

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE GRANGE SCHOOL**

Stourbridge

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103859

Headteacher: David Kemp

Lead inspector: Keith Davitte

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th November 2003

Inspection number: 258810

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 910

School address: Grange Lane  
Pedmore  
Stourbridge  
Postcode: DY9 7HS

Telephone number: 01384 816660  
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Appropriate authority: Dudley  
Name of chair of governors: Mr R Evans

Date of previous inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Grange School is located in Pedmore in Stourbridge in the local education authority of Dudley. The school serves its immediate area. With 910 pupils on roll the school is of average size with 451 boys and 459 girls. The majority of pupils are white (83%). Pakistani pupils (104 pupils) represent the most significant minority ethnic group by size (11%). There are 28 pupils for whom English is not their first language and who are at an early stage of learning English, which is higher than most schools. There are two pupils who are refugees. One hundred and ten pupils have special educational needs; of those 89 are on School Action and 12 are on Action Plus. Nine pupils have statements of special educational needs which is below average. Of those on Action Plus, or who have statements, four have specific learning needs, eleven have moderate learning needs, five have social and emotional disabilities and one has a hearing impairment. The school has very recently set up a Teaching and Learning Centre to support pupils who are at risk of being excluded from the school.

Socio-economic circumstances are average overall but there are significant numbers from economically deprived backgrounds, and far more in that category than at the time of the last inspection. The percentage of pupils currently eligible for free school meals (19%) is above average.

The headteacher has been in post since January 2002 and the deputy head was appointed permanently from last September, but had been seconded from the local education authority earlier to work with school. One deputy head post is vacant. There has been a large turnover of staff in the last two years with 21 new full-time equivalent staff appointed.

Pupils' attainment on entry varies slightly from one year to another and is just below average overall. Pupils who joined the school in 2002 (current Year 8) were well below average in mathematics.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15029	Mr K Davitte	Lead inspector	
9417	Ms E Owen	Lay inspector	
33020	Ms A Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics
30046	Mr R Parker	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English
5241	Ms C Millband	Team inspector	Science
32169	Mr R O'Hagan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Citizenship
11672	Mr P Harle	Team inspector	Art and design Drama
31779	Mr V Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology
13734	Mr H Davies	Team inspector	Religious education Business education
17732	Mr D Martin	Team inspector	Geography History
11751	Mr D Sutcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
31600	Ms M Young	Team inspector	Music
23030	Ms C Runyard	Team inspector	Physical education
32337	Mr N Chandla	Team inspector	Urdu

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school is currently providing a satisfactory education and satisfactory value for money.** It is a rapidly improving school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are rising but further improvement is necessary including in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is good and most teachers manage behaviour well but in some lessons the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils holds back the learning of others.
- The teaching and learning of information and communication technology (ICT) is a much improving situation but is not used enough in some subjects across the curriculum.
- There is strong leadership by the headteacher and a good whole-school team spirit.

Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. In national tests at the end of Year 9 standards in recent years have declined, but are now improving. Standards have improved in English but that is only happening of late in mathematics. Much progress has been made in using data to set individual pupil targets and track their progress. There are now very effective links between the special educational needs department and subject areas, which are very well co-ordinated and managed.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	C	C	C	A

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Achievement is satisfactory overall.** Pupils who sat GCSE examinations in 2003 were not as capable as previous year groups but, with much support from the school, achieved very well in relation to their results earlier in the school. When in Year 9, the same pupils were below average overall in national tests for 14-year-olds and therefore made very good progress from that time up to GCSE. It is that improvement which is reflected in the similar school grading above for 2003. The most capable pupils achieved particularly well and as the school recognises the number of high grades which they attained was a major factor in boosting overall results. Some boys of average capability underachieved in 2003 and as a result the school is monitoring the progress of boys very carefully this year and to good effect. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well at GCSE. The best GCSE subject results have been in design and technology which have been consistently well above average over time. Pupils currently in Year 11 are on course to attain average standards overall in GCSE examinations and are achieving satisfactorily. GCSE results in mathematics have been consistently below average but under new leadership standards are improving and are currently average in Year 11. Standards in Year 9 are currently average in English, mathematics and science and meet national expectations in most other subjects. In ICT, pupils have not made enough progress in their first three years in the school but with better staffing and resources that situation is improving rapidly.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory.** The majority of pupils are keen to learn and most behave well, but a small minority disrupts progress in some lessons. Where occasional incidents of bullying arise pupils are pleased with the way staff deal with the situation. Racial harmony has markedly improved following

a period in the recent past when there was some serious tension between certain groups of pupils. There is now a greater understanding and respect by the vast majority of pupils for other people's feelings, beliefs and cultural traditions. Attendance is currently average following below average figures in recent years.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good** and is very good in drama and history. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning vary between subjects. A large turnover of staff has held back pupils' progress in some subjects but there is now greater stability. Major improvements in accommodation are helping to raise standards. Newly created posts of heads of year have made an immediate and good impact on the quality of care, guidance and support. Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are good. Representatives from the local Pakistani community are now regularly consulted and have played a key part in improving race relationships.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall.** Very good leadership by the headteacher is giving the school a strong sense of direction. He is well supported by other key staff and in particular his deputy who is driving a multitude of initiatives forward very effectively. Governance is good. The school is in breach of some statutory duties, but these are being actively addressed.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Most parents are satisfied with the school and find staff approachable. The majority feels well informed about the progress of their children but a significant minority would like more information. Reports are satisfactory overall but vary too much from high quality to those which do not make it sufficiently clear what pupils need to do to improve further. The majority of pupils like school but are concerned when small numbers spoil some lessons and cause unpleasantness around the school, including in toilet areas.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- continue to build on the improved standards seen at the inspection particularly in English, mathematics and science;
- prevent the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils holding back the progress of other pupils in some lessons;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that all parts of the National Curriculum for citizenship are taught, to build on the rapid improvements which have been made under the current leadership of the subject;
- provide more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in ICT in subjects across the curriculum.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment is **satisfactory**. Standards in English and mathematics are currently average.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results were well above average compared with similar schools in 2003.
- Design and technology has been the strongest GCSE subject over time and the weakest subjects have been mathematics and geography.
- The trend in national test results at the end of Year 9 has been below the national trend but standards currently in Year 9 are improving and are average.

#### **Commentary**

1. From the time of the last inspection in 1998 up until 2001 results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were average overall in most years and above average in 2000 compared to all schools. In 2001, however, results fell to below average compared with all schools nationally and that was repeated in 2002 and 2003. This resulted in the overall trend in results since the last inspection to be below the national trend. In addition the 2002 results flagged up some serious concerns, as they were well below average when compared with similar schools, and showed that pupils had made insufficient progress in their first three years in the school and had underachieved.
2. Faced with that situation and the prospect of the decline continuing the school was determined to take matters in hand. A combination of measures, including good use of national strategies to improve standards and extra support for pupils at all stages, including Easter holiday revision classes, had a beneficial effect on the 2003 test results. Although results in 2003 compared with all schools were still below average overall they were average in English, and that was a significant improvement. Equally important was a major improvement in the comparisons with similar schools, based on prior attainment, from well below average overall in 2002 to average in 2003. In 2003, compared with similar schools, results were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. The school's plans show a determination to improve further on those results, which is both necessary and possible.
3. In the current Year 9 pupils, who joined the school in Year 7 with better standards than the previous year group in core subjects, are on course to attain average results in their tests in 2004 in English, mathematics and science and are achieving satisfactorily. The improvements in mathematics, as at GCSE, are linked to new leadership in the subject. In most other subjects, pupils are achieving well in relation to standards on entry in Year 7, but over the three years pupils have not made sufficient progress in ICT. Pupils meet national expectations in art, design and technology, French, geography and physical education and standards are above national expectations in drama, and just above in history and religious education. Standards are below national expectations in German, ICT and music. In mathematics, music and ICT, standards have suffered because of changes of teachers in the past but in those subjects pupils are now making good progress with greater stability in staffing. Standards in ICT are also benefiting from much improved resources. The reason for standards in German being below national expectations is solely because pupils have only recently started studying the language, but they have made a good start and are achieving well.



4. Although overall GCSE results were average compared with all schools in 2002, they were well below average compared with similar schools. The same pupils when in Year 9 had attained above average results overall in national tests and well above average results in English and therefore should have achieved more highly at the end of Year 11 at GCSE.
5. Pupils who sat GCSE examinations in 2003 were not as capable as previous GCSE cohorts and when in Year 9 had attained below average results in national tests. However, with much support from the school and in difficult circumstances, including as a result of a high turnover of staff, those pupils achieved very well in relation to their earlier results and met the targets set by the school. Despite the decline in the proportion attaining five or more grades A\*-C, pupils' performance, measured by the better indicator of the GCSE points score, was average. Compared with similar schools based on prior attainment, results were well above average, which was another clear indication of how well that year group achieved taking into account their earlier results. The number of high grades attained by the most capable pupils was a major factor in boosting the average points score, however, and the school recognises that some boys underachieved. As a result the school is monitoring the progress of boys very carefully this year and to good effect.
6. In addition to design and technology being consistently well above average at GCSE, several other subjects have performed well over time. Results in art, drama with small numbers, business communication systems, religious education, statistics and Urdu have been mostly well above the national average. Results in mathematics have been mostly below the national average and alongside geography stand out as being weaker than other subjects in most years since the last inspection. GNVQ results in ICT at Intermediate level were very good in 2003.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.4 (31)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	33.5 (33.4)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	32.3 (31.6)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 196 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

**Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003**

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	41.4 (54)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	87.3 (93)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97.1 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	32.7 (34.7)	35.8 (34.7)

*There were 176 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

7. Currently in Year 11, a more capable group of pupils than the previous year, pupils are on target to attain the improved GCSE results predicted by the school and to return to standards nearer to those attained by pupils prior to 2003. Standards in English and mathematics are average. In other subjects, standards are average in French, German, physical education and religious education, above average in art, design and technology and history and well above average in drama. In ICT, standards are below average as a result of pupils having to make up lost ground and are also below average in science, citizenship and geography. In citizenship the benefit of new leadership is a major factor in improving standards but it will

take time to catch up on a slow start in the subject. Achievement in Year 11 is satisfactory overall and is good in history, modern foreign languages, physical education and business communications studies and very good in art and drama.

8. The school's analysis shows that higher attainers achieve very well at GCSE and that pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Some boys of average capability noticeably under-performed in 2003 and the school has targeted an improvement in that area; the impact of that is beginning to be felt. Evidence from the inspection showed that there is no significant difference between the performance of different groups but that pupils of all capabilities suffer when their learning is held back by unsatisfactory behaviour in some lessons. The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs makes a major impact but achievement is higher in subjects such as art, design and technology, drama and physical education, where there are more opportunities for practical work. Gifted and talented pupils achieve satisfactorily but there is more to do to ensure they are challenged and stretched in some lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language and the two refugee pupils in the school are achieving very well considering their starting point and are benefiting from high quality support.
9. Pupils' skills in English and literacy and mathematics enable them to make at least satisfactory progress in all areas of the curriculum but some pupils with special educational needs require and receive very good support to make that possible. Although proficiency in ICT is not as good as it should be, rapid improvement is being made which is giving pupils the necessary skills to apply their knowledge to other subjects when given the opportunity.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Attendance is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour vary from mainly good to poor and are **satisfactory** overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attendance is improving following below average figures in recent years.
- Behaviour is mainly good, often very good, but a small minority of pupils behave badly and hold up the learning of others and pull down behaviour to satisfactory overall.
- Racial harmony has greatly improved.

### **Commentary**

10. The school is working hard to reduce absenteeism, and attendance is around average so far this year following well below average figures for 2002-3. The school recognises that the performance of some pupils in GCSE examinations has been affected by poor attendance and have appointed an attendance officer who is working hard and successfully to improve that situation. A barrier still to overcome is the reluctance of some parents to provide reasons for their children's absence and that inflates the recorded unauthorised absences.

### **Attendance**

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9	School data	1.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

11. The school has moved rapidly to tackle the deteriorating situation of behaviour in recent years. A well co-ordinated effort throughout the school has improved behaviour considerably and the majority of pupils are now keen to learn. Behaviour is now satisfactory overall but pupils and their parents understandably feel strongly when a small minority disrupts progress in some lessons. That is sometimes associated with weaknesses in class management, but there are some pupils who are challenging for even the most competent teacher. Small numbers of pupils showed themselves in a very poor light at the inspection when deliberately setting out to prevent teachers from teaching as well as they could. In addition a small minority cannot be trusted to behave well when not directly supervised and damages property, removes locks in toilets and uses such areas as a refuge for smoking. Although reduced considerably some bullying still exists, but pupils are pleased with the way staff deal with any reported incidents.
12. Most pupils have a clear understanding and acceptance of what is right and wrong but a small minority falls below such standards and can make life unpleasant for others. A very firm but necessary line was taken on exclusions in the last school year with an increase in fixed-term exclusions in particular and permanent exclusions used in extreme and justifiable cases. Exclusions are now much reduced. The new Teaching and Learning Centre, which includes catering for pupils who are at risk of exclusion, is already helping to diffuse some tensions and helping to reintroduce pupils back into lessons. Pupils who attend the centre for one or more of their lessons a week recognise that something had to be done, and welcome the opportunity to have one-to-one attention and time to talk through issues of concern.

## Exclusions

### *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	757	100	2
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	104	22	4
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	5	1
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	1	0
No ethnic group recorded	14	1	0

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

13. Evidence from a variety of sources, including the local Pakistani community, testify to a greatly improved ethos in the school, including in relation to racial harmony. There were examples of major friction between ethnic groups in the recent past which was a significant factor in an increase in fixed-term exclusions which were not confined to any particular ethnic group. That is no longer the case; a policy of zero tolerance has been adopted in combating racism, with a strong oversight from the headteacher. There is now a greater understanding and respect for other peoples' values, beliefs and cultural traditions. The school is far from complacent but has much better strategies at hand to intervene if any problems reappear, including much closer contacts with all sectors of the community including representatives of

Pakistani families. The teaching of religious education and the study of a broad range of faiths plays an important part in enabling pupils to reflect on their own experiences, explore those of others and understand the wider world and spiritual questions and issues. Weekly assemblies and 'thought for the day' are improving the opportunities to reflect on and discuss issues. Pupils fasting for Ramadan during the inspection week were well supported, and other pupils had a clear understanding of its purpose through explanations in high-quality assemblies which embrace all faiths.

14. Parents are very positive in their view that staff encourage pupils to become mature and independent. Most pupils enjoy school, feel valued, have good relationships with staff and each other, and respond with growing confidence, but there are pupils who are reluctant to take responsibility for their own learning. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 see little relevance in much of the curriculum on offer but some positive steps are being taken to address that. The prefect body is an active and confident group which contributes positively to school life, but prefects have a difficult job when helping to supervise some areas at lunchtime as some pupils refuse to co-operate. The system of applying for the position and having an interview has widened the range of pupils and encourages opportunities for all. Pupils with special educational needs who become prefects are very well supported in that role. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are well represented on the prefect body.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning and the quality of assessment are **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in drama and history but opportunities for pupils to develop their capacity to work independently varies between subjects.
- Most teachers insist on high standards of behaviour but small minority of pupils do not respond well enough.
- Questioning techniques are used very well to involve pupils of different capabilities.
- Teachers and assistants and support staff work very effectively together.

#### Commentary

15. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and that is making a significant contribution to turning around some declining results and improving standards of behaviour and the ethos of the school. Teaching is very good in drama and history and good in nearly all other subjects including in English and mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory in science. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) sets a strong example through her own very good teaching. A more stable staffing is a significant factor in improving standards. Although teaching and learning in citizenship are currently satisfactory, over time, because of weaknesses in provision, teaching and learning have been unsatisfactory.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 126 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (4%)	35 (28%)	52 (41%)	28 (22%)	6 (5%)	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

16. Teachers have a good command of their subject and in drama such expertise is used very well to put pupils at ease and in building up their confidence.

17. Teachers plan well to create interest, and clear objectives are profitably shared with pupils in most lessons. Excellent relationships and high expectations in drama succeed in interesting, engaging and encouraging pupils. Very good relationships are also a marked feature of lessons in design and technology and history and in the best lessons in other subjects including in personal, social and health education (PSHE). Teachers' expectations are good in physical education not only for standards of work but also for behaviour and sporting attitudes. In science the progress which pupils make is strongly dependent on who teaches them and the expectations set. Whilst expectations are generally high in design and technology there are lessons which do not challenge all pupils sufficiently.
18. In the majority of lessons the needs of different groups of pupils are well met. Good planning is made for pupils with special educational needs. There is an acute awareness of involving pupils of different ethnic backgrounds fully in lessons and much sensitivity is shown in that respect. Although pupils with particular gifts or talents are achieving satisfactorily there are some lessons where insufficient challenge is built into the lesson. There are good examples of the highest attainers being challenged productively in mathematics.
19. Teaching methods are good overall and a very good feature is the use of sharply focused questioning techniques to keep pupils on their toes and to challenge pupils of different capabilities. Notable examples were seen at the inspection in several subjects including in mathematics, science, geography, history, religious education, music and modern foreign languages. Some good starter exercises to lessons were seen in mathematics but lessons do not always finish on a good note in drawing together what has been learned and the same is true in science. Excellent sets of notes in history aid pupils enormously in their recall of information. Considerable strides have been made in the teaching of ICT in specialist lessons and there are examples of good use in other subjects such as religious education and in a PSHE lesson observed with Year 11. Overall, however, the use of ICT across the whole curriculum is not as well developed as it should be, but that is an improving situation. The use of homework to extend and reinforce learning is good but is not set regularly in ICT. Teachers work very well with teaching assistants and other support staff, including those supporting pupils with special educational needs and technician staff in practical areas.
20. The assessment of pupils' work is good. There are many examples of diligent and helpful marking which makes it clear to pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve but checks to ensure these are followed up are not always made. Assessment is very well used in drama and is very thorough in history. Assessment procedures are good in modern foreign languages and in the tracking of pupils' progress in design and technology. Satisfactory use is made of National Curriculum levels and is an improving feature as new teams in several subject areas settle down. Homework is mostly marked well and set regularly but some parents at the pre-inspection meeting complained about gaps in the setting of homework and at times tasks which were not challenging enough.
21. Teachers generally establish good relationships and manage behaviour well. When unsatisfactory behaviour occurs or is anticipated, teachers usually adhere to school policy to prevent lessons being disrupted. There are lessons, however, where teachers' management skills are not good enough to cope with some difficult pupils. During the inspection the same pupils were seen behaving well in some lessons with a particular teacher and unsatisfactorily in others with a different teacher. Most pupils apply themselves well to learning and are prepared to work hard but small numbers are reluctant to learn and co-operate, particularly in some lessons, or deliberately set out to disrupt and prevent teachers from showing themselves at their best. In English, poor listening skills by some pupils and lack of skills in following and analysing an argument caused them to lose concentration. Teaching and support in the Teaching and Learning Centre during the inspection was of a very good quality and excellence was seen in an individual interview, with tutor and pupil developing joint strategies to prevent possible exclusion.

22. Pupils' capacity to work independently varies from one subject to another and is satisfactory overall. As well as ensuring that some unsatisfactory behaviour does not get in the way of learning a significant proportion of teachers are confident to forge ahead in developing pupils' capacity to work independently, but in some lessons such opportunities are not made available. Improvisation and group work feature strongly in drama in promoting independent learning. In history and religious education, pupils readily respond to opportunities to learn through discussion and in music are prepared to take responsibility for their own learning when faced with some exciting tasks. Much greater independence is being developed in mathematics. In English there is too much dependence on the teacher and in science there is scope for the more creative involvement of pupils in some lessons.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** and opportunities for enrichment are **good**. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some good steps have been taken to broaden the curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
- Statutory requirements are only partly met in relation to the teaching of citizenship.
- The good range of extra-curricular activities involves pupils of all ages.
- Significant improvements in accommodation have contributed to a 'good feel factor' in the school and a calming atmosphere but access for disabled pupils is unsatisfactory.
- Much-improved facilities in ICT are helping to raise standards in all year groups.

### Commentary

23. The school has taken the necessary steps to improve its provision for collective worship by developing a whole-school 'theme of the day' to complement assemblies. Despite much improvement of late, not all strands of the National Curriculum are taught adequately in citizenship in order to meet fully statutory requirements, but that is being positively addressed. Elsewhere the curriculum is mainly broad and balanced. Good attention has been paid to national initiatives to improve standards in Years 7 to 9. The religious education course has been changed to better reflect the multicultural nature of the school and, as part of their GCSE studies, pupils visit a local Mosque. Work experience for all Year 10 pupils extends over two weeks which is good practice and pupils are left in no doubt what is expected of them to make that successful. A development plan specifically for work experience is good practice. The school offers a good range of GCSE subjects. The school is determined to do far more for those pupils who are turned off by a traditional school curriculum. In Years 10 and 11 a satisfactory start has been made in offering more vocational opportunities, including courses in conjunction with a neighbouring college. Higher attainments are also being considered and can opt for an AS-level course in creative thinking at a local sixth-form college. The introduction of a Princes Trust course in Years 10 and 11 has broadened provision. A good PSHE programme now co-ordinated through heads of year ensures good coverage of a wide range of topics and themes including sex and relationships education and attention to alcohol and drug misuse. The school has ambitions to secure specialist technology status and a submission is planned for 2004.
24. There has been a complete change of setting arrangements in Years 7 to 9, based on pupils' prior attainment. Setting arrangements were used offer opportunities to stretch pupils of all capabilities but it is too soon yet to measure the success of the new arrangements and the school has planned an early review to ensure pupils have been placed in the correct groups. In history and geography in some lower sets in Year 7, pupils benefit from extra support from their English teacher to develop literacy across the curriculum. Small group sizes for pupils with special educational needs ensure that all receive individual help. Additional support for pupils outside normal lesson time is helping pupils achieve more highly, for example the recent revision classes in the holidays at the end of the spring term for pupils in Years 9 and

11, which were very well attended. An innovative feature was the use of trainee teachers from Wolverhampton University to support pupils' regular teachers.

25. A good range of extra-curricular activities is strongly promoted and three enrichment co-ordinators have been appointed to build on that as well as the appointment of a school sports co-ordinator. There is good practice in relation to special educational needs with the SENCO and team encouraging such pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities. Extensive music opportunities are provided by woodwind, brass and strings groups and an orchestra and choir. The music and drama concert last summer was a good example of departments working together to celebrate pupils' achievements. The Duke of Edinburgh programme is well established. Good provision is made for extra-curricular sport and there is a good range of visits to extend pupils' experiences including residential experience for all Year 9 pupils as well as trips and group visits abroad. The enrichment week for Year 9 is very well planned. Whilst a good range already exists one of the school's priorities in its development plan is to develop extra-curricular activities further.
26. Most staff are suitably qualified and there is a good mix of experienced and newer staff. Following some disruption through a high teacher turnover the teaching team is now more stable, but there are difficulties in attracting staff in some subject areas which is not peculiar to this school. Only a few are not yet qualified as teachers and they receive very good support including a qualified teacher in some lessons. The majority of learning support assistants have completed or are working towards recognised courses of study and regularly attend short training courses. Accommodation is satisfactory and there are good features but there are also pressures pending the building of a new classroom block which has been approved. The governors are aware of restrictions on access for disabled pupils and would like that resolved if funding was available. The swimming pool is a great asset and is used well. Well-appointed ICT rooms encourage a business-like atmosphere and are being well used to raise standards. There are times, however, when specialist ICT rooms are not being used and therefore there are missed opportunities for those staff who are not using ICT enough in their subject teaching to meet statutory requirements. The hall provides adequate accommodation for drama but is not ideal acoustically and there are occasional problems of access.

## Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. Provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **good**. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good internal support and co-operation with outside agencies ensure that pupils at risk and others causing concern are well supported.
- Newly appointed heads of year are making a positive impact on supporting pupils.
- Induction arrangements are good and help Year 7 pupils settle quickly.
- Very good improvements have been made in school security.
- Some pupils are reluctant to use the toilets at times because of the poor behaviour of a small minority but the school has begun to take positive steps to tackle that problem.

## Commentary

27. Child protection procedures comply with those adopted by the local Area Child Protection Committee and are used well to minimise disruption to pupils' learning. Governors are involved in health and safety issues and have given much backing and support. Very good first-aid procedures and facilities are in place. Parents appreciate the improvements in security, as previously it was possible for anyone to enter school without being challenged. Systems are in place to ensure the safe use of the Internet. Health and safety checks are regular in workshops and practical areas. Pupils work in a safe environment, and the close

adult supervision of all the toilet areas seen during the inspection has improved the situation where some pupils felt worried about using them because of the behaviour of a minority. Although the school has signed up as a 'healthy school' it has some way to go in changing the eating habits of pupils in school. A wider range of healthy food options is being offered at lunchtime but most do not opt for that. The school decision to remove a vending machine where pupils could buy sweets and chocolate is a positive step. The shorter lunchtime is bringing extra pressure on serving pupils with meals in a reduced time. There have been teething problems and some pupils are unhappy with the new arrangements, especially if they wish to attend an extra-curricular activity during the lunch period.

28. New arrangements for support, guidance and advice are having a positive impact. Prior to the current year, three heads of house were charged with providing much of the pastoral support, which was a tall order. That has been replaced with a system common to most schools with a head of year for each year group. Heads of year are working very effectively with the deputy headteacher, form tutors and special educational needs staff to provide well co-ordinated support, advice and guidance for pupils. An 'inclusion group' has been established recently to ensure that all pupils who need support receive it.
29. The performance of pupils with special educational needs is constantly monitored with careful follow-up action to discuss individual targets related to both classwork and extra-curricular activities. As pupils have more ready access to a sympathetic adult in school there is more chance of minor issues being prevented from becoming major ones. A much better focus is being placed on pupils with a record of poor behaviour and the Teaching and Learning Centre is helping to keep pupils in school who might otherwise have been excluded. Two refugee pupils have been well supported and have made very good progress. Progress in English development is effectively monitored for all minority ethnic pupils and support provided as needed. The placing of more emphasis on celebrating pupils' achievement is also ensuring that pupils of all abilities are given recognition. The Bridge Project has provided very good support for vulnerable pupils starting school.
30. Parents of Year 7 pupils have been impressed with the good induction arrangements. A very good PSHE module 'Managing Myself' produced specifically for Year 7 has also helped in the transition from primary to secondary school. Prior to leaving school there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to plan the next stage of their education or training, and they receive very good impartial advice from the Connexions service and school staff working in that area. Gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to set their sights high and a three-day visit to the University of Oxford for selected Year 10 pupils last May helped in raising aspirations and another day is planned for this school year.
31. The school is looking at ways to involve pupils more effectively in the development of the school. The school council is a good forum for this and more involvement with the youth service is planned. Pupils' views have been listened to in creating outdoor seating and social areas. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in discussions leading up to annual reviews and records show their contributions are listed to and valued.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents are **good**. Links with other schools, colleges and the community are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with parents are good including with those parents of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- There are good relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs.
- The Grange Partnership is a very good recent innovation.



## Commentary

32. The majority of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, problems or complaints. Parents generally agree that the school seeks their views and takes account of their suggestions and concerns, but some feel that timescales for consultation have at times been too short. Whilst the majority of parents feel well informed about how their children are getting on, others would like more regular information about their progress. For some year groups the formal opportunities for receiving such information take place during only one term of the school year. Parents' evenings are well attended. School reports are satisfactory and there are good examples of clear and sharp targets being set for pupils to improve but too many reports lack precise guidance on improving standards. Newsletters to parents are regular, interesting and informative. The current annual report to parents is much improved with clearer information on test and examination results.
33. Pupils' organisers serve as a useful link between home and school in encouraging parents' involvement in their children's education, and are regularly checked by form tutors. There are now regular meetings with the Pakistani community representatives serving a vitally important two-way link. Such parents no longer feel remote from the school and their perceptions of the school are much changed. At the same time the school recognises that such meetings should not be seen as a substitute for attendance at general parents meetings and is looking for all sectors of the community to be represented on parent bodies. A home-school link officer made possible by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) is working successfully with mothers of Year 7 pupils from the Pakistani community to encourage their involvement in school.
34. There are good relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs, and they appreciate knowing who the support assistants are who will be working with their children. Where pupils have an individual education plan a copy is sent and they are encouraged to use the strategies outlined. More parents of pupils with special educational needs now attend parents' evenings and other functions. There are some good links with the local college where some pupils attend vocational courses, and a local secondary school runs a Year 11 AS group for gifted pupils, which four Grange pupils attend.
35. Links with outside agencies are being considerably strengthened and the Grange Partnership involving a wide range of organisations is evidence of that. Although links with primary schools have improved transfer arrangements, curriculum links are not strong enough, but the head of Year 7 is working on that. There are some good examples, however, of primary schools occasionally using specialist facilities at the school, which they have difficulty in providing themselves, for example in design and technology, music, art and physical education.
36. There is comparatively little use of school facilities by the community except for the regular use of sports facilities particularly for football and swimming. The school has identified the expansion of such links as an area for improvement.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance and overall leadership and management of the school are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership by the headteacher is very good.
- A strong commitment to equality of opportunity pervades the school.
- At all levels in the school there is a co-ordinated and more consistent approach and that is beginning to have a positive effect in raising standards.

- Good self-evaluation is a growing strength of the school but some departments are more advanced than others.
- With a tight budget everything possible is done to maximise its use and secure best value.

## Commentary

37. Governance is good. Governors make a significant contribution in helping to shape the vision and direction of the school. They welcome increased opportunities to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the school openly with the headteacher, give much support and ask searching questions where necessary. The respective talents of governors are well used, including parent governors. The governing body has been strengthened of late by the addition of a representative from the local Pakistani community. In seeking to improve the school, governors have not shrunk from making difficult decisions in the recent past, including when faced with some serious issues of racial tension. This led to a marked increase in exclusions, involving pupils from white and minority ethnic backgrounds. They have made a major contribution in helping the school to move on including through some very good staff appointments. Governors are doing everything possible to tackle weaknesses and have taken all reasonable steps to ensure compliance. The recently appointed deputy head has been given the responsibility for ensuring that the citizenship programme meets requirements and that is helping in giving the subject the necessary status and profile. Although there are still deficiencies, very good progress is being made in bringing that about. The considerable investment in ICT is having a major impact in improving standards with all pupils in all year groups benefiting from specialist ICT lessons. It is taking time for some subjects to include ICT as an integral part of teaching and learning and therefore to meet statutory requirements but governors have played their full part in bringing about change. The onus is now on teachers to take full advantage of the ICT facilities made available and to be more pro-active in requesting any extra facilities they would ideally require.
38. The very good leadership by the headteacher is giving the school a strong sense of direction. Leadership by other key staff is good and is good overall. Although the full impact of many changes has yet to be felt on standards, the evidence of the inspection shows that rapid improvement is being made. The headteacher has made a major impact since his appointment in January 2002 but there has been a very difficult period of adjustment during that time with many changes of staff. Change has been accomplished with close and very effective co-operation with the local education authority. Strategic planning is good and whole-school and departmental planning is well integrated. The headteacher has acted as a very good role model in taking steps to consult representatives from ethnic minority groups. The headteacher has his title in both English and Urdu on his office door, and that is good practice, but good practice runs much deeper than that and there is a relentless drive to ensure that all pupils feel that they are a part of the school and that their views and beliefs are respected.
39. The management of the school is good. Much is asked of staff but, because they can see it is necessary, teachers and administrators respond extremely well. They also see senior managers asking much of themselves and taking on a formidable workload at a time when one deputy head post is vacant and when the existing and recently appointed deputy is also acting temporarily as head of Year 11, in partnership with an assistant headteacher. The deputy headteacher is having a significant influence on the school in driving a multitude of initiatives forward. Senior management unearths and faces up to issues and expects middle management to do likewise. Aspirations have been raised. A combination of experienced and newer staff at middle management level is working well. Effective teams have been created with a common focus on pupils' achievement and the team of teachers and assistants supporting pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. There are still barriers to be overcome across the school, for example with some issues of staffing, some behavioural problems, and peaks and troughs in examination results in recent years, but overall the school is improving rapidly. Parents also feel the school is moving in the right direction.

40. Rigorous self-evaluation is a growing strength of the school and monitoring has much improved but some departments are more advanced than others with design and technology to the fore. There is very good analysis of examination results to show the value added by subjects and very good follow-up action with departments to discuss how well pupils have achieved. Performance management is thorough and effective in bringing about improvement. Senior management has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its teaching and administrative staff. Staff development of teaching and support staff is good. There has been a very good evaluation of the role of administrative staff and a complete overhaul to ensure that such staff are as well deployed as possible to support teaching and learning. With a tight budget everything possible is done to maximise its use and secure best value. Spending decisions are made with the priorities of the school very much in mind. A fairly average, but tight, budget, considering all which the school has had to do, is used well and all possible economies are explored including applying best value principles when purchasing goods and services. Much has been done to bring financial procedures up to date and in line with all other improvements in school procedures. The allocation of funds to allow middle managers more time to monitor areas for which they are responsible is good practice.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,578,047	Balance from previous year	75,399
Total expenditure	2,533,647	Balance carried forward to the next	74,949
Expenditure per pupil	2,710		

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### European and community languages

#### URDU

The quality of provision in Urdu is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are consistently well above the national average.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Teaching is good but use should be made of ICT and a greater range of tasks to match pupils' capabilities should be developed.

#### Commentary

41. At GCSE, the percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C grades has been well above the national average including in the last two years.
42. Standards of work seen in exercise books and lessons in Year 11 are above average and average in Year 10. Pupils are making good progress and are achieving well. They can produce good written work on a variety of topics, demonstrating well-developed skills. Most pupils take an active part in class discussion and are able speak confidently on a variety of topics including their daily routines, school uniform and shopping. All pupils are able to speak Urdu at some length and can express themselves effectively. More able Year 11 pupils

demonstrate highly developed reading skills as shown, for example, through reading some Arabic extracts from the Quran in assembly. They are able to analyse and use past, present and future tenses accurately. Pupils with special educational needs are also making good progress and achieving well.

43. The quality of teaching and learning in Urdu is good. The teacher's enthusiasm, knowledge of the language, questioning techniques and use of target language are major strengths. Planning includes good features such as appropriate objectives, but more could be done to match tasks and materials to the differing needs of pupils. Opportunities to use ICT should be explored. There is good use of assessment data to track pupils' performance and the targets are profitably shared with pupils. Pupils' work is marked on a regular basis with good diagnostic comments. There are good, meaningful displays which create a good learning environment and which contribute to the raising of standards and the quality of work produced by pupils. Pupils apply themselves well to learning the language which is an integral part of their cultural background. Social skills are developed well within the context of the subject in a supportive atmosphere.
44. The leadership in the subject is good and the teacher has a clear vision and a sound knowledge of the subject specification. The subject teaching is making a good contribution towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The number of pupils studying Urdu is growing and the department is keen to start teaching the language at Year 9.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very thorough planning supports good learning.
- Day-to-day assessment is underdeveloped.
- Teachers manage pupils well so that behaviour in lessons is good.
- Pupils are not good at learning independently.

##### **Commentary**

45. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 were average compared with all schools and improved on the below average results of 2002. Results were above average compared with similar schools based on prior attainment, and that was much better than the well below average results of the previous year. The trend in results has been erratic but overall an improving one since the last inspection. Standards of pupils in the current Year 9 are average. This represents satisfactory achievement for pupils in relation to when they started in Year 7, including pupils with special educational needs.
46. GCSE results were below the national average in 2003 following average performance in the previous year. Teacher absences during the second half of the GCSE course caused some disruption to pupils' learning. Staffing is currently more stable which is helping pupils to attain average standards and to achieve satisfactorily over the two years of their GCSE course.
47. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Although the majority of pupils behave well in lessons, this is because teachers have become skilled in dealing with poor behaviour and in preventing it getting in the way of learning. Too few pupils are able to work independently and depend too much upon teachers' very thorough preparation and continual direction to help them learn effectively. Lessons are varied, fast moving and develop a wide range of skills. The most competent pupils in Years 7 to 9 are developing effective ways of thinking about what they are reading so that they can anticipate and read between the lines more quickly. They can write accurately in a variety of styles, and readily adopt the language needed for a press report or formal letter. Less competent pupils can recognise the different styles, and can imitate a range of different simple sentences effectively. They do not use punctuation well enough and do not have enough self-confidence to write at length. In Years 10 and 11 the most competent pupils talk and write confidently about the themes and ideas in the books they have read and can work independently. Less competent pupils can write short pieces about people and things they do. When the most competent pupils develop their ideas effectively in discussion, some other pupils in the same class do not know how to listen or how to follow and analyse what is being said and lose concentration. Teachers mark and assess work carefully. However, they are not evaluating how well individual pupils have learned in that lesson in order to adjust their plans and keep the level of challenge high.
48. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has been absent for some time. In her absence the acting head has worked closely with the teaching team to continue a programme of development. Improvement has been well supported by outside consultants. New teaching materials and methods have helped in managing potentially difficult behaviour and to improve boys' achievement. Almost all the weaknesses identified in

the previous inspection have been dealt with. Although standards at GCSE are still not high enough a good basis is being laid for improvement earlier in the school as shown in recent national test results. Improvement since the last inspection had been satisfactory. The wide range of different activities to continue raising standards has created a heavy workload. Consequently the team has not made consistent use of data to monitor how well pupils are achieving.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

49. There is satisfactory development of pupils' use of language in subjects across the curriculum. Each subject now benefits from having a policy which describes how teachers will support language development. There is good use of writing frames in music to support lower attainers and careful attention to ensure that pupils understand the wording of lesson objectives. Literacy skills are well supported in design and technology. Subjects such as drama and physical education offer pupils chances to discuss and evaluate their work and drama has a very significant influence in pupils' language development. In history and religious education, teachers recognise the value of discussion to help pupils when grappling with new ideas. In most subjects, teachers introduce pupils well to key words they will need to use, and good displays of key words in mathematics and modern foreign languages are used well in lessons and help in promoting good learning.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results in French have been well above average in two of the last three years.
- Teachers' planning in most lessons is good, with good examples of different tasks to stretch pupils of different capabilities, but there is insufficient planning for the use of ICT.
- Poor behaviour by a minority of pupils adversely affects teaching and learning in some lessons.

#### **Commentary**

50. In attaining well above average results in two out of the last three years, pupils have achieved better in French than most of their other subjects, and particularly so in 2003. In German, results were average in 2003 and well above average in 2002.
51. Standards in French in Year 9 meet national expectations, but are below that level in German where pupils are at the beginners' stage of language learning. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in French and well in German considering the stage they are at. In the current Year 7, pupils achieve well in French as a result of their enthusiasm and that of the teaching. Pupils' writing is mainly accurate and they can understand most of what they hear. Speaking, however, is often a weakness with some pronunciation problems in French. Standards in Year 11 are average in both French and German, with a wide range from the higher grades to those who may not be entered for the examination. Achievement is good. Many pupils are able to write fluently and accurately in the foreign language, but a minority is very limited in written skills.
52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and are good in Years 10 and 11. Good teaching was seen in Years 7 and 8 where pupils were encouraged to use the language and where teacher and taught enjoyed the high level of interaction. Where a small minority of pupils behave badly the learning of the majority is held back, standards are lowered and teachers are prevented from showing themselves at their best. Teachers set an example with their proficiency and understanding of the language, they plan their lessons well and expectations are good. In the best lessons they use a good range of activities and different strategies to ensure all pupils are challenged and that was seen to very good effect in a Year 11 German

class, but opportunities to use ICT as a regular part of learning are not exploited. Good use was made of a learning support assistant in a Year 7 class to enable pupils with special educational needs to learn well. Displays in all classrooms, including the use of key words, help to promote good learning. Assessment is used well.

53. The curriculum is satisfactory, as all pupils learn French. Only higher attaining pupils, however, are able to start German in Year 9, therefore limiting the number of pupils who have the choice of studying two languages. Most pupils therefore are limited to two lessons of languages per week.
54. The very recently appointed head of department provides satisfactory leadership and management. It is too early yet to measure the full impact of the appointment but a good start has been made and a good team spirit is being fostered. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and are leading to a marked improvement in standards.
- The enthusiasm and commitment of the new head of department and the staff, who work well together as a team.
- Relationships in lessons are very good and the pupils behave well and work hard.
- Test and examination results need to improve, especially the GCSE results.

### **Commentary**

55. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have been below average for the last three years compared with all schools. In 2003, however, results were average compared with similar schools, based on prior attainment, which represented a considerable improvement from the well below average results of the previous year.
56. GCSE results have been below the national average in the last three years, although rather better than the well below average results in the two years following the last inspection. Results were very near to average for boys in 2002. Pupils' performance in mathematics, however, has not been as good as their performance in other subjects.
57. Current standards at the end of both Years 9 and 11 are average, and higher than those of previous years, as pupils have benefited from a good focus on key elements of the National Numeracy Strategy, changes in the teaching team and a concerted and ongoing effort to raise performance. Achievement is currently satisfactory and good for higher attainers. Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 use graphical calculators very effectively to solve quadratic equations. In all years pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress. As a result of effective teaching most pupils acquire a sound knowledge of basic skills and concepts and are able to draw accurate graphs and interpret and analyse data and understand the connection between fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils in Year 9 were seen investigating the angle sum of polygons and being able to generalise the result to a good standard. However, some pupils have difficulty with measuring angles and problem solving. Good displays of key words, the insistence of teachers on the correct use of mathematical language and good oral work in lessons help the development of literacy skills.
58. Current teaching is good overall. The majority of lessons are good or very good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations of the pupils, the pace is good and a variety of tasks

challenge pupils of all abilities. Despite examples of lessons that do not move on quickly enough, the pace of lessons is better than that reported at the time of the last inspection. Some good starter exercises are used, for example, to help with number revision. A number square generated by a computer and displayed on a screen was used effectively with a Year 9 group to revise square numbers, primes, multiples and factors. The ending of lessons is sometimes insufficiently well focused, with learning not always appropriately consolidated. Teachers make effective use of questioning, encouraging pupils to explain their answers and solutions to the rest of the class. Pupils have a positive attitude to mathematics. Pupils' enjoyment of the subject and the quality of relationships have been helped by the measures taken to improve discipline.

59. Leadership and management judged over time and taking into account recent examination results of the mathematics department are satisfactory. Current leadership is good. The new head of department has a clear vision of what she needs to do to raise standards and has made an impressive start. The monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning now taking place in an organised way is helping to raise standards across the department. Assessment procedures are good. Marking is both encouraging and informative. Pupils are aware of National Curriculum levels and the targets set are helping pupils to achieve their potential. Improvement, taking into account the recent improvement in standards, has been satisfactory since the last inspection. Whilst the staffing of the department has improved there are still too many part-time teachers.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. The key features of the National Numeracy Strategy have been shared with all staff in the school and have helped in raising awareness of how pupils can develop their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects across the curriculum. That, allied to the general raising of standards in the mathematics department, is ensuring that most pupils can cope satisfactorily with the mathematical demands made in different subjects. Pupils in design and technology are able to use the methods they have been taught in mathematics lessons in a variety of ways including in measuring and costings. In physical education, pupils can apply their knowledge to calculate cardio-vascular heart rates at various stages during exercise and plot the results. There are good opportunities for practising numeracy in science and pupils make accurate use of graphs in science and geography. Pupils have a sound understanding of where calculators are best employed and where they are inappropriate tools. Pupils with special educational needs who have weaker mathematical knowledge, for example in manipulating fractions, are supported well in lessons and small group work.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weakness**

- There is insufficient independent investigative work in Years 7 to 9 and there is scope for the more creative involvement of pupils in lessons generally.
- Good use of assessment and high quality comments on class work help learning substantially, but individual targets are not precise enough, and pupils do not always act upon written comments in marked work.
- Pupils know what they are expected to learn, because lesson objectives are always explained to them, but they are not always sufficiently challenging.
- There is a good team approach to raising standards.



## Commentary

61. National test results at the end of Year 9 were below average in 2003 but average compared with similar schools. This represented satisfactory achievement for many pupils in relation to their standards when they joined the school in Year 7.
62. A smaller proportion of pupils is entered for GCSE double science than nationally. Results declined to below average in 2003 following above average results in the previous year. Results in GCSE single science were above the national average compared with all schools in 2003.
63. Current standards in Year 9 are broadly average. The majority is achieving satisfactorily although there are pockets of underachievement. Some good work was seen, for example, when high attainers were able to write chemical equations of what happened as they made compounds and when middle attainers were able to write word equations. Class experiments, however, are too structured and independent investigative work in Years 7 to 9 underused. Pupils have good opportunities for practising numeracy but not enough for using technical words or applying ideas.
64. Current standards in Year 11 are below average but achievement in relation to earlier attainment is satisfactory. Higher attainers can refer to fundamental ideas about science when drawing conclusions but the majority is not sophisticated enough in their observations. Teachers do not focus upon these skills early enough. Pupils in lower sets are making better progress than those in the top set, where a significant minority is underachieving, partly because of a high turnover of staff. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make satisfactory progress.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. It ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers' good subject knowledge is used well in their questioning of pupils and in explanations. Progress in lessons is strongly linked to teachers' expectations. In a Year 9 class, pupils with special educational needs were seen to sharpen their understanding about patterns in temperature change as liquid wax solidified, because of their teacher's good knowledge of their individual needs and what they were capable of achieving. They also benefited from the expert skills of assistants. The best teaching not only knows what pupils need to learn, but how to make this happen through clever planning geared to well-chosen and challenging objectives, but that is not always, as seen in a small number of lessons. Learning is impoverished at times by unimaginative planning, too much guidance by teachers, a slowing of pace as lessons proceed and a lack of imaginative and constructive beginnings and endings to lessons. There is also scope for more creative involvement of pupils throughout lessons. High quality comments on classwork are very helpful to pupils in their learning but checks that these comments have been acted upon by pupils are not routine.
66. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the concerted teamwork is having a positive effect in raising standards. Meticulous analysis of test and examination results is being used well to focus on strengths and weaknesses. Assessment information is used well to check the general progress of individual pupils but not well enough to identify specific targets which focus sharply on learning particular aspects of science. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is below average but improving.
- Currently, good teaching is helping pupils to achieve well.
- Homework is infrequently set and does not extend learning.

## **Commentary**

67. Most pupils take ICT to GCSE level and that gives them a very good grounding for the next stage of their education. Higher attainers are encouraged to take the full course while others are guided into the short GCSE course. GCSE results in the full ICT course were above average in 2002 and well above in 2003 but results in the short course have been well below average.
68. On entry to the school, pupils' ICT skills are somewhat below national expectations. Until very recently pupils made slow progress, especially the more talented. As a result current standards by the end of Year 9 are below national expectations but that situation is improving rapidly. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 also have to make up lost ground and current standards as a consequence are below average, but with improvements in teaching and resources pupils are now achieving satisfactorily in lessons, particularly higher attainers. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and boys and girls make similar progress. The best-developed skills are those used for communication such as word processing. The use of ICT for controlling mechanisms remains weaker, as it was at the last inspection.
69. The main reasons for current standards being below average lie in the past. A shortage of specialist teachers has affected many groups, especially in Years 7 to 9 and that has been a very difficult situation to manage. Moreover, schemes of work provided insufficient challenge, particularly for higher attainers. In recent months there has been considerable progress on both fronts and the quality of teaching and learning are now good. Teachers use their comprehensive knowledge of the subject to make good presentations using the new interactive whiteboards. Schemes of work are now more demanding and teachers' expectations are higher. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well catered for, supported by talented, well-qualified classroom assistants.
70. Relationships are good and for the most part pupils respond well in lessons, co-operating to assist each other's learning. When faced with work that is ill suited to their needs, some behave badly but that is normally dealt with effectively by the experienced teachers. However, pupils have few opportunities for whole-class discussion or to work in groups or to experiment. Homework is not set regularly, and for Years 7 to 9 does not even find space on the homework timetable, which further restricts opportunities for independent learning, including for gifted and talented students. Opportunities to develop literacy, mathematics and citizenship within the context of ICT skills are not exploited.
71. Since the last inspection, equipment and technical support have improved markedly which is helping to raise standards. Good leadership and management by the recently appointed head of department are having a significant effect but systematic monitoring of staff performance is not yet in place. The team works hard, gives up lunchtimes to allow open access to the facilities, and shares a commitment to succeed. The department's new assessment policy provides a good framework for tracking pupils' progress. Target setting is in its infancy but good short-term targets have been introduced for Year 7 classes. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

72. There are some good examples of the use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum but additional opportunities could be offered in some subjects. This could allow pupils to use and develop their rapidly improving skills, being acquired in specialist ICT classes, in a broader range of contexts. There are examples of good practice in design and technology, history, geography, religious education and special educational needs, and in mathematics pupils use graphical calculators from an early stage. Staff appointed under the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant use computers well, with pupils using imaginative techniques when, for example, designing cards celebrating Eid. There are missed opportunities, however, in some

subjects including in art, music and modern foreign languages, and opportunities for greater use in most subjects.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results have not been high enough but current standards are better.
- The subject is becoming increasingly popular as an option choice at GCSE.
- There is very good provision for fieldwork for all pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop and practise enquiry skills and pose their own geographical questions.

#### Commentary

73. At GCSE in 2003, pupils' results at grades A\*-C were well below the national average. They were also lower than pupils' results in their other subjects. In 2002, results at grades A\*-C were just below the national average.
74. Standards in the current Year 11 are below average and in Year 10 above average. Overall pupils are now achieving satisfactorily, including pupils of all capabilities, those with special educational needs and pupils from minority ethnic groups. Pupils are showing an increasing knowledge and understanding of geographical terminology. All can recognise and describe geographical processes such as erosion and higher attaining pupils can explain them well. The relative weakness for all is their lack of recall of case studies. Pupils are well supported in their fieldwork in Stourbridge or Aberystwyth and have undertaken some good data collection. Higher attaining pupils draw appropriate conclusions from this data. Recruitment to geography has increased, doubling in the last year.
75. Standards in the current Year 9 are in line with national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils. Pupils of all capabilities show increasing confidence in using appropriate geographical terminology. Their geographical enquiry skills are less well developed.
76. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and during the week of the inspection some lessons observed were good or very good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Teacher questioning is purposeful and encourages pupil participation. Pupils respond positively, answering questions and working with interest. At GCSE the majority is compiling adequate sets of notes but some pupils have significant gaps in their work and new management has taken steps to address that. The value of engaging pupils in their own learning was seen in a starter activity of a Year 11 lesson where the teacher asked each pupil to sum up his or her understanding of rivers on a yellow sticker and answers were then displayed on the board and discussed. This enabled the teacher to reinforce some fundamental points, such as why rivers flow to the sea, and also to clear up areas of pupil misunderstanding. Teacher assessment is conscientious. Pupils are regularly set targets but they are frequently not sufficiently geography specific to help pupils to improve.
77. Leadership and management of geography are satisfactory. The head of department, in post since September, has introduced a new system to monitor pupil progress. This is beginning to impact on learning. The geography teachers work well as a team. They have made improvements such as the provision of fieldwork for all pupils in Years 7 and 8 and of clear learning objectives in all lessons. Teachers are also making greater use of ICT. Such

improvements are fairly recent and, judged over the whole period since the last inspection, improvement has been unsatisfactory.

## History

The quality of provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results were above the national average in 2003 with A\* and A grades very well represented, although the attainment of boys was well below that of girls.
- The increasing numbers opting for the subject in Years 10 and 11.
- Very good quality of teaching and learning.
- Good provision for historical site work for all pupils in Years 7 and 8.

### Commentary

78. Following average results in 2002, results improved to above the national average in 2003 with especially high numbers achieving A\* and A grades. The attainment of boys was well below that of girls in 2003.
79. Standards in the current Year 9 are just above national expectations. This represents good achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, in relation to the standards they were achieving in Year 7. Pupils of all abilities show good knowledge and understanding of events and people in the past as seen with Year 9 pupils when explaining the causes of the First World War and when Year 8 pupils made a judgement on whether Oliver Cromwell was a hero or a villain. There is a slow start to Year 7 as half a term is spent on an introductory unit.
80. Standards in the current Year 11 are above average. This represents good achievement for pupils of all capabilities. Pupils show very good knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content and its requirements. All can describe the influence of factors, such as war and religion, on the development of medicine and the higher attainers can offer well-developed explanations. The relative weakness in their work lies in their use of historical sources. Pupils are especially well supported in their work on Goodrich Castle resulting in high quality coursework. Many pupils show real enjoyment when discussing their ideas about the past.
81. The quality of teaching is very good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Teacher questioning is very skilful and forces pupils to think and explain their ideas and is especially effective in drawing the majority of pupils into oral work. Pupils respond positively to the well-planned lessons and work with interest. At GCSE they are compiling excellent notes. Teacher assessment is very thorough and pupils have precise targets to help them to improve.
82. The leadership and management of history are very good. There is very effective monitoring of teaching and learning. Teachers of history form a very committed team. They have successfully introduced the new course at GCSE and have made a number of significant improvements since the last inspection. They have developed the use of ICT although this needs to be taken further. The history clubs are another positive feature. Improvement has been very good since the last inspection.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall good teaching, with a high percentage of very good practice combined with positive pupil attitudes, results in good standards.
- Good leadership ensures non-specialist teachers are supported and effective monitoring enables best practice to be shared.
- Links with local faith communities are underdeveloped.
- The subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development.

### Commentary

83. GCSE results have been mainly well above average with pupils' standards usually better than their performance in their other subjects. In 2003, although results dipped slightly they were still just above average.
84. Standards in the current Year 9 are just above expectations. This represents good achievement for many pupils in relation to when they started in the school in Year 7, including pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups. Pupils make good gains in factual knowledge and understanding of religious symbolism, beliefs and traditions. In Year 9, pupils have a good grasp of how different religions celebrate an individual's passage through life. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of religious language, which was well demonstrated in a Year 7 class exploring the existence of a God.
85. In the current Year 11, standards are above average. This represents satisfactory achievement over the two years of the course. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well. Middle and higher attaining pupils are developing good independent enquiry skills. They use the Internet effectively to gather information. One good example of this was seen in researching how the media depicts Islam. Pupils also show clear understanding of issues involving the sanctity of life and often provide perceptive comments as was seen in lessons on the festival of Id-ul-Adha.
86. Good teaching overall enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of ways in which religions influence the lives of believers. The strong features of the most effective teaching are careful planning and the use of motivating and engaging tasks. Focused questioning challenges pupils and requires them to think about issues. Pupils respond positively and most concentrate sensibly and are prepared to discuss and share opinions in learning well. This was seen in a lesson exploring Christian and Jewish views on the coming of the Messiah. Computers are used effectively to assist pupils learn.
87. The leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear vision to develop the subject even further and appropriate priorities have been identified for development. Good standards and the quality of teaching and learning commented on in the last report have been maintained. Subject levels have been introduced to inform pupils how well they are progressing. The development of a computerised system of assessment recording could assist the monitoring of teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are consistently well above the national average overall.
- Good and some very good teaching leads to very good pupil achievement by the end of Year 11.
- Expectations are generally high, although vary between different subject specialisms in Years 7 to 9.
- The head of department provides good leadership for the subject but the monitoring of teaching and learning requires a sharper focus in order to share good practice.

#### Commentary

88. In attaining consistently well above average results at GCSE pupils achieve significantly better in design and technology than in their other subjects. Results in graphics and electronics are high when compared with national results. In 2003, results were above average in resistant materials and just below average in food technology.
89. Current standards in Year 9 meet national expectations. Attainment on entry is below average and pupils make good progress from Years 7 to 9 representing good achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. In very good work in the ICT module in Year 9, pupils use computer-aided design software to a high standard in presenting their work. Where standards are weaker it is mainly due to pupils' poorer presentational skills, incomplete work or where end-of-module tests do not reflect the ability level of the class.
90. Current standards in Year 11 are above average overall. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and often exceed predictions based on their prior attainment. Higher attainers can produce very good standards of work as seen in a graphics project investigating methods of packaging for consumer use. Middle and lower attainers find some aspects of the work difficult and some of the work is repetitive. Standards of practical work are good and often very good. Pupils' attitudes are good overall and very good in some classes. They respond well and most show a desire and willingness to learn.
91. Literacy skills are well supported and the importance of the use of correct technical terms and vocabulary is reinforced in lessons. Pupils use their numeracy skills satisfactorily. ICT is generally well used in the department and in Year 10 pupils are confident in using the vinyl cutter in project work.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils achieve well because teachers have good subject knowledge, plan and use resources effectively, have high expectations in most lessons and usually challenge all pupils appropriately. They manage pupils very well. Such qualities were used to good effect in a lesson where pupils were learning about different types of motion when designing a mechanical toy, and also in a very good lesson where pupils developed their practical skills to a high standard in using a variety of materials and processes when making clocks. There are occasions when lessons do not challenge and engage pupils of all attainment levels and where learning is not as good.
93. Leadership and management are good with some very good features. The head of department leads by example, has high expectations and has much expertise in preparing pupils for their GCSE examinations. Assessment procedures are good and very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' progress and achievement are tracked well in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, monitoring of coursework and preparation for examinations is very good. Whilst

marking is helpful it is not always to National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9. The very good practice seen in some areas of the department's work should be shared more widely across all areas of the department.

94. Resources are satisfactory but there is a shortage of computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing equipment.
95. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Good quality resources and workbooks have been produced for Years 7 to 9. ICT usage has increased, assessment procedures have been developed well and risk assessments are now regularly undertaken. Most of the issues from the last inspection have been addressed and high standards have been maintained.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision is art and design is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Examination results are mostly well above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT.
- Not enough use is made of pupil self-assessment and of National Curriculum criteria and levels.

#### **Commentary**

96. The well above average results at GCSE have been a feature of most years since the last inspection, but results were below average in 2003, reflecting a lower attaining year group.
97. Current standards in Year 9 meet national expectations indicating good achievement for many pupils compared to their standards on entry, including for those with special educational needs. Pupils' work is well founded on direct observational drawing, and good work was seen from many pupils including in their understanding and application of colour theory.
98. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average, representing very good achievement over the two years of the course. In tackling portrait work, pupils in Year 10 make rapid progress in this challenging topic. In an exciting Year 11 lesson pupils were encouraged to use experimental techniques which led to very high quality and vibrant work. Pupils with special needs achieve equally as well as others and some high quality work from these pupils was seen.
99. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 10 to 11. The best lessons are characterised by good relationships and high pupil self-esteem, with the passion and enthusiasm of the teacher gaining a mirror response from pupils. Pupils' learning is characterised by good skills in observation and analysis, and developing and refining their skills through trial and error in both practical and theoretical work. There are examples of high quality work and achievement. In a very good art lesson with Year 11 pupils, opportunities were given for pupils to experiment with new methods of applying paint using everything from scraps of torn card to blowing paint across the surface of the paper with straws. Toothbrushes and plastic or card tubes were also used to apply the paint. The results were exciting and vibrant. The lesson was exceptionally well supported by assistants who were actively involved. Parallels were drawn with the work of Hockney, Kandinsky and Pollock. Pupils knew that they were being successful and this made them feel very good about themselves. The use of ICT remains an area for development.

100. Leadership and management are good, and the head of department has a clear perception of necessary developments in the subject. The contribution of the technician is outstanding. The good assessment system needs to be developed further to take full account of National Curriculum criteria and levels and pupil self-assessment is under used. Access to ICT was an issue at the last inspection, and this is still true. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with only the ICT access issue unresolved.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

- Lessons are interesting and varied with pupils expected to do their best.
- Leadership and management are good and are raising standards.
- There is a lack of essential and suitable computer equipment for use in music lessons.
- Pupils are not sufficiently aware of their individual progress and the targets for which they should aim.

## Commentary

101. Only a small number of pupils studied music at GCSE level in 2003. All pupils attained A\*-C grades and this reflected improvement from 2002 results. Pupils' achievement was good and both boys and girls attained higher grades.
102. Because of previous staffing difficulties there are no pupils this year studying music in Year 11. Standards of work by pupils in Year 10 are currently below average but pupils are achieving well and making good progress in their course. At the moment, however, they are struggling in analysing music and creating musical pieces with a clear structure.
103. Current standards in Year 9 are below national expectations but, considering their starting point, pupils are achieving well. Because of the lack of stability in staffing since the previous inspection, pupils have significant gaps in their musical skills and knowledge. Therefore they lack ideas when composing or performing. Better standards were seen at the inspection in Year 8 where evidence from lessons and recent recordings show that pupils who have had lessons from permanent staff are meeting national expectations and achieving well, including those with special educational needs.
104. Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good as seen with classes in Year 7 and Year 10. Lessons are exciting and aim to involve pupils in tasks such as composing a fanfare and understanding how music is used in advertising. Questioning is rigorous and pupils are encouraged to explain technical terms in their own words. Very good planning ensures that musical skills are integrated and developed carefully, but at present singing is underdeveloped. Use of writing frames helps the less competent and those minority ethnic pupils with English as an additional language to progress well in improving their literacy and evaluative skills. Examples of very good class management help most pupils to relate well to each other but a small minority of pupils is uncooperative and disruptive and is reluctant to answer questions, follow instructions or perform when asked. Where that happens it prevents teaching from showing itself at its best. Despite that, pupils' efforts and achievements are celebrated and valued wherever possible. New assessment systems are being developed but pupils need to be involved more in challenging themselves through individual targets and measuring their own progress against such targets. There are insufficient resources to allow pupils to use computers in their lessons.
105. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear understanding of priorities, commitment to raising standards, consistency of approach and sharing of good practice. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils take part in concerts within school and the local community. Improvement has been good since the appointment of the current head of



department. Good musical opportunities are provided for all and the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **Drama**

Provision in drama is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching overall including examples of excellence.
- Very good achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- The very good contribution to the development of speaking skills could be strengthened further with stronger links with the English department.
- The contribution of the subject to building up pupils' self-esteem.

### **Commentary**

106. GCSE results, with small numbers entered, have been consistently well above average, with nearly all candidates since the last inspection attaining grades A\*-C. Pupils do very well compared with their performance in other subjects. Numbers are steadily growing, as shown in the current Years 10 and 11 examination groups.
107. Standards are above national expectations in Year 9 and achievement is good. Drama plays a powerful role in pupils' language development. Improvisation and group work feature strongly in promoting independent learning. The great majority of pupils successfully apply their knowledge and skills to improvise dramatic scenes which explore issues and convey feelings and emotions. Pupils in Year 7 are making a good start and, for example, can successfully practise mime with a good awareness of audience and purpose. Most pupils are able to use group work productively but some pupils in Year 9 have not mastered the basic skills of drama in their earlier years, have poor levels of concentration and are demanding of the teacher's time.
108. Standards in Year 11 are well above average and achievement is very good. Some high quality work was observed, for example, in a Year 10 class when investigating the role of power and status in society. High quality work was also seen in Year 11 with pupils showing an astute understanding of the power of group dynamics and how human relationships form much of the basis of drama. Some improvisations by pupils were very powerful when exploring ways in which groups create 'outsiders' and when set in the context of food and eating disorders in the teenage world.
109. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 9, excellent in Years 10 to 11 and very good overall. The teacher's expertise, high expectations, and excellent relationships make pupils feel secure and build up their confidence and self-esteem. Assessment is very well used and ongoing feedback helps pupils to improve and encourages self-evaluation. Teaching caters well for the needs of all pupils in the class, including for pupils of different ethnic heritage, and multicultural issues are regularly addressed within the context of drama.
110. Leadership and management in this one-person department are very good and based on real vision and inspiration. There is a passion for the power of drama in contributing to pupils' growth and personal development. Stronger and more formal links with the English department could further strengthen the overall very good contribution of drama to pupils' speaking skills. Drama was not reported on in the last inspection report but now occupies an important role in the school and improvement in provision and practice has been good.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good management of pupils is contributing to improving standards and to pupils' personal and social development.
- An improving curriculum is generating increased levels of interest and participation.
- Pupils' achievement at GCSE could be higher.

### **Commentary**

111. GCSE results have been mostly average over time but were above average in 2003. Pupils achieve satisfactorily.
112. Standards in Year 9 meet national expectations and pupils achieve well. Girls understand the importance of exercise for a healthy lifestyle and can accurately record their pulse rate using graphs. The boys apply tactics effectively in football. All pupils evaluate each other's performance well and make constructive comments which lead to improvement.
113. In Year 11, standards are average and pupils achieve well. Boys have advanced skills in swimming and football. Girls effectively coach and apply tactics in netball using their knowledge of techniques. Those following the newly introduced Junior Sports Leaders Award understand the importance of rules, health and safety and enjoyment factors when organising games. In all years, pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are often talented games players and also achieve well. Those with physical disabilities achieve well because tasks are adapted to meet their needs.
114. A minority of pupils opts to take a GCSE in physical education. Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Their practical work is above average. A minority of higher attaining Year 11 pupils underachieves because tasks and homework set are not challenging enough.
115. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work, behaviour and sporting attitudes. The pace of learning is always brisk and lessons have clear objectives. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to demonstrate effectively. They plan well, mostly ensure that the needs of different groups of pupils are met and manage pupils well. Literacy and numeracy skills are supported well but planning for the development of ICT is not as effective. Target setting for GCSE pupils is not sufficiently sharp in Year 11 but the new system for assessment in Year 10 clearly gives pupils greater focus on how to improve. Pupils apply themselves well in response to encouragement and opportunities to be actively involved in their own learning.
116. The popular extra-curricular programme and a 'sport for all' approach encourages pupils of all capabilities to participate in school clubs and inter-house matches. Individuals and teams enjoy success at school, district and county levels in netball, football and swimming.
117. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection. New leadership and management of the department are good and are already having a positive impact. Self-evaluation and its use in the department are very good. The subject already makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and the more innovative curriculum encourages greater participation by girls and a wider choice of course for some disaffected boys. The development plan is sharply focused on improving standards.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business communications systems**

Provision in business communications systems is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have been very good in recent years and pupils have done better in this subject than in most of their other subjects.
- Links with the real world of business are currently underdeveloped.

#### **Commentary**

118. Results at GCSE have been mainly well above average and were above average in 2003.
119. The subject is taught in the ICT department and currently there are two groups in Year 11. After the first term pupils from the full ICT GCSE course have the option of taking business communication systems as an additional GCSE.
120. Current standards in Year 11 are below average. This is partly a result of the effects of serious staffing problems in Years 7 to 9, when pupils were taught by non-specialist teachers. They also had non-specialist teachers in the first year of the GCSE course. Many pupils' ICT skills are currently weak, particularly the practical skills necessary to understand ways by which ICT has revolutionised administration and communication systems in the business world. Pupils are now taught by specialist staff and will be concentrating on computing skills for the rest of the year in order to raise standards. Higher ability pupils in the groups have prepared good notes on aspects of business, for example, data protection legislation, human resource management and different kinds of working environments. Weak literacy skills and a failure to provide sufficient detail in assignments and notes are characteristics of many lower attaining pupils. Many find it difficult to analyse and evaluate situations and systems in modern business. Achievement in relation to ability on entry to the course, however, is good. Standards in Year 10, with double the number of groups, are above average. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to their peers.
121. Teaching and learning are good. Strong features of the most effective teaching include careful planning and close one-to-one support provided in lessons. Teaching is accurate and current teachers have a very secure understanding of the requirements of the course and the teaching of key computer skills. The relative weakness in learning partly results from some pupils' inability to sustain concentration for any length of time. This was seen in a Year 10 lesson where, despite the efforts of the teacher, a small number failed to work consistently.
122. Leadership and management are good. Lessons and pupils' work are monitored and evaluated to enable progress to be tracked and best practice to be shared. In the past, visits have been arranged to real business environments but this is currently not happening. The subject was not offered at the time of the last inspection.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are unsatisfactory but improving.
- The new deputy head is providing inspirational leadership for the subject.

## Commentary

123. Standards and achievement are unsatisfactory as a result of the slow start made in the past in introducing citizenship and in covering all the strands of the National Curriculum. The subject has only recently been taught systematically within the school's PSHE programme. There are still parts of the National Curriculum for citizenship which are not being covered in enough depth. The scheme of work for PSHE reflects the school's emphasis on health education and the incorporation of citizenship into the PSHE programme represents a good way forward. It provides better coverage, however, of knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens, such as human rights and the workings of government, than developing skills of enquiry and of active democratic participation.
124. Outside the PSHE programme good contributions are made by English and drama and to a lesser extent by physical education, science and music, but opportunities in other subjects arise only incidentally and not explicitly. A full audit has now been taken of the contribution which could be made by all subjects and that is good step forward.
125. Teaching and learning have been unsatisfactory over time because of the inadequate provision for citizenship in the curriculum. That has prevented pupils from learning as well as they could. Under new arrangements, teaching and learning are currently satisfactory overall and the response of pupils is good. All form tutors teach one lesson of PSHE per fortnight to their own classes which means that pupils discuss topics more freely in a protective environment with teachers who know them well. The school has not yet managed to find sufficient time to train them effectively, although good quality advice is available from the heads of year and the deputy head. Despite that, teaching styles are too dependent on worksheets. No arrangements are in place for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress in citizenship to parents but that is planned for the end of the current academic year.
126. Outside lessons, some innovative citizenship activities take place. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 took part in an imaginative day of activities related to democracy in May. The school hosts an anti-racism in football project and, as part of a local education authority initiative, the views of all pupils are surveyed every other year. The school council meets only once a term, however, and elections are not routinely held.
127. The leadership and management of the subject by the new deputy head are very good complemented by the support of her assistant. This has inspired a corporate commitment from the large teaching team. The school has come late to addressing the requirements to teach citizenship, but improvement over the last six months has been very good with the full impact of some measures likely to be felt in the near future. Arrangements for monitoring by heads of year are very good and important at this early stage of development, although time needs to be found for teachers to plan collaboratively and to identify and share good practice. Although community links to citizenship are undeveloped generally, the recent establishment of the Grange Partnership of local stakeholders is an example of good practice.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*