year 11 pupils are organised out of school time. The recent refurbishment of most of the laboratories has provided good quality accommodation for teaching. The resources are generally satisfactory, although there is a current lack of computer equipment to deliver fully the required sections of work in data logging and processing. The technical staff manages the resources very well, and this contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the teaching programme. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

### **ART AND DESIGN**

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

**Strengths:**

- Leadership and management of the department are good.
- Pupils achieve better than might be expected considering their starting points.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive.
- The teaching staff show good commitment and teamwork.

**Areas for development**

- The failure to use ICT sufficiently in Years 7 to 9 prevents full delivery of the National Curriculum.
- The teaching of drawing and the use of sketchbooks are weak.
- Assessment data is not used sufficiently to diagnose weaknesses in the curriculum.

**Standards and achievement**

142. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show standards to be well below average. The 2002 GCSE results for Year 11 pupils were also well below average. These results were low due to poor pupil attendance and the failure of many pupils to meet coursework requirements. The girls' results were significantly better than those of boys. The 2001 results were well above average and better than those at the time of the last inspection.
143. The work seen in school is below average. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 work from observation, drawing everyday objects, usually in pencil, but few are able to use line or tone with any sensitivity. Selected sketchbooks of Year 9 pupils contain collections of imagery such as the American flag, famous artists' work, drawings of everyday objects and multi-cultural items including fabrics and artefacts. This work makes it clear that the basic skills of drawing and colour need further development. Pupils do not use sketchbooks well to experiment or record personal responses to the world around us. There is a strong emphasis on finished work with insufficient regard to investigation into methods and materials. There are good quality paintings based on the work of the English painter Ben Nicholson, echoing his overlapping shapes and earth colours. Pupils make insufficient use of computers. Recognising that pupils have had little if any previous experiences of art and design when they arrive in the school, their achievements by the end of Year 9 are satisfactory.
144. Standards by the end of Year 11 are close to the national average although pupils continue to have under-developed basic skills of looking, analysing and recording through drawing. Pupils are not aware of the need to draw to collect specific information. Sketchbooks continue to be under-used for investigation and experimentation. Pupils are very dependent on their teachers for guidance and few know how well they are doing relative to the examination board's assessment objectives, or how they might improve. Their use of colour, shape and process reflects well the multi-cultural pupil population in work such as Mendhi patterns where good pencil skills result in highly decorative designs. Pupils invariably have an end product in sight and find it difficult to deviate or exploit a happy accident. Pupils are familiar with the theory of photography, health and safety in the darkroom, as well as the pioneers of photography including Fox-Talbot. The much-improved standards, increased knowledge and understanding of methods, materials and famous artists means that achievement is good by the end of Year 11.
145. Those who are least capable in art and design and those who have English as an additional language make progress equal to their classmates. Their teachers are fully aware of their particular needs and plan the work so that it offers learning opportunities to all. Energetic,

knowledgeable classroom assistants provide very good support for pupils. Those who are the most capable make slower than expected progress because their underdeveloped basic skills prevent them developing their talents or working independently from their teachers.

### **The quality of education**

146. Teaching overall is good because of the teachers' obvious regard for their subject, their pupils and the school. More than half of the lessons seen were at least good and some were very good. Well-managed lessons skilfully generate enthusiasm and learning opportunities for all. Teachers plan their lessons well and most have sufficient experience to modify lessons as necessary. The teaching of drawing skills is an area for development from Year 7 onwards. Good relationships are a strength of the department. Year 10 pupils learned very quickly when making collage from drawings of pinecones. Their teacher made his expectations of productivity and creativity clear by providing good quality demonstrations of positive and negative shapes and of the process and history of collage and associated vocabulary. The lesson included a good review of previous learning plus an equally clear review of new learning at the end of the lesson. The classroom assistant provided particularly good support for the whole range of pupils who took the initiative, accepting responsibility for their learning. They knew what they were doing and most knew how to improve. A teacher chastised Year 11 pupils effectively for not having done enough work since the previous lesson to investigate the photographers' work they were due to discuss. The teacher inspired her pupils to increase their understanding when analysing composition and recording their opinions. Her strategy of increasing the challenge and explaining methods and new words promoted pupils' interest and progress. In the only unsatisfactory lesson, an inexperienced teacher lacked the skills to prevent gossip interfering with the learning of others. Pupils are not comfortable using the language of art and design and have difficulty talking about their work. Marking is often descriptive rather than evaluative and homework sometimes fails to challenge the higher attaining pupils.

### **Leadership and management**

147. The leadership and management of the department are good and promote strong teamwork and high expectations of pupils and teachers alike. Planning is very thorough and detailed although occasionally there is insufficient focus on raising attainment. There are very good systems to monitor teaching and learning and for the induction of new teachers. The curriculum is reasonably broad but not enough attention is given to three-dimensional studies and printmaking. Elements of the textiles course are insufficiently investigative. The failure to use ICT sufficiently in Years 7 to 9 prevents full delivery of the National Curriculum. Assessment procedures are good. Increasing numbers opt for GCSE art and design, textiles and photography. The accommodation is satisfactory although the split-site nature of the school does cause some classes to be late for lessons. Teaching and learning, progress, attainment and attitudes have all improved since the last inspection. Improvement overall is therefore good.

### **CITIZENSHIP**

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

**Strengths**

- The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been carefully planned.
- All departments, especially science, geography and religious education, have identified where their subject contributes to pupils understanding of citizenship.
- Pupils show very good responsibility towards each other and the community, ensuring that citizenship permeates the fabric and life of the whole school at all times.

**Areas for improvement**

- A scheme of work for all pupils is yet to be completed.
- There is no effective method for assessing and reporting pupils' progress.
- Resources, especially worksheets, do not sufficiently challenge the various groups of pupils.

**Standards and Achievement**

148. Citizenship as a subject is new to the school with many pupils just starting to develop their study of rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. Before the statutory introduction of the subject, all departments completed an audit to demonstrate how the various elements of citizenship can be taught through various subjects. This enabled the overall planning to link themes across different year groups and to ensure that all elements are taught. For pupils in Year 10, 70 per cent of their learning derives from work done during religious education lessons. All pupils study religious education and as a result more tutor time can be devoted to other aspects of the personal, social and health education curriculum, including work experience and careers provision. Other subjects are gradually reinforcing learning, notably in science, where Year 10 pupils discuss ethical issues and respect for life, and Year 9 pupils in German, who learn about post war division in Germany.
149. Standards in work seen are below average overall and reflect pupils' abilities in both literacy and in religious education where the bulk of the work in citizenship takes place. On the other hand pupils achieve well throughout the school compared to their starting points. They develop a good sense of responsibility towards each other and to the community. By the age of 16, pupils are becoming informed citizens and are developing skills of enquiry and communication. They are generally interested in their lessons, especially during lessons that relate to issues relevant to the school. For example, Year 11 pupils explored the topic of race relations and how to live in an orderly and racially harmonious community. In discussion they used personal experiences to identify situations and contribute examples of racial tension. Pupils achieve well when the work is challenging and their minds fully engaged. For example pupils had enjoyed an assembly the previous day and were keen to use the ideas and thoughts raised in their discussions. They were given time to refine their views and listen to others' opinions.

**Quality of Education**

150. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers are well prepared for lessons. In the best lessons teachers have good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and encourage lively debate. This was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 8. An eye-opening and thought-provoking discussion on the theme of human rights was well led by the teacher. Key words were used and described carefully, followed by discussions by the pupils. This ensured that they were familiar with terms such as 'hostage' and 'terrorism' and could use them appropriately. Pupils considered their own right to an education and also to human rights in a global context. This means that the pupils were able to use their own experiences to contribute to the lesson. All opinions were valued with very good behaviour and attitudes displayed. Where teaching is less strong

teachers are less confident to deliver the topic, despite a clear commitment and willingness. This means that pupils become passive in lessons and are not encouraged to contribute and share their opinions. There is too much reliance on printed worksheets and, despite often good support for pupils with special educational needs and for those who have English as an additional language, these resources are often inappropriate. Assessment is not yet a regular part of teaching so there is little coherent approach in order to monitor and measure progress in lessons. Whenever possible in lessons pupils use their own personal knowledge of different cultures to contribute to discussions and they are encouraged to research issues and present findings in class.

### **Leadership and management**

151. The school has decided to incorporate citizenship lessons into the current programme for personal, social and health education. Pupils receive two thirty-minute lessons during the week taught by their form tutors. Overall leadership of the subject is good and the school adopts a group approach to management of the subject. Heads of year and other senior members of staff share responsibility for planning, with the heads of year having responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and delivery of the lessons. A good citizenship programme has been written but is as yet incomplete. The programme is linked closely to assembly themes and includes other aspects of personal, social and health education. This means that citizenship becomes part of the daily life and behaviour of the school community. There is a satisfactory range of resources and teaching aids. Regular meetings are held to evaluate the success of the lessons and to address any concerns teachers may have.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- The teachers in the department work well together and are committed to improving standards.
- They have positive attitudes to the challenge of dealing with a rapidly changing pupil population.
- Procedures to monitor and share teaching practice are good.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are identified and supported well.
- The department's capacity for further improvement is good.

### Areas for improvement

- GCSE results are well below national results and lower proportions of pupils are entered for examination than are nationally.
- Learning outcomes are not always clear and so quality measures are not used in judging performance.
- Marking practices are not consistent across the material areas.
- Learning opportunities are not fully developed within lessons for those pupils who are gifted or talented in design and technology.
- ICT is not always used when it would improve pace and the quality of the outcome.

## Standards and Achievement

152. In 2002, standards by the age of Year 9 were well below the national average, as judged by teachers' assessments. The proportion of pupils achieving national curriculum level 5 or above has increased over the last three years. The department has the challenge of trying to develop the design and technology capability of pupils with well below average attainment in English, mathematics and science. The rapid turn-over of the pupil population also presents significant organisational difficulties for the department. Large numbers of pupils often join the school in years other than Year 7. Pupils arrive even as late as Year 10 or Year 11 with limited command of English and limited exposure to design and technology experiences. Teachers have a positive attitude to the development of these pupils and behave in an exemplary manner in providing opportunities for pupils to become competent in design technology.
153. Standards of work seen during the inspection for pupils in Years 7-9 are generally below average. Achievement by Year 9 is good considering that pupils' capability in design and technology is well below average when they enter the school. When teacher assessments and work seen during the inspection are compared, it shows that there is improved performance. Pupils have a good range of experiences planned for them and produce a good range of products.
154. Test results for GCSE examinations in 2002 are also well below those achieved nationally and a lower proportion of the year group are entered than is usual elsewhere. In Years 10 and 11, pupils can choose to study in one of three material areas for GCSE: food, graphic products or resistant materials. The low numbers of pupils who achieve higher grade passes at GCSE make it unrealistic to compare the differences between material areas. However, over the last three years the number of pupils achieving higher grade passes has increased in all three areas. There is a difference in attainment between the boys and girls. Girls are doing better than boys but both achieve better than expected in Years 10 and 11 when their attainment in Year 9 is taken as the starting point for comparison.

155. In Years 10 and 11, standards seen are below average. Achievement is good for these pupils considering that their teachers assessed their attainment as well below average at the end of Year 9. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are identified, their difficulties are known and they make satisfactory progress.
156. Overall attitudes and behaviour seen during the inspection in design and technology lessons are satisfactory. Pupils have both good working relationships with teachers and work well together. They support each other in their work, in particular by helping other pupils to understand the work when there are language difficulties to overcome. Pupils are conscientious in the way they clean up in all material areas. Many pupils are keen to finish and improve work done in lessons and they are able to work through break times, part of the lunch time and also attend after school sessions during the week and on Saturdays. They can do this because of teachers' enthusiasm and commitment to the pupils' success.
157. The department makes a good contribution to developing literacy skills through the use of word walls in classrooms showing technical terms in all material areas. Design work uses some annotation and pupils are always keen to participate in speaking and listening opportunities when provided by teachers during lessons. This could be further developed to provide more opportunities for this. Numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily in the calculation of material costs, measuring and marking out work.

### **Quality of Education**

158. Overall teaching and learning are good in design and technology lessons. Teaching in lessons was always at least satisfactory, in two thirds of lessons it was good or better and some very good teaching was seen in textiles. Where teaching is good, teachers have good classroom routines, relate well to pupils and have good management practices. They have good subject knowledge which is used to support pupils well in design and make activities. Objectives are made clear to pupils at the start of most lessons and good use is made of white boards to illustrate key points. Teachers know which of their pupils have special educational needs and what their difficulties with learning are. These pupils are supported well in lessons and they generally make satisfactory progress. Some classes have an additional teacher which provides an opportunity for pupils to have more 'one-to-one' support. Pupils with English as an additional language not only benefit from the additional support but also from the additional languages spoken by the teachers. Some support is provided by teachers on a graduate teacher program and some classes have learning support assistants allocated to them. These learning support assistants work effectively with individuals, small groups or whole classes to ensure that pupils make good progress. Marking is variable in quality across material areas but, at its best, is encouraging and provides clear direction on how pupils should improve their work. Assessments are carried out and information is recorded as 'can do' statements by the pupils. The resultant targets for pupils on teacher records are satisfactory and are under further development to help pupils to help themselves in progressively developing each element of design technology capability. The department has already started to collect work to exemplify standards expected in design and technology. Homework is not yet used effectively within design and technology to extend learning. To enhance the technological experience of pupils, links have been created with other academic institutions, colleges and with some industrial and manufacturing companies.

### **Leadership and Management**

159. Leadership and management of the design and technology department are good. The design of the curriculum currently meets the needs of the pupils and the department reviews and develops this regularly. Improvement plans clearly identify appropriate priorities. Although the department has had some staffing difficulties it has been reorganised well to ensure that pupils are catered for and new teachers are now in place. Teachers work very closely together and there are many occasions where effective team teaching is used. Procedures to monitor teaching and share this practice are an integral part of the management of the work of the department. This practice is particularly beneficial for new teachers to the school and for teachers following training programs. Schemes of work require further development to include learning outcomes with quality measures.
160. The department is an improving one. Staff are fully aware that although pupils' capability on entry is well below average, it is improving, and there are plans in place to review and develop the curriculum to meet better the needs of pupils. These include developing schemes of work, student self-assessment and better use of data to help pupils develop. There are plans also to improve the quality and frequency of homework and the improvement of practical skills. The developments have not yet been extended to ensure that the needs of 'gifted or talented' pupils are met. There is improved use of ICT and further improvements to support the development of literacy and numeracy. The department has responded to the needs of pupils and started an Applied GCSE in manufacturing this year for Year 10 pupils along with a GNVQ in health and social care and a technology aspect to the post-16 International Baccalaureate. A motor vehicle maintenance course with practical aspects delivered at a local college is also offered. All in all improvements since the last inspection are good.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching and learning are always at least good and sometimes very good.
- Pupils' behaviour is always at least good and sometimes very good.
- Procedures for target setting and the assessment of pupils' work are good.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Standards of attainment in all year groups are low.
- Tasks and materials are not sufficiently modified to meet the different learning needs of pupils.

## **Standards and achievement**

161. Standards attained by pupils in the teacher-assessed tests at the end of Year 9 showed a considerable improvement over those of the previous two years although they were still well below the national average. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* - C rose overall over the last three years although they are still well below the national average. However, almost all pupils who are entered for the examination attain a pass at grade A\* - G, a proportion that is similar to the national average.
162. During the inspection the standards of pupils' work seen in Years 7 to 9 was below national expectations but indicated that the improvement of last year was continuing. In relation to their very low attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieve well. They acquire and use a good geographical vocabulary in both their written and oral work. Pupils who have English as an

additional language sometimes struggle with pronunciation and spelling but teachers support them well and they continue to make the effort to attain accuracy. Pupils acquire a good range of geographical skills and all have a basic understanding of geographical processes and patterns. However, pupils' sense of where places lie in the world in relation to each other is weak and many have poor recall of facts even by the end of a lesson in which they were presented. They make little use of independent writing although most of their written work, which is usually well-presented and complete, is in the form of sentences. Pupils with special educational needs progress as well as their peers, using modified materials and with individual assistance. Gifted or talented pupils do not progress as well as they could as they generally cover topics in just the same depth as the rest of their class instead of tackling more complex work.

163. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 were well below the national average. Achievement overall is better than expected. All work seen would obtain a GCSE pass grade – in line with the national average - but there was very little work that would attain the higher grades. Pupils complete a substantial amount of work. They extend their geographical vocabulary, consolidate and develop their skills, deepen and widen their knowledge of geographical processes and make good progress from their generally low level of prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well with the support of modified materials and help from teachers and teaching assistants and are assiduous in completing their work. Pupils who have English as an additional language achieve well but some of their written English is so inaccurate that their meaning is not clear. Their understanding is often better than their capacity to express it. Gifted or talented pupils do not achieve as well as they could as they generally complete exactly the same work as the rest of their class. The standard of enquiry work completed by pupils was very low in relation to the national average. Although pupils understand the principle of enquiry, can carry out an enquiry, identify and evaluate the outcomes and present their results in the form of graphs, overall their work is at a relatively simple level.

### **Quality of education**

164. Teaching and learning are good overall and in nearly one third of lessons, all in Years 7 to 9, they are very good. All teaching is lively and enthusiastic and engages pupils' interest, encouraging them to learn well. Teachers manage pupils very well and enjoy warm, good-humoured relationships with them whilst maintaining the highest standards of behaviour. All pupils respond well to this approach, are keen to do what is required of them and few waste time in class. Almost all pupils concentrate and work hard for the whole of their lessons although occasionally their attention wanders during lengthy expositions. Teachers are very careful to ensure that pupils who have English as an additional language understand what they are taught and take opportunities to reinforce the learning of English as well as geography. All lessons are planned thoroughly, with reference to the different learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and of gifted or talented pupils. The needs of the former are well met through the provision of modified tasks. Although these are not always both demanding and accessible, teachers and in some instances teaching assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive sufficient assistance to do what is required of them. The needs of gifted or talented pupils are not met so well, because more demanding work is not available for them as a matter of course, and they are often unoccupied for some part of their lessons. Teachers do not expect enough extended and independent writing from all pupils. Homework is used appropriately and is always set well before the end of the lesson so that there is time to ensure that pupils are clear about what they are to do. All teachers have the same consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work so that it is supportive and always makes clear what pupils are to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

165. Leadership and management are very good. The work of the department is effectively monitored by the head of department through regular formal and informal observation of teaching. Planning within the department is meticulous. The scheme of work is very well developed with opportunities for the development of citizenship, and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural development and for the development of their literacy and numeracy skills are all clearly identified. The needs of pupils with special educational needs, gifted or talented pupils and pupils who have English as an additional language are identified in all sections, though the strategies to meet these needs are not always evident. Policies and procedures for assessment are well developed and assiduously followed. The department believes that its development of joint target setting with pupils is leading to a rise in standards. The curriculum within geography includes opportunities for enquiry work and first-hand investigation and opportunities for the use of ICT are identified and planned for.
166. Accommodation is good in the two attractively presented specialist geography rooms. However, because they are on two separate sites, it is difficult to oversee the work of the department and time is lost at the beginning of some lessons as pupils move from one building to another. Resources are satisfactory and have just improved with the provision of 15 laptop computers in the larger room. However, the smaller room does not have its own television and video set nor has it any computer facilities.
167. Improvements since the last inspection are very good. There are significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance. Pupils now participate in fieldwork and use ICT. The low standards of attainment remain, because they are closely linked to the very low levels of attainment that pupils have when they enter the school.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned.
- There is a strong emphasis on literacy in all lessons.
- Pupils are given a solid foundation on which to build historical knowledge.
- Good management of classes and very good relationships ensure a secure learning environment for all groups of pupils.
- Assessment procedures are well developed.

### Areas for development

- The absence of a GCSE course restricts the academic opportunities for pupils and teachers.
- The limited opportunities for extended writing restrict the progress of gifted or talented pupils.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in the delivery of the history curriculum.
- Learning outside the classroom is limited by the absence of field work.

### Standards and achievement

168. Standards in history are improving slowly, but remain low. Standards attained by pupils in the teacher-assessed tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000 showed an improvement over those of the previous year although they were still well below the national average. At present there is no GCSE course in history. The course was offered but there were insufficient takers to make the subject viable.
169. Inspection evidence confirms that although the standard remains low, attainment overall is continuing to improve. Higher attaining Year 7 pupils distinguish between primary and secondary sources. They use documentary evidence to explain how Henry II established his control over England. Higher attaining Year 8 pupils studying the French Revolution further develop their historical skills. They use specialist words, for example bourgeoisie, and explain the discontent of the Third Estate. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils analyse source materials, to distinguish bias and assess the reliability of the documents. Lower attaining pupils appreciate the propaganda value of art by examining portraits of Elizabeth I and Henry VIII. Some lower attaining pupils have difficulty in following simple instructions and are given individual help by the teacher.
170. Differing groups of pupils achieve according to the weight of educational problems and/or the language difficulties many of them have to overcome. Given the low level of attainment of the majority of these pupils when they enter the school, achievement overall is good in Years 7 to 9. The department is very aware of the relationship between good progress in history and good literacy skills. 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. Every new topic begins with key words. Pupils use dictionaries to find out the meanings for themselves. Their vocabulary is constantly extended. A Year 8 lesson on the French Revolution is enhanced by a French speaking pupil's advice on the correct pronunciation of guillotine and Bastille. A Year 7 class, made up entirely of pupils with English as an additional language, learned about the quarrel between Henry II and Thomas Becket. The teacher has high expectations. They learned new words such as Archbishop and repeated them until the teacher was satisfied with the pronunciation and the understanding. Pupils enjoy the story, are keen to join in the rôle play and, as a result of the skilful teaching, are able to put the events in order. One pupil understands enough to ask "Was Henry happy afterwards?" In this group the boys are quicker

and more responsive than the girls, whose language skills are not as confident. The department is very aware of its responsibilities towards pupils with special educational needs. Teachers know their individual needs. Support assistants make a significant contribution. Text books and good quality worksheets are pitched at the appropriate levels for different groups. Extension work for gifted or talented pupils is included in lesson plans but lessons often do not progress far enough for it to be used. Some higher attaining pupils are not given difficult enough work to make the progress of which they are capable. There are not enough opportunities for extended writing. Progress in some areas is hampered by the language difficulties experienced by many pupils. ICT is not used sufficiently to enhance pupils' learning.

### **Teaching and Learning**

171. Teaching, overall, is good. Of the seven lessons observed five were good and very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The structure of lessons is good. Pupils understand the aims and the key words to be used in each topic. Each lesson begins with questioning to reinforce previous learning. Pupils know what to expect and what is expected of them. The familiarity gives them security. In the best taught classes pupils are kept fully involved, their attention held and their concentration sustained. Good classroom organisation means there need be no distraction from learning. Lessons are well planned by the Head of Department. Classes are well managed. Lower attaining pupils react well to, and learn more confidently in, the calm and ordered atmosphere which is established in the best taught classes. The pace of lessons is usually good. Pupils learn to work to time but are not put under undue pressure. Teaching is very active and teachers are always ready to give extra help. The encouragement offered by teachers and the respect given to pupils' opinions gives them the confidence to participate in class. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9, including a group identified as gifted or talented, are deflected from narrative description towards analysis and deduction. The key word is not "describe" but "why?" They learn always to support opinions with evidence. These pupils explain how much they appreciate the skills their study of history has taught them – how to recognise bias, how to write a good paragraph, and how to research a subject. Pupils at all levels are required to think. Relationships are very good between pupils and with teachers. Pupils co-operate well in groups. In most classes there is a very pleasant hardworking atmosphere. Work is taken seriously. The great majority of pupils want to learn. They enjoy their new knowledge.

### **Leadership and Management**

172. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department is newly appointed. Planning and organisation are good and still developing. Departmental aims are clearly laid out and achievable. Long term plans include the re-establishment of the GCSE course and in the short term, the department plans to introduce fieldwork. For this year the head of department is concentrating on known strengths. Assessment procedures are a strength of the department. Records are detailed and meticulous. Targets are set and pupils know their current National Curriculum Levels. Marking is regular and thorough, although it is not always constructive enough for pupils to understand precisely what they need to do to improve. The teachers work well as a team. Regular departmental and faculty meetings ensure the sharing of good practice.

173. Improvement since the previous inspection in 1997 has been satisfactory overall. Teaching, the behaviour and attitude of pupils, classroom management, and the provision of up-to-date textbooks have all improved. The emphasis on literacy has had a marked effect on progress, especially that of pupils with English as an additional language. However, opportunities for learning are restricted by the absence of a GCSE course and insufficient use of ICT. The

history department is forward-looking and receptive to change, committed to improving pupils' academic performance and to ensuring their enjoyment of the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Strengths**

- Achievement is better than expected throughout the main school.
- Teaching is good.
- Attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good.
- The provision is effectively managed.
- Computer resources are of high quality.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Attainment is well below average towards the end of Year 9 and below average towards the end of Year 11.
- There are poor success rates for the GNVQ Foundation course.

## **Standards and Achievement**

174. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Year 9 are well below average. However, those pupils entering the school at the beginning of Year 7 do so with very low and sometimes no skills in the subject. A significant proportion of pupils entering the school during Years 7, 8 and 9 also have very restricted skills in ICT. Taking this into account, together with their frequently poor literacy skills, the achievement of the majority of pupils at this stage is better than expected. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is also better than expected. Gifted or talented pupils, however, generally make unsatisfactory progress. The percentages of pupils reaching the expected level in the teacher assessments during Year 9 have been rising over the last three years. However, in 2002 the percentage continued to be well below the national average. Girls generally perform better than boys at this stage.
175. Standards in ICT by the end of Year 11 are below average. Significant numbers of pupils enter the school throughout Years 10 and 11, many with low levels of ICT skills in addition to limited command in English. The achievement of the majority of pupils during Years 10 and 11 is better than might be expected when these and other factors are taken into account. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs continue to make good progress. However gifted or talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress. GNVQ Part One Intermediate level pass rates have risen over the last three years. In 2002 approximately two-thirds of the candidates were successful. This pass rate was approximately 20 per cent above the Local Education Authority average. However pass rates for the GNVQ Part One Foundation level programme have been poor and in 2002 only 5 per cent of the candidates were successful. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls at this stage.
176. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 were well below the national average. Pupils' skills relating to communicating and handling information are better developed than other aspects of the requirements. However, many pupils lack the skills and confidence to undertake relatively basic tasks relating to ICT without considerable support from the teacher. Pupils in a middle attaining Year 9 class, for example, were undertaking work involving the

use of data in a spreadsheet and presenting the information graphically. Although the teacher explained clearly all the steps that were involved, and had also produced a detailed handout to which the pupils could refer, many were unable to complete the task successfully without further assistance.

177. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 were below average. A number of pupils on the recently introduced applied GCSE in Year 10 and on the Intermediate level GNVQ programme are beginning to produce some higher quality work. Files of work seen were well organised and indicated that several pupils were developing a good range of ICT skills. However, overall, the majority of pupils have below average skills with standards of work undertaken by Foundation and entry level pupils being particularly low.

### **Quality of Education**

178. The teaching of ICT is good throughout the school, and some of the teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. There are several reasons for the good teaching. All lessons are well planned and involve pupils in well planned activities, including practical work. Good quality handouts support learning during lessons. Teachers use digital projectors effectively, demonstrating the practical uses of the technology, and there is some particularly effective team teaching. All teachers develop good relationships with their pupils. Teachers set regular homework for the pupils to undertake and keep good records of pupils' progress. As a result of the good teaching, pupils develop good attitudes and behaviour. They respond well to the questions teachers ask them during the group work. Good quality computer resources in most classes support the learning well. Two things restrict the learning. The pupils only have to share the use of a computer in a few of the larger classes, but when they do it clearly impedes their progress towards becoming autonomous computer users. Pupils arrive late to several classes in several cases, because they have to walk from one teaching block to another between the lessons.

### **Leadership and Management**

179. Leadership and management of the department are good. ICT forms part of a business and technology faculty. Staff hold regular meetings at this level. Those involved with the teaching of ICT work well as a team. Teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated effectively. There are regular reviews of the work of the department. The curriculum is satisfactory, except that the data logging aspects of the statutory requirements are not met. Detailed schemes of work are in place. Pupils have access to good quality computer resources in lessons. They have access to these outside of the normal school day. The department has made good progress since the inspection in 1997. Although standards continue to be low the majority of pupils now make better than expected progress and achieve well. There has been a significant improvement in the level of computer resources.

### **Information and Communication Technology across the curriculum**

180. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is too variable, and is unsatisfactory overall. In Business education it is very good and in English, French and Spanish it is good. Pupils have good access to resources in these subjects and make planned and effective use of them to support various aspects of their work. There is much less use in a number of other subjects. For example, the limited use in science and the lack of data-logging work means that the statutory requirements for this aspect are not currently being met. Although mathematics is increasing its use of ICT, it also remains limited. Good use of graphic calculators is, however, made in this subject. There is only very limited use of ICT in art during Years 7 to 9 and as a result the statutory requirements for this subject are not currently

being met. There is very little use in history and no use of ICT in the community languages Panjabi and Urdu. The school is aware of the limited use of information and communication technology in a number of subjects and plans to use the European Computer Driving Licence qualification to raise staff expertise and confidence.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Overall, the quality of provision in the modern European foreign languages French, German and Spanish is **good**.

### **Strengths**

- Relationships between pupils and between teachers and pupils are very good.
- Teachers are committed to the success of the pupils.
- Provision for information and communication technology is good.
- Leadership and management are good.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Results, both at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE, are well below national averages.
- Marking is not linked to National Curriculum levels or GCSE criteria.
- Teachers do not always use the foreign language in lessons to best effect.

## **Standards and achievement**

181. Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well below national averages. Pupils do not begin to study a modern language until the start of Year 7, and as they join the school with general levels of attainment well below national averages this represents satisfactory achievement. Girls performed better than boys. Standards seen during the inspection confirm this picture. In the early stages of learning a foreign language pupils make satisfactory progress. They learn vocabulary at a reasonable rate and their listening and reading skills develop quite well. By the end of Year 9, however, not enough pupils are producing sufficient extended responses in speaking and writing to be certain of reaching the expected National Curriculum levels. They can refer to past and future events in a limited fashion, but they cannot produce more complex sentences. Teachers plan well for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for pupils with special educational needs. As a result they make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
182. By the end of Year 11 in 2002 results in French at GCSE were well below national averages. This has been the case over the last three years, although there has been a steady trend of improvement during this period. Girls have tended to perform better than boys, with the exception of 2002, when boys did much better against the national trend. A comparison of results across the school shows that pupils perform better in French than in some other subjects. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm this picture. Overall attainment is well below average. Some higher attaining pupils refer to past and future events correctly and express opinions, but in lower attaining groups, pupils' knowledge of tenses is less secure and in speaking pupils are less confident. This does, however, represent satisfactory achievement, given that many pupils who take examinations did not join the school in Year 7, and come to the school from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. Again, pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because teachers are aware of their needs and plan well to cater for them.

## Teaching and learning

183. Overall teaching in modern languages in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory and in just less than half of lessons it was good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In all lessons teachers share learning objectives with pupils and review learning at the end of the lesson. This means that pupils have a good sense of the progress they are expected to make during the lesson. In the good lessons, teachers make the most of opportunities to speak the foreign language, often using it for routine purposes as well as for practice; lessons proceed at a brisk pace; there is a variety of activity; teachers support understanding with visual aids and use pair work to develop speaking skills. As a result, pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. These features also mean that pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils with special educational needs are able to make similar progress to other pupils in their group. This is particularly noticeable when there is additional support available, because it is normally used effectively to promote learning. Gifted or talented pupils are identified, and both lesson plans and schemes of work identify opportunities to extend the learning of these pupils. However, these identified opportunities do not always translate into activities which genuinely stretch the higher attaining pupils in each teaching group. Relationships are very good in the classroom. Pupils generally respect their teachers and respect each other, which means that all work together to achieve common goals. Pupils show positive attitudes in lessons, work with application and make intellectual efforts.

## Leadership and management

184. The quality of leadership and management provided by the subject leader is good. He gives a good model of classroom practice, supports staff well and monitors the quality of teaching through classroom observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Documentation is thorough and schemes of work are well pitched and sequenced. Assessment procedures are not yet fully developed, because marking is not linked to National Curriculum levels or GCSE criteria. This makes it more difficult for pupils to know what level they are working at on a day-to-day basis, and how to improve to the next level. The modern languages curriculum meets statutory requirements, and the department is well placed to deliver National Curriculum requirements in information and communication technology with the installation of the new DIVACE digital language laboratory.
185. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching, staffing is more stable, there is a rising trend of improvement at GCSE in French and resource provision has been improved by the addition of the language laboratory.

## PANJABI AND URDU

Overall, the quality of provision in the community languages Panjabi and Urdu is **good**.

**Strengths**

- Pupils achieve well in comparison to other subjects in the light of their GCSE results.
- Learning is good because the teaching is good.
- Pupils are very well behaved and keen to learn.
- The teachers in the community languages department work well together and are committed to improving standards.

**Areas of improvement**

- There are at present no opportunities for the use of ICT in Panjabi and Urdu to help them with their work.
- Resources, particularly the stock of textbooks, are inadequate, especially in Urdu.
- The library has insufficient good books in community languages.

**Standards and achievement**

186. Standards attained in Panjabi by the end of Year 8 (there are no Panjabi classes in Year 9 and 10) are as expected for this age group. Achievement in relation to their prior attainment is good. Standards at the end of Year 11 are average. GCSE examination results for A\*- C in 2000 and 2001 were in line with the national average but above the national average for grades A\*- G. However, the results were well below the national average for A\*- C and A\*- G grades in 2002. Boys performed better than girls in 2000 and girls did better in 2001 but the performance of boys and girls was the same in 2002.
187. Standards attained in Urdu by the end of Year 9 are in line with the national expectations. Achievement in relation to their prior attainment is good. Standards at the end of Year 11 are average. GCSE examination results for A\*- C grades in 2000 were well below the national average but above the national average for A\*- G. The results improved in 2001 and 2002 which were in line with the national average for A\*- C and A\*- G grades. Girls performed better than boys in all these years.
188. During the inspection, the standards of pupils' work in Years 7 and 8 in Panjabi and 7 to 9 in Urdu was good. Considering that pupils in both languages have to master a new script, their achievement is very good. Their speaking and listening skills are more developed than their reading and writing skills. Pupils can answer the teacher's questions showing good understanding. Their standard of pronunciation is good, because teachers act as role models and encourage the use of target language in lessons. Pupils' achievement in reading and writing skills is good in relation to their prior attainment.
189. In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve satisfactorily by building on their attainment in Years 7 and 8. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make several spelling and grammatical errors in their written work but are making good progress overall.

**Quality of education**

190. Teaching in Panjabi and Urdu is good and much of it is very good. It was good in five and very good in four of the nine lessons observed. Teaching was very good in three of the four lessons in Panjabi and one of the five seen in Urdu. Teachers are native speakers and have a good knowledge of their subject. They use the target languages in class, which has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. In lessons where the teaching is good and very good the work is challenging, activities are well planned to match pupils capabilities and pupils participate fully. For example, in a lesson on letter writing complaining about a lost parcel in a Year 11 Panjabi class, pupils' thinking and ideas were well developed. In Years 7 and 8,

pupils' prior knowledge of their literacy skills is kept in mind when planning lessons. For example, in one Year 7 Urdu class, matching words with pictures and using flash cards to introduce new words to further develop their literacy skills was very effective. However, the use of ICT has not yet been developed in both languages. Good use of audio-visual aids such as an overhead projector and tape recorder was made. Pupils' work is regularly marked and useful comments are made for further improvement.

### **Leadership and management**

191. Leadership and management are good. Panjabi and Urdu are well managed by the head of community languages. Good relationships and strong commitment to raise standards are having a positive effect on pupils' learning. The day-to-day working is well managed by the head of community languages and the teachers work effectively as a team. The Urdu teacher, who is on a graduate teachers' training scheme, is fully supported by the head of community languages and also by a support teacher, which contributes to her confidence and professional development. There are, however, no facilities for ICT for teachers and pupils at present. Although the community languages have their own base room, with storage space and good displays of pupils' work and other relevant material, teachers have to teach in other rooms, effectively losing the benefits of the displays for teaching and learning.
192. Improvement since the last inspection is good overall. Standards are as good as they were during the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and pupils are now more well behaved.

### **MUSIC**

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

#### **Strengths**

- The school provides opportunities for pupils to perform and enjoy music making, despite the difficulties in recruiting a music teacher.

#### **Areas for Improvement**

- An experienced music teacher is urgently needed.
- Instrumental lessons and group activities will eventually require more suitable accommodation.

193. At the time of the inspection the music department was without qualified music staff and has had severe problems recruiting and retaining qualified staff for the last four years. The result has been that music was suspended from the timetable for the last four months for pupils in Years 7-9. There is no GCSE examination group in Year 10. There is an examination group of pupils in Year 11. A teacher from a neighbouring school has recently been seconded to teach these pupils. During the inspection week they received their second lesson from this teacher.

### **Standards and Achievement**

194. The current position in the music department means that no judgement can be made regarding standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9. There have been no GCSE candidates entered for examination during the last three years.
195. Two lessons for pupils in Year 11 were observed and standards attained were poor. As a result of disruption to regular teaching, achievement is well below what is expected for pupils at the age of 16. In the lessons observed, pupils struggled to describe their musical compositions and

to construct melodic lines over a ground bass. They are uncertain of melodic and musical structure and many pupils have limited performing skills. However, some pupils made good use of information and communication programs to store and refine their work. Overall, pupils' use of musical language is underdeveloped when trying to describe their music or to write commentaries for their coursework.

### **Quality of Education**

196. In the two music lessons seen teaching is very good. Planning is thorough and responsive both to examination requirements and individual pupil needs. Questioning is used to encourage pupils' involvement in their lessons. Explanations are thorough with clear demonstrations ensuring a thorough understanding by the pupils. The work done by a music instructor to support pupils in lessons is good. Using his musical strengths and knowledge he is able to contribute and enable all pupils to make progress in lessons. Pupils are given clear rules and guidance in order to complete coursework requirements.
197. Despite the lack of qualified music staff, the musical opportunities provided by other music staff, and external volunteers are good. There is a good range of extra-curricular groups which enable many pupils to enjoy music making. Participation by pupils in these groups contributes significantly to their social and moral development. Pupils' attitudes are positive and they talk enthusiastically about the opportunities afforded to them to perform in a variety of locations both within school and the local community. A gospel choir who had recently performed in Birmingham Cathedral performed effectively during an assembly, with the pupils familiar with repertoire and structure of the music. They take pride in contributing to the organisation of the group. During the inspection a pupil performed during a sixth form assembly, a traditional African drumming piece using his own djembe. Playing was confident and well received by his peers. Cultural diversity is celebrated and enjoyed, with peripatetic staff using their own personal knowledge to enliven and describe music.

### **Leadership and Management**

198. Currently there is no music co-ordinator in post and very little of the documentation usually found. Accommodation in the main teaching room is satisfactory with a display of pupils' work and key words to support pupils learning in Year 11. However, there is a lack of suitable accommodation for visiting instrumental teachers and group work. Resources are satisfactory, but there are limited un-tuned resources and insufficient tuned percussion instruments. Keyboards have limited functions and do not enable pupils to record and refine their compositions. The current provision for ICT equipment means that there is insufficient variety of programs for all pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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

### **Strengths**

- Lessons have clear objectives and there is good evaluation of learning.
- Class management is good.
- Good extra-curricular activities enhance learning opportunities.
- Pupils' progress is good in Years 7 to 9.
- There are good links between theory and practice in GCSE classes.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The accommodation is inadequate which affects the teaching, learning and progress of pupils.
- Planning for literacy and numeracy is evident in most lessons but not always delivered.
- Areas for improvement are not sufficiently highlighted by teachers for pupils in practical and theory work.

### **Standards and achievement**

199. Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding which are well below average in physical education. In 2002, teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 indicated below average attainment when compared with schools nationally. Teacher assessments indicated that pupils were achieving well in relation to their prior attainment.
200. In 1999, after well below average results, the GCSE course was discontinued. It was restarted in 2001. There is no comparable examination to existing examination courses at the time of the last inspection. Predicted grades anticipate below average results in 2003, but with an improvement on the results achieved in 1999. This indicates satisfactory achievement. More boys than girls take the course.
201. The work seen during the inspection indicates that teacher assessments in Year 9 are accurate. Pupils are well below average in Year 7. In a Year 7 gymnastics lesson, for example, pupils explored simple skills and understood some of the basic requirements of balance. Most pupils were able to comment on one another's performances but they were unable to maintain a balance and get extension. By Year 9, pupils progress well and work to below average standards in gymnastics with most pupils able to get extension in simple jumps although landings frequently lack control.
202. In Year 11, pupils in GCSE classes understand the need for, and effect of, fitness training. Most pupils are able to link the theory and practice well and are aware of safety issues. Highly motivated pupils explore apparatus, link this well to their learning on muscle groups, use the extension work offered by the teacher and ask questions to extend their knowledge; they work to national expectations. Several boys are less well motivated; several show weak knowledge of safety by chewing during physical exercise and work is below expected standards. Girls work well below national expectations because they display low attention levels and do not cooperate with the teacher.
203. In core physical education lessons, standards are below average. Progress has been maintained from Year 9 showing satisfactory achievement overall in Year 11 for both core and GCSE pupils. In some lessons, progress is affected by the restrictions in facilities. For example, in a Year 11 badminton lesson progress was affected because the practice area was too small and pupils did not have access to a full badminton court and so pupils did not have the benefit of correct markings and subsequently accurate targets. They could not fully appreciate the rules of the game.

### **Quality of education**

204. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are more effective in Years 7 to 9 where teachers are focused on raising standards in the first years of secondary education. For example, in a Year 7 basketball lesson the teacher demonstrated clearly the advantages and disadvantages of positioning in dribbling and passing. Pupils learned quickly but several were hampered by weak hand/eye co-ordination and lack of previous experience. In a Year 9 football lesson the teacher concentrated on control and

accuracy in passing and pupils learned a variety of passing techniques and applied them in a game. Teaching and learning are not as effective when pupils are not given all the necessary teaching points for success so that low attaining pupils, in particular, lack the correct body position to use apparatus, direct a shot, target a ball or execute a stroke. Areas for improvement are not sufficiently highlighted by teachers for pupils in practical and theory work. Most teachers evaluate at the end of lessons but opportunities to identify areas for improvement and to see and learn from the achievements of others are sometimes lost when time is not given for groups to display their work to others for analysis and improvement.

205. Teachers give generously of their time to provide a good extra-curricular programme to help pupils to improve their standards and extend their knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because they are included well in activities and receive individual attention if necessary. Teachers are clear in their explanations and frequently conduct demonstrations for good understanding. This approach is useful for all pupils but particularly benefits low attaining pupils, those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Teachers try to encourage pupils to become good citizens by insisting on sportsmanlike behaviour.
206. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Teachers insist on good behaviour and relationships are generally good. Teachers check the balance of teams in team games and include all students by ensuring that everyone has equal chances within games. A few pupils lack concentration and do not listen or work hard enough. Their behaviour affects the chances of other pupils, particularly in examination classes. The numbers of non-participating pupils are low and non-participants often contribute well when engaged and in good lessons help others to succeed by giving feedback and critically analysing performance.

### **Leadership and management**

207. The department is satisfactorily led. Resources are satisfactory but accommodation, mentioned as being in urgent need of improvement in the 1997 inspection report, remains unsatisfactory and affects the teaching, learning and progress of pupils. Opportunities in extra-curricular activities are also affected by insufficient indoor space and crowded changing areas. A hard play area is out of use because of the need for its refurbishment. There is no allocated teaching space for GCSE theory lessons and pupils are restricted to smaller than average indoor court space for sports such as basketball and badminton. There is little opportunity for pupils to access computer facilities. The library has books, CDs and videos to complement the GCSE course but too few physiology books. Teachers make the best use of facilities and resources available to them. They also provide good role models, share expertise and work to their strengths.
208. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, except in the matter of the accommodation. Pupils are discouraged from calling out. Literacy skills are encouraged in some lessons and are planned for in most. Girls' physical education has improved and the provision of extra-curricular activities is better than at the time of the last inspection. Objectives are outlined for lessons and evaluation of learning terminates lessons. New assessment processes monitor pupils' achievements but pupils are not as well informed as they should be by the use of grades linked to examination courses. Some opportunities exist for the gifted or talented pupils in the form of extension work but this could be improved further. Teachers keep up-to-date by meeting with other specialists, through attendance at courses and by monitoring one another's teaching to share expertise.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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

#### **Strengths**

- The teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Their good teaching leads to good learning from the pupils.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well.
- The value placed on the religious knowledge of the pupils who come from several faith communities is high.
- Religious education promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils very effectively.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Pupils writing skills are improving slower than their oral skills in Years 7 to 9.

### **Standards and achievement**

209. At the end of Year 9, the standards achieved by pupils in religious education are below those seen nationally. Pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment and many pupils speak English as an additional language. Their oral skills improve steadily throughout Years 7 to 9 but their written skills do not improve at the same rate. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious language and of what is taught in lessons are often good. They can usually express their ideas and beliefs fairly clearly. Their written work, however, remains weak.
210. The results in the GCSE Short Course examination in 2002 are above average at grades A\*-G, where every pupil entered for the examination achieved a grade. At the higher grades of A\* - C the results are well below average. However, about one sixth of the pupils entered for the examination achieved grade B, which shows that the subject is succeeding with gifted or talented pupils. In addition, the proportion of pupils achieving grade C is greater than the national average for grade C.
211. The school's detailed analysis of GCSE results over the last three years shows that results at both grades A\* - C and A\* - G are improving. Girls do better than boys. Results in the 2002 GCSE Short Course show that pupils in this school do better in this subject than in their other subjects by over three-quarters of a grade. Just over half the pupils in Year 11 are not entered for the GCSE examination. They lack familiarity with English or have weaker literacy skills but follow the same course as other pupils.
212. Pupils at both key stages make good progress. Teachers offer structured opportunities in lessons for pupils to practise speaking and listening. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud, to answer questions in sentences and to listen carefully. In this way, pupils begin to improve not only their knowledge and understanding of the subject but also their ability to express themselves clearly in speech. In their study of Christianity, Year 9 lower attaining pupils from diverse faith backgrounds can list the main events in the life of Jesus. They know what 'saviour', 'sin', and 'forgiveness' means in the Christian tradition.
213. One pupil, from another world faith, knows that 'creed' is from Latin and knows that 'the sign of the cross' is a Christian prayer. A number of pupils express themselves lucidly in their written work. Pupils are generally very productive. Those pupils with greater literacy problems are encouraged to write more clearly. Given the very low attainment on entry and the problems that many pupils have for whom English is an additional language, achievement by Year 9 is better than might be expected.

214. In Years 10 and 11 pupils continue to improve. Some pupils have particular difficulties. For example, in a Year 10 class where all the pupils have English as an additional language, progress in the lesson is slow. Pupils access the new GCE course at a simple level. They learn to pronounce key words like 'pollution' and to recognise and define simply words such as 'deforestation'. They grasp the difference between renewable and non-renewable resources. These pupils, all of whom are from overseas, are eager to learn but are in the process of acquiring and using English at a very basic level. They illustrate the problems that the school faces from groups of pupils who arrive in the school with little or no English and for whom the school has to make provision. In this lesson the pupils' achievement is good because, as a result of very good and well organised teaching, they reinforce some language skills, gain confidence and begin to understand some basic concepts.
215. By Year 11, there is definite improvement in pupils' written skills, particularly for higher attaining pupils, who produce writing of good standard. For example, their notes on aspects of medical ethics are clear and ordered. Other pupils, however, progress at a slower rate, limited by weaker writing skills.
216. In a Year 11 class with pupils of average attainment there is a clear understanding of moral and ethical issues associated with abortion, belief in God and with suffering and evil. Pupils' learning is very good because the teaching is very well structured, clear and stimulating.
217. Overall, achievement in religious education is good when compared to pupils' attainment on entry, whether that be in Year 7, or, as is often the case, much later in the school. Pupils' written work improves notably between Year 10 and Year 11, particularly for higher attaining pupils, and this is the basis for the improving results at GCSE.

### **Quality of education**

218. Teaching is consistently good. There are no unsatisfactory lessons. All the lessons seen are either good or very good. The two experienced specialist teachers of religious education are ably assisted by teachers from other subject areas. They are a dedicated and hard working team. What is special about religious education in this school is that it takes into account the diverse religious beliefs of the pupils, encouraging them to learn from and to respect each other in a tolerant, thoughtful and courteous atmosphere. Teachers know their subject very well. They have a very good knowledge of the beliefs of the several world faiths represented in the school and use this to good advantage when discussing aspects of the subject. For example, in their work on 'Pilgrimage' pupils do not simply learn the facts about Lourdes or the Hajj but consider pilgrimage as a search for holiness and forgiveness.
219. Learning is good throughout both key stages. Pupils like the subject. They listen carefully in lessons and offer their own views. Their oral skills improve. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils, who are in a minority, are achieving at nationally expected levels. All pupils, whether gifted or talented, those with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language make good progress in lessons because the teaching is carefully directed to their learning needs. Pupils enjoy learning about other religious beliefs and there is a shared understanding of the major world faiths because there is an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in all classes. This leads to good learning by all groups of pupils.

### **Leadership and management**

220. Leadership and management are very good. Planning and assessment are strengths. The support for non-specialist teachers is very good and the department is experienced in the training of religious education teachers. The department's approach to teaching the subject is

firmly grounded in very good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of what the pupils can learn. The scheme of work is good. It has clear and detailed expectations of what pupils of varying levels of attainment should be able to learn. There is a consistent emphasis on building up a secure knowledge base in each year and in encouraging pupils to talk purposefully about their learning. There is also an equally consistent emphasis on developing writing skills, although this is more difficult for some of those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Nevertheless there is steady progress. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm, friendly, courteous and purposeful. The department analyses its results carefully and successfully integrates citizenship into the curriculum.

221. This is a very good department, striving to make religious education relevant to the pupils in this school who come from such ethnically diverse traditions. It is an inclusive department, which ensures that pupils, whatever their attainment, have access to religious education. It is a department open to change. The adoption of a new full GCSE syllabus, which brings together environmental issues, citizenship and religious belief, is an example of the department's vision and determination to improve. This syllabus change came about because the department and the school, listened to the pupils' suggestions. It is a department, which recognises the spirituality that pupils bring to the school, and helps them to explore it. In this way, religious education actively and effectively promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The scheme of work accords with the local Agreed Syllabus and there is adequate time in which to teach the subject.

## **BUSINESS EDUCATION**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching is good and supports the wide range of attainment of pupils admitted to the school at all stages.
- Pupils are positive in their approach to learning.
- They have regular, frequent access to ICT to support their learning and to enhance the presentation of their work.
- Leadership and management of the department are good and there is clear educational direction, especially in strategies to raise attainment.

### **Areas for improvement**

- There are few meaningful links with industry.

## **Standards and achievement**

222. GCSE results in 2002 are below average both in terms of A\*-G grades and pupils' average point scores and well below the national average for grades A\* - C. When based on actual entry numbers they are in line with the national figure for average points score, and below average for both A\*-C and A\*-G. Some of the pupils who are entered are recent arrivals in the country and sit for the qualification at an age different from 15+. These latter results represent an improvement on similar figures for 2001, but are slightly down on those of 2000. In all three years girls have consistently performed better than boys.

223. Inspection evidence focuses on vastly differing courses, which aspire to meet the needs of a highly mobile and transient student population. Given that many are arriving at all times of the year and at different stages of their education, their achievement is good.
224. Many pupils have English as an additional language, and both they, and those with special educational needs, have benefited from frequent access to ICT, in that their presentation is good and their writing mostly coherent. Year 11 pupils on the GNVQ part 1 course are showing good understanding of the subject and are satisfying the course requirements. At both intermediate and foundation level there is a small proportion of pupils who are working towards merit and distinction grades, but there are not enough of them to raise overall attainment to national levels despite potential improvement. Many of the lower-attaining pupils are still learning to provide sufficient practical detail and explanation when making a point, and to apply business theory to their chosen case study.
225. The department has provided a GCSE business communication systems course for newly-arrived students. The course has a high ICT content, and experienced difficulties in the first year, because of the lack of ICT skills of many of the students. Most pupils are now progressing well at their own level, and responding well to the need for absolute accuracy. The wide range of attainment is matched by the volume and quality of the content and presentation of the work, and the standard of note-taking.
226. The GCSE applied business course has replaced the now defunct GNVQ part 1 in Year 10. Most pupils fulfil the criteria for the course and show good understanding and progress, but some lower attaining pupils omit important tasks in the elements of the units and delay their accreditation. All pupils respond well to the teachers' emphasis on good presentation.

### **Quality of education**

227. Teaching is good overall. All members of the departmental team are specialists with a detailed knowledge of the subject, and teach a variety of aspects across the subject curriculum. Planning in lessons is good. Teachers involve pupils immediately in recalling prior knowledge, and use varied activities to extend and consolidate it, emphasising the importance of retaining key vocabulary and technical terms. The best lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, and pupils are fully involved in class exchanges. Learning is further enhanced at the end of the lesson when teachers expect pupils to explain what they have learned. Teaching has its most impact on learning when pupils are constantly stretched and challenged. Once individuals have chosen a business as a case study, they are required to state in class how the theory applies to their choice, for instance, why a business has chosen its location. Homework is satisfactory in the way it consolidates learning or prepares pupils for the next stage. Marking and feedback are detailed and constructive, and encourage pupils to look for ways to improve their attainment. There are extension opportunities within the courses for gifted or talented pupils, and those with English as an additional language or with special educational needs are well supported, and make good progress.
228. Pupils' attitudes towards business education are good. They are well motivated, contribute eagerly to class exchanges, use computers responsibly and take a pride in their finished product.

### **Leadership and management**

229. Leadership and management are very good. The department works hard to provide courses which meet the needs of an unpredictable intake, and to ensure that pupils achieve their potential. The clear educational direction provided by the head of department is reflected in

the detailed schemes of work, and the time devoted in faculty meetings to important educational issues and to providing opportunities for pupils to achieve good standards of literacy and numeracy. There is a good match of staff to the demands of the different courses and they are well deployed where possible to reflect their expertise. Accommodation is very good, especially as pupils have immediate access to the machines in the ICT department, with whom the facilities are shared. However, for a business department seeking to provide every opportunity to pupils seeking a new life, there are few contacts with industry, apart from the occasional visit. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are good in that they occur regularly under the school's performance management scheme, and also involve the local authority. Members of the department observe each other informally to good effect.

230. Business education was not reported at the last full inspection.

**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.

*GCE AS level courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	6	50		15		2.2	
Biology	5	60		0		0	
Chemistry	2	50		0		2.0	
English Literature	16	88		0		1.71	
French	3	100		33		2.3	
Mathematics	10	40		10		0	
Panjabi	5	80		40		2.33	
Psychology	4	75		0		0.8	
Physics	6	50		0		0.8	
Sociology	6	0		0		0	
Urdu	4	100		75		3.5	

*GCE 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
GCE A Level courses							
Biology	4	100		0		2.5	
Chemistry	5	80		0		2.8	
English Literature	2	100		0		5.0	
Panjabi	2	100		100		9.0	
Urdu	2	100		100		8.0	
AVCE courses							
*Business	2	100		0		10.0	

*Health and Social Care	2	50		0		2.0	
*ICT	8	88		12		6.0	
Media	8	100		0		2.6	
Travel and Tourism	7	100		0		4.0	
* Double Award – 12 units							

*Intermediate and foundation vocational qualifications*

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Intermediate level							
Business	6	83		33		0	
Health and Social Care	3	66		0		0	
ICT	14	72		33		0	
Foundation level							
Business	5	60		0		0	
Health and Social Care	6	83		0		0	
ICT	14	29		0		0	

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS

Overall, the provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- There is good teaching from enthusiastic and caring teachers.
- Committed students make good progress.
- A wide and imaginative range of courses meets the varying needs of a large number of students.

#### Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT in mathematics.
- Day-to-day assessment through marking and focused questioning.

#### Standards and achievement

231. Over the last few years the number of students taking A level mathematics has been very low and there has been limited success. With such small numbers, meaningful comparisons with national averages are not possible. There are currently three A level students in Year 13 who have been successful at AS level, although a greater number of Year 12 students withdrew from the course without achieving this. Work seen in lessons and in the scrutiny of work for Year 13 students is of a good standard and indicates that they are coping well with the demands of the course and progressing well.
232. The growth in numbers in Year 12 has enabled the department to offer a wide range of courses to meet the varying needs of a large number of students. There are two IB courses. Several students are studying 'Mathematical Methods' and are coping well with advanced algebra such as algebraic fractions, series and logarithms. A greater number are doing Mathematical Studies and can solve quadratic equations, interpret straight line equations and use the sine rule. A large number of students are re-sitting GCSE. Last year about half such students improved their grade, although, as is the case nationally, few achieved grade A\* to C. In addition there is a Key Skills course 'Application of Number' and a special non-examined course for a small group of students with limited English to help them develop basic skills.

#### Quality of education

233. In all the lessons seen teaching was at least satisfactory and in half it was good. Lessons were well planned. Some practical materials were used well, including practical measuring equipment and mini white boards to enable all students to attempt questions in the oral and mental starters. There is little use of ICT. Some teachers rely too much on students marking their own work, and while presentations from the teacher are clear they do not always involve the students sufficiently through focused questioning. Pupils respond well and relationships between teachers and students are excellent. Students' work is generally well organised and shows they take a pride in their work.

#### Leadership and management

234. The head of department has responded well to the greatly increased student numbers by initiating an imaginative range of courses to meet the widely varying student needs. Provision has improved markedly since the last inspection.

## **BIOLOGY**

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

### **Strengths**

- The course attracts large numbers of students in Year 12.
- Students' attitudes to the course are positive.
- Most aspects of the teaching are good.
- Learning resources are good and their use is increasingly effective.
- Relationships are good.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The higher level course is too difficult for some of the students.
- The pace of some lessons is too slow, particularly the first part of the lessons.
- The written work of students is not monitored for accuracy and completeness as systematically as it should be, especially at the beginning of the course.
- The self-improvement course in the Autumn term disrupted the learning of many of the Year 12 group.

## **Standards and achievement**

235. Relatively small numbers of students have taken GCE Advanced (A) level and Advanced Supplementary (AS) level examinations in recent years and results have varied greatly from year to year. In the A level examination in 2002, all four Year 13 students achieved moderate pass grades. Two of the six AS students achieved pass grades at grades B and D respectively and are continuing with the course to A2 level. Achievements have generally been in line with that predicted from students' GCSE grades.
236. The two remaining students in Year 13 are progressing reasonably well in the GCE Advanced level A2 course and are on course to achieve pass grades. Their understanding of the conflicting theories of Darwin and Lamarck in explaining natural selection and how it may bring about evolution is developing well but slowly. The two students are likely to be successful only if they put in the necessary efforts outside lessons and at home in following up the work set by the teacher as a continual and essential part of the coursework. Unfortunately they are relatively passive learners at present.
237. The International Baccalaureate (IB) course, offered only at the higher level in biology, is proving popular and has attracted a large number of Year 12 students this year (2002 /2003). Their range of prior attainment at GCSE is very wide. This is particularly noticeable in practical lessons where, for example, some students were puzzled by the purpose of a burette, and others had little idea of the dangers of hydrogen peroxide solution. Working in mixed groups, however, they showed a good measure of persistence plus a dependable level of team work, thus beginning to match well the IB assessment criteria for carrying out this aspect of their practical development. Progress of the group as a whole was disrupted for eight sessions last term whilst up to half of the class attended what was albeit an excellent self-improvement course during lesson time. The school plans to run this course outside lesson times in the future.

## Quality of education

238. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall, and never less than satisfactory. Preparation is meticulous and learning objectives are set at three different levels, which is particularly appropriate in Year 12. Relationships are good, although students are quick to learn that particular immature behaviour is unacceptable when they occasionally try to be over-familiar or facetious with the teacher, whose professional standards are high. Expectations of what students will complete in their own time are also high, and not always fulfilled. Expectations of how well the students will be capable of collaborating together effectively in groups on the other hand are fully justified on the evidence seen. The pace of some lessons is not as sharp as it should be, especially the first half of some lessons. There is insufficient oversight of students' notes on a regular basis in order to ensure its accuracy and completion.

## Leadership and management

239. Co-ordination of the course is good, and increasingly effective use of the newly arrived overseas support teacher is being made. A good measure of in-service training in Latvia has prepared the co-ordinator well for this her first run through the very promising IB course, and helped her to prepare other colleagues in the department for when they teach it. Learning resources, such as up-to-date texts and lap top computers are in relatively good supply and are beginning to be used effectively.

## CHEMISTRY

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

### Strengths

- The International Baccalaureate course meets the needs of sixth form students.
- Students are enthusiastic about the course.
- Students' notes are regularly checked for completeness and accuracy.
- Students' individual learning skills are developing well.

### Areas for improvement

- Further training is needed for the International Baccalaureate course, particularly with respect to assessment criteria.
- Students do not yet have full support materials for the new course.
- Links with universities and industry to provide enrichment opportunities are limited.

## Standards and achievement

240. Two students took the AS level examination in 2002 and one gained a pass grade. The other student did not proceed to study the A2 course. In the A level examination in 2002 four of the five candidates gained pass grades. In recent years the number of candidates has been small and some of these have been arrivals from overseas who had not taken the GCSE examination. Students taking the A level course following GCSE have generally achieved grades in line with their GCSE performance.
241. The quality of work seen by Year 12 students during the inspection matched the expectations of the International Baccalaureate course. The course has recruited students with a wide range of prior attainment, but all have adjusted well to the demands of the course and the level of the work. Students have sound knowledge and understanding of atomic structure, bonding and the

shape of molecules. Calculations are generally carried out accurately. Students have a good understanding of concepts such as the kinetic model of matter and derive elementary ideas from it with reasonable clarity.

242. The single student in Year 13 is building well on the foundations laid in the GCE AS level course and is achieving well in the A2 course. Her understanding is sound and she was able to link her understanding of lattice energies to predict relative melting points of ionic compounds. Notes taken through the course were thorough and detailed, practical work was well documented and results presented in an ordered manner.

### **Quality of education**

243. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher has good subject knowledge and prepares materials and resources well for lessons. A relaxed, informal tutorial approach is adopted to the teaching of both year groups and is very successful. A good dialogue is developed that ensures students have many opportunities for developing the language of the subject, testing out ideas and exchanging views. This leads to good learning for students of all abilities. Practical work is generally well organised, but demonstrations are not always checked carefully enough to ensure the desired success. Students' notes are regularly checked to ensure accuracy and completeness. Good homework and research exercises are regularly set, thoroughly marked and evaluative comments made.

### **Leadership and management**

244. The subject is well led. The decision to move the sixth form course to the International Baccalaureate and to offer it at standard level clearly meets the needs and aspirations of sixth form students. This is reflected in recruitment to the course and students' reactions to the work and course pattern. The subject teacher has received training for the new course and is scheduled to receive further direct training in the near future. Curriculum planning for the course is good. Currently assessment materials used in the teaching are largely based on existing GCE AS and A level materials, and the school has not clarified the course's assessment criteria to ensure accurate monitoring of students' progress. Suitable textbooks are not yet available to support students' learning, although the current range of texts available in the library provide sound coverage of topics. Since the previous inspection standards have generally been maintained, and the introduction of the International Baccalaureate Standard Level course has been very successful in increasing considerable recruitment to post-sixteen chemistry, attracting a broad spectrum of student ability. Students' response to the course is very positive and initial indications are that they are achieving well.

## **BUSINESS EDUCATION**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching is good and supports the wide attainment range of the many students who join the sixth form at different times.
- Marking and assessment are good. Students are fully aware of what they need to do to improve their standards.
- Students have regular, frequent access to ICT to support their learning and to enhance the presentation of their work.
- Recruitment and retention rates are increasing.
- Teachers are specialists with a wide range of expertise between them.

### **Areas for improvement**

- There are few meaningful links with industry.
- Attainment is below the national figure.

### **Standards and achievement**

245. The numbers of entries at GCE advanced level since 1998 have generally been low. In the last year of entries, in 2001, two boys gained grade B. In the vocational courses numbers were again low, and some students did not complete the course.
246. Recruitment to business education has improved in 2002, owing to the introduction of the international baccalaureate, which offers a business and management course as one of its options. Retention rates from Year 12 into Year 13 have also improved.
247. Standards observed during the inspection indicate good achievement considering the low levels of attainment on entry of students who arrive at the school at unconventional times of the year with a disrupted education.
248. Many students have English as an additional language, and both they, and those with special educational needs, have benefited from frequent access to ICT, in that the presentation of their work is good and their writing mostly coherent. On the two-year AVCE course major portfolio assessments show a wide range of attainment, but mainly at the moderate grade D/E level. Higher-achieving work is distinguished by its volume of content, standard of presentation, and skills shown, for instance, the capacity to analyse and evaluate. As there are clear criteria and graded tasks for attainment of grades E, C and A, students are aware of which skills are required to meet these various standards. Students have the opportunity to re-draft and re-submit their work, and whereas their first submissions may have lacked illustrative detail in applying theory to practice, or suffered from crucial omissions, they are able to rectify these faults from feedback given by teachers.
249. Year 12 students on the International Baccalaureate course are working at average or above average expectations. There is firm evidence of independent research and independent note taking by students. Their language is accurate and coherent and shows good understanding of technical terms. Some higher-attaining pupils still have to sharpen their skills of evaluation, and others are occasionally not providing sufficient detail and explanation in support of their arguments, nor applying business theory to their case studies.

250. In the GNVQ courses, students are satisfying the basic requirements of the courses. At intermediate level higher attaining students are showing the skills of interpreting and analysing, which attract at least merit grades. A small number of lower-attaining students at foundation level are finding difficulties in achieving base criteria, because of language problems in providing relevant detail to complete the tasks.

### **The quality of education**

251. Teaching is consistently good. Teachers have a wide range of expertise in the subject, and deliver a variety of aspects across the curriculum. Students are aware of the objectives of the lessons, of the ultimate aim of each task, and of the criteria they need to meet to achieve success. During preparation of coursework, teachers are effective in their role of facilitator, using students' own learning to help solve their problems, and giving them every encouragement to find ways to improve their work. In a Year 12 lesson where both intermediate and foundation level GNVQ students were being taught together, the teacher consistently checked understanding, emphasised key words and encouraged students to read important texts aloud. As most students had English as an additional language or had special educational needs, this enabled them to enhance their command of English and contributed to raising their attainment. Teachers are also constantly challenging students to think at greater depth.
252. There is a very good rapport between teachers and students, and the students themselves are beginning slowly to appreciate the benefit of working together. They also show a high degree of maturity, responsibility and independence in the preparation and completion of their work.

### **Leadership and management**

253. This is a strong department, which is very well led and managed, with clear educational direction. A committed team is working hard to raise standards. There is a wide range of courses to suit students' qualifications and needs. However, closer links with industry, especially major manufacturers, would be beneficial for supporting one or two of the portfolio units. The department closely monitors students' attainment and progress through the school-based systems, and is able to set effective targets. Student learning is enhanced by frequent and regular access to ICT. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching occur regularly under the school's performance management scheme.
254. Business education was not reported at the last full inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Achievement is better than expected.
- Teaching is good.
- Computer resources are of high quality.
- Management is effective.

### Areas for improvement

- Overall standards are below average.
- Success rates are low for the Foundation programme.

### Standards and achievement

255. Standards in information and communication technology in the sixth form are below average. Although there have been only a relatively few candidates, results for the AVCE programme have generally been satisfactory. In 2001 all five candidates were successful and in 2002 of the nine candidates seven were successful. Results for the GNVQ Intermediate have been more variable. In 2001 eight of the fourteen candidates passed and in 2002 ten of the fourteen candidates were successful. Results for the GNVQ Foundation programme have been poor. In 2001 no candidates were successful and in 2002 only four of the ten candidates successfully completed the course. Only a very restricted number of students achieve other than pass grades for the various courses. Attainment of the majority of students recruited to the information and communication technology courses is below average. Some have very little prior experience of using a computer and in several instances have limited literacy skills. Taking these factors into account the progress and achievement of the majority of students are good. This is also the case for students with English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs.

256. The standards of work seen during the inspection in the sixth form were below average. Some good quality work is being produced by several current AVCE students. Files of work for some of these students are well organised and show appropriate skills and understanding of a range of information and communication technology topics. Standards of work seen for the other courses are much lower and sometimes well below expected levels. Students in a Year 12 GNVQ Foundation class for example were undertaking work on producing a business letter. After an initial introduction by the teacher the students worked on an individual basis at computers developing the business letter. Several students had basic language difficulties and several made limited progress with the task that had been set.

### Quality of education

257. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and contain a good range of teaching and learning approaches. Group work usually includes good questioning of the students and this provides a check on the level of understanding of the students. Some of the questioning in a few lessons is not sufficiently directed so that only a few students are fully involved in answering. In other lessons students are very closely led by the member of staff, so that students are not always given sufficient opportunities to show initiative or sufficient responsibility for their own learning. A few students arrive to lessons late.

258. High quality computer resources support the learning well. Students have good access to the resources in lessons and outside of these. Students receive good support when they are working on an individual basis at computers sometimes by more than one member of staff. Work is regularly set marked and returned to the students. Attitudes and behaviour of sixth form students are good and sometimes very good. Those spoken to were very positive about their experiences in the subject. They particularly remarked on the quality of the teaching, resources and they also found the work interesting.

### **Leadership and management**

259. Leadership and management of the sixth form work are good. The teachers involved are working well as a team. Effective monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place, including regular observations of teaching. There is a good range of courses designed to meet a wide range of student groups. The department contributes well to the teaching of the International Baccalaureate which was introduced by the school in September 2001. Also operated in Year 12 are GNVQs at Foundation and Intermediate levels together with an entry level programme for students for whom English is an additional language. Useful key skills programmes are also offered at levels one and two. In Year 13 students are able to undertake either three, six or twelve units of the AVCE programme. Both students and staff have good access to good quality computer resources. Overall in the school there are about four students to each modern computer and this is significantly better than the national average. The use of information and communication technology across subjects in the sixth form is variable. It is good in English but unsatisfactory in mathematics and science. It is generally satisfactory in the remaining subjects.

### **ART**

Overall, the quality of provision in art in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

#### **Strengths**

- Leadership of the department is good.
- The students are well managed.
- Teaching is good, slightly better than the learning.
- Their views and attitudes to the department are positive.

#### **Areas for development**

- Drawing for different purposes and as preparatory studies for future work is weak.
- Sketchbooks are not sufficiently used to promote challenging and investigative work.
- Students are not provided with sufficient structured opportunities to talk about their work so that they may acquire a personal view of art.
- The courses available for different groups of students are not always completely accessible to them.

### **Standards and achievement**

260. Two of the seven sixth form students who followed the AS level examination in 2002, were awarded the highest A and B grades. Four others achieved pass grades. The two students who followed the GNVQ course in 2002 gained a distinction and a merit pass respectively.

261. The work seen in lessons with the students in the present Year 12 is below average. Students from both Year 12 and Year 13 are taught together. They work with drawing and painting, sculpture, photography, textiles and collage. Their sketchbooks contain some experimental

work with drawings in pencil, pen and ink and felt pen, but too little of it is challenging and investigative. They do not draw for different purposes, such as to gather information about space, light or texture, or as preparatory studies for future work, to investigate scale, mood or composition. Drawings for Oldenburg-inspired soft sculpture lack detail of development. A minority of students produce good quality pencil drawings of everyday objects and stimulating, interesting work in painting and sculpture inspired by anatomical diagrams of the human heart. There is some investigation of string, chalk and charcoal in studies of facial features using newspaper cuttings but students seldom fully exploited these materials.

262. Higher attaining students make good progress. They make quality sculptures, paintings and collages influenced by a range of movements, including Picasso's Cubism and Mondrian's detached abstract paintings as well as responding to the world around them, such as in innovative paintings of the outside of the school highlighting the rhythmic arrangement of windows and walls. The majority of students lack the personal view of art and artists necessary at this level. Students working on the theme of "Twisting and Turning" were looking at books dealing with different artists' use of colour but the books were brought to the lesson by the teacher not the students. Others look at Seurat's pointillist style but again lack any personal opinion and annotation tends to be descriptive rather than evaluative.
263. Those who are at an early stage of speaking English or are recent arrivals in school make satisfactory progress in relation to their very low levels of prior attainment. Some students lack the necessary academic background to allow them to read, research, acquire the personal view of art and design, and talk about their work in the constructive critical way expected at GCE advanced and A2 level. These enthusiastic students depend on their teachers for guidance more than is usual and look at the work of artists such as Georgia O'Keefe, prompted again by teachers rather than by personal curiosity.
264. The work seen by students in the present Year 13 is further on than that produced by the Year 12 students and shows a more personal view. Most students following the A-level course produce work that is satisfactory and sometimes good. For example, one student's work shows natural ability for the subject but lacks refinement and experimentation is limited. On the whole, students lack confidence and are receivers of learning rather than active learners.

### **Teaching and learning**

265. Teaching and learning are good in the sixth form, but learning lags a little behind the teaching. Students made good progress in a lesson designing and making a maquette for a sculpture. A Year 13 student working on a geometric sculpture referred well to illustrations of paintings by other artists as well as a computer generated image of her work as she considered the options and possible effects of different colour schemes. In another lesson, Year 12 students generated an atmosphere of creativity, productivity and learning, making good use of chicken wire and papier-maché to develop ideas inspired by sculptures drawn largely from New York's street life. The teachers have good subject knowledge and challenge the students to exploit materials and investigate the different possibilities they offer. The students are interested and know what they were doing but rely heavily on their teacher for future direction.

### **Leadership and management.**

266. Leadership and management are good. The head of department monitors teaching and learning regularly and has high ambition for her students and the teachers. Planning is detailed and thorough. The curriculum provides opportunities to work with two and three-dimensional processes including painting and drawing, computer generated imagery, print, textiles and photography. Sixth form students have their own studio. Students speak highly of the department and its teaching staff and the majority follow their studies to the terminal

examination. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are better than they were. Resources have also improved, with a good range of two and three-dimensional processes, reference materials and access to computers. The accommodation is now satisfactory, with separate studio space for sixth formers.

## ENGLISH

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Relationships in the classroom are good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Some students are very dependent on teachers and are not independent learners.

## Standards and achievement

267. In the past five years such small numbers of students have been entered for A level that a comparison of standards of attainment against national standards is not valid. The grades achieved have been low, however. Since 2000, all students entered have obtained pass grades. The two students entered in 2002 obtained grades which represent good progress in the light of their previous GCSE results, one achieving a higher grade B. A large group of twenty six students was entered for AS level in 2002, although only sixteen of them were in the official Year 12 cohort. Though generally below national standards, the results represent good progress from GCSE. Twenty-four students obtained pass grades, with two achieving higher grades.
268. During the inspection standards of attainment were observed in two quite different courses. Two students in Year 13 have continued to study English after successfully completing the AS course and are currently taking the A level course. Twenty-four students in the present Year 12 are studying English in the International Baccalaureate Diploma course.
269. Attainment in Year 13 is broadly in line with national standards. The students are confident and articulate, comfortable in exchanging ideas. They present a fluent account of research into the social and historical background of the poetry of the First World War, informed by study of reference books and the Internet. They make perceptive contributions in the discussion of poems by Laurence Binyon and Wilfred Owen. They show good knowledge and understanding of *Othello* in the analysis of Othello's speeches. Their writing is mature and capable – extended critical studies showing good research skills. They show good word-processing skills and have prepared Powerpoint presentations of reasonable quality.
270. Students in Year 12 are at an early stage of the IB course and the decisions about grouping into standard and higher level entry have not yet been made. Standards of attainment observed are, overall, below average, determined by the considerable range of students' prior attainment on entry to the course. They are engaged in proper literature study, have covered a good range of texts – *Jane Eyre*, *The Winter's Tale* and the poetry of Keats – and are able to make notes, summarise and respond in class discussion and extended writing. In the discussion of poems, they show familiarity with some poetic terminology. Few, however, are comfortable in engaging in extended discussion and many are very dependent on the teacher's input. Their writing shows evidence of research and some students word-process their work.

271. Required tasks are completed but the extent and quality of written response vary from quite capable critical essays incorporating quotation to relatively insubstantial responses.

### **Quality of education**

272. The quality of teaching is good and in some lessons very good. Lessons are well-planned, informed by good subject knowledge and understanding, and learning objectives are made clear to the students. Good pace and energetic delivery stimulate students and an interest in and enjoyment of literature are well communicated to them. There is a good variety of activity, which involves students in contributing to discussion or preparing presentations. They are encouraged to make contributions by the mature and good-humoured relationships in the classroom and the care taken to ensure understanding. Teachers are very supportive and students' work is thoroughly marked with points for improvement identified. Teachers assist students' progress by the provision by of a variety of task and information sheets. There is a very clear desire to develop students' self-confidence and enable them to become independent learners.

### **Leadership and management**

273. The subject is very well-managed by the head of department who has a clear vision of its future development. Teaching is shared between a number of staff who work very co-operatively, ensuring consistency of delivery of the courses and constant monitoring of students' progress. There is a shared commitment to raising standards. The transition to a new course for students in Year 12 has been managed very capably and its effectiveness is constantly under review.

## **FRENCH**

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

### **Strengths**

- The International Baccalaureate scheme has increased take-up in the subject by providing a more appropriate qualification route for some students.
- There are good opportunities for students to use information and communication technology to help them in their work.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Feedback to students does not link the marking of their work sufficiently to the examination criteria.

## **Standards and achievement**

274. Entries for the traditional GCE advanced level examinations in French have been very small. In 2002, for example, there were three candidates for the AS level examination in French. All three achieved a graded result, including one A grade. To improve opportunities for students, the school introduced the International Baccalaureate scheme in September 2002. This is an alternative to the more traditional AS and A2 Advanced Level courses. It has been successful in increasing recruitment to post 16 work in modern languages. There is no other provision at this level.
275. It is the first year of the scheme, so there are no points of comparison with previous years. Standards seen during the inspection, however, indicate that students are meeting the requirements of the specification. In the beginners' groups, although the level of language is low, students are making satisfactory progress given that they have had little or no experience of the language they are studying. They are committed to the course, and work hard in lessons. They use basic vocabulary and structures quite well; their speech can be halting, but the meaning is usually clear; they cannot refer yet to past and future events. In the more advanced group students find the requirements challenging, but are persevering nonetheless, despite coming to the course with relatively low results at GCSE. They lack fluency and confidence in speaking and their range of vocabulary and idiom is limited.

## **Teaching and learning**

276. Overall teaching in French in Year 12 is satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In all lessons teachers share learning objectives with students and review learning at the end of the lesson. Teachers use the foreign language more consistently. This reflects high expectations and challenges the students.
277. There is more emphasis on students taking responsibility for their own learning, particularly in the more advanced group, through preparing and delivering presentations on topics of current concern, such as prejudice and asylum seeking. Students are positive in their approach to the subject. They work with concentration and application in lessons, and persevere in the face of difficulties. They use their private study time to research and prepare presentations. One pupil, who has English as an additional language, is progressing at the same rate as the other students because the teacher is assiduous in rephrasing and remodelling language to help the student understand.

## **Leadership and management**

278. The quality of leadership and management in the subject is good. Some staff have undertaken specific training in Riga through the International Baccalaureate Organisation, and this training has been passed on to other members of staff involved in teaching the courses. Documentation is thorough and schemes of work are well pitched and sequenced. Assessment procedures are developing as staff become more familiar with the requirements of the course specification. Marking, however, is not sufficiently linked to the criteria in the specification, so that it is more difficult for students to know how best to improve their work. Students spoke well of the access to Internet research facilities afforded by the DIVACE digital language laboratory, and also of the level of support offered by teachers.

## SPANISH

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

### Strengths

- The International Baccalaureate scheme has increased take-up in the subject by providing a more appropriate qualification route for some students.
- There are good opportunities for students to use information and communication technology to help them in their work.
- Students' attitudes to the subject are positive.

### Areas for improvement

- Feedback to students does not link the marking of their work sufficiently to the examination criteria.

## Standards and achievement

279. In the past there has been no provision for Spanish beyond GCSE. To improve opportunities for students, the school introduced the International Baccalaureate scheme in September 2002. This is an alternative to the more traditional AS and A2 Advanced Level courses. It has been successful in increasing recruitment to post 16 work. There is no other provision at this level.
280. Standards seen in lessons in this first year of the new IB scheme are satisfactory. Students are meeting the requirements of the specification. The two groups in Year 12 are both composed of students without previous knowledge of Spanish. The level of language is low but students are working hard and are committed to the course. They use basic vocabulary well. Some higher attaining students try to produce more extended responses. Although speech can be halting, the meaning is usually clear. They cannot yet refer to past or future events.

## Teaching and learning

281. In the lessons seen in Year 12, the overall quality of teaching in Spanish is good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In all lessons teachers share learning objectives with students and review learning at the end of the lesson. Teachers use the foreign language consistently. They model the language very well, which helps students to learn. Students are challenged to listen carefully and to respond. Some students are beginning to produce slightly more extended responses. There is more emphasis on students taking responsibility for their own learning.
282. Learning is good in Spanish because the good structured teaching is consolidating their growing language skills. Their receptive skills of reading and listening are developing because the materials used in lessons are challenging. The use of short, structured conversations and the teachers' use of very focused question and answering at the end of lessons, helps students

to revise and strengthen their learning. Learning is enhanced by the exemplary attitudes of the students. They concentrate well during listening tests, make considerable efforts to understand and volunteer answers readily.

### **Leadership and management**

283. The quality of leadership and management is good. Staff have benefited from the training in Riga, organised by the IB organisation. Documentation is thorough and schemes of work are appropriate for students who are just beginning the language. Assessment procedures are developing well. Marking is not yet sufficiently linked to the criteria in the specification, so that it is difficult for students to know how best to improve their work. Students are very enthusiastic about the new subject. They speak highly of the support offered by the teachers.