

INSPECTION REPORT

THE SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

Kingswinford

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103854

Headteacher: Mrs Jill Stuart

Lead inspector: Dr David Benstock

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th February 2004

Inspection number: 262102

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

Terms used in this report

*Students in Years 7 to 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for students and students of all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, students aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the students know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, students aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**).*

*Inspectors judge the **standards** reached by students by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for students of the same age nationally. The students' **achievements** reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational **value added** over time. In this report, **similar schools** are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.*

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 – 16 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1031
School address:	Lodge Lane Kingswinford West Midlands
Postcode:	DY6 9XE
Telephone number:	01384 816165
Fax number:	01384 816166
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Graham Knowles
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Summerhill School is an 11 - 16 mixed comprehensive school, and is of average size. It is situated in the area of Kingswinford, near Dudley in The West Midlands and the school draws from the immediate locality and surrounding area. The socio-economic background reflects a mixed range of family circumstances. Many families have experience of higher education but there is also some social deprivation. Very few students leave or join the school at other than the usual time. The school is very popular and heavily oversubscribed. The majority of students have white British heritage. The number of students who speak English as an additional language is low. The number of students eligible for free school meals is well below average, and the percentage of students identified as having special educational needs is below the national average. The percentage of students with Statements of Special Educational Need, mainly for students with hearing and visual impairment, dyslexia or moderate learning difficulty, is also below national average. Standards on entry to the school are generally above average, but there are slight variations between year groups. Attainment on entry for the Year 11, who left in 2003, was below average on entry. In the past year the school has moved into new accommodation and benefits from new modern facilities. External landscaping is still underway. The school has gained Specialist College Status for languages, together with several awards for achievement, Investors in People status awarded in 1999, re-awarded in 2002, the Artsmark Silver Award, and the Sportsmark Award, in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20243	David Benstock	Lead inspector	
9189	John Horwood	Lay inspector	
3958	Maureen Cawdron	Team inspector	English Drama
1407	Peter Scott	Team inspector	Mathematics
23188	Virginia Maunder	Team inspector	Science
31129	Jeff Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology
19152	Richard Merryfield	Team inspector	History Citizenship
12336	Malcolm Overend	Team inspector	Geography Special Educational Needs (SEN)
12475	Stuart Johnson	Team inspector	Music
3687	Godfrey Bancroft	Team inspector	Physical education
30046	Ross Parker	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
11838	Derek Cronin	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language (EAL)
17288	Megan Warner	Team inspector	Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)
3, Harrowby Road
West Park
Leeds
LS16 5HN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	38

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some very good and excellent features. It gives good value for money. The most recent GCSE results were well above average. Standards of work seen are above average, and the achievement of students throughout the school is good overall. The quality of teaching is good and leads overall to good learning. Overall, the school is well led and managed and the personal leadership of the headteacher is excellent.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students' attitudes to learning and their personal development are very good and contribute significantly to their achievement.
- The headteacher demonstrates excellent vision, drive and determination to raise achievement.
- Achievement is good overall and very good in English, art and design, music and French. Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory because the quality of teaching, leadership and management of this subject are currently unsatisfactory.
- The match of tasks set in lessons to the particular needs of groups of students, including higher attainers, lower attainers, gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, is inconsistent between departments.
- The provision for the care and welfare of students is excellent.
- There is inconsistency in the monitoring of teaching and learning, by heads of department.
- The governors' role in strategic planning and establishment of the new accommodation, facilities and modern resources has reflected their strong commitment to the school.
- Provision for ICT in art and design and history, where a unit of work is not taught in Years 7-9, does not meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

Since the last inspection the school has improved well. A strong commitment to modern languages has resulted in the award of specialist language college status. The school now occupies new accommodation and gained new resources that greatly enhance the learning. Despite some variation, standards have been maintained in nearly all subjects, the exception being ICT, where standards have declined as a result of the unsatisfactory teaching and leadership. The overall quality of teaching has improved. Provision for spiritual development has improved and assembly, together with tutorial time, enables the school to meet the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Parents now receive very good information about students' progress.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

Current standards of work are above average and students achieve well. However, students underachieve in ICT. There is some inconsistency between subjects in the achievement of different groups of students because tasks do not always match their individual needs closely enough. GCSE results have remained well above average for the past three years and the trend has been above the national trend, although there was a fall in the results in 2003. Test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above national average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. Broadly, boys achieve as well as girls, although there are variations especially in mathematics where, for example, boys make better progress than girls. In general, the performance of boys was similar to that of girls in Year 9 in 2003. In mathematics, however, boys achieved higher results than girls, relative to the respective national averages. Although remaining well above average overall the trend in results in Year 9 has been below the national trend.

The ethos for learning in the school is very good. Overall, arrangements for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good and contribute significantly to their personal development. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is well above average and students are punctual to lessons. Students' involvement in school life and willingness to take responsibility are excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning overall are good. They are very good in English, art and design, music and French. The teaching of specialist ICT, is unsatisfactory. Overall procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Marking of work supports learning but does not sufficiently ensure students know how to improve their standards. Very good use of the new resources and accommodation contribute to good learning. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are very good. Links with parents and the community are very good. The school's care for students is excellent and encourages the exceptional attitudes and ethos for learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are good. The personal leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She has excellent sense of purpose and determination to raise the quality of education further. She is well supported by senior colleagues and the leadership of staff with responsibilities is good. The general effectiveness of management is satisfactory, but there is inconsistency in the monitoring of teaching, use of assessment data and monitoring of students with special educational needs. Management of ICT is unsatisfactory. Governors are very supportive, challenge ideas and have been very involved in the school's strategic development. Financial management is very good.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school believing that there are high expectations and good teaching. They appreciate very much the arrangements made to help new students settle into the school. They wish to be kept better informed about their progress and consulted more on issues. The great majority of students who responded to the questionnaires are pleased to be at the school. Although the inspection team found behaviour to be at least good, 25 per cent of students who responded disagree.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the teaching, leadership and management in ICT, which are currently unsatisfactory.
- Improve the rigour and consistency of monitoring of teaching and learning in departments.
- Improve the consistency with which departments match the tasks for students to their individual learning needs.

And to meet statutory requirements

- Ensure the requirements for National Curriculum are met in ICT, art and design, and history.
- Ensure that the minor omissions in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents are rectified.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, standards are **above average** in Year 9 and in Year 11. Achievement from entry into the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in English and standards are well above average in Year 9 and in Year 11. Performance overall in the GCSE examinations in 2003 was well above average compared with all schools and compared with schools with a similar prior attainment on entry.
- Achievement is good in most subjects of the curriculum including mathematics, and very good in art and design and music.
- Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory.
- There is some inconsistency between subjects in the achievement of different groups of students because tasks set by teachers do not always match their individual needs closely enough.

Commentary

1. In the National Curriculum Tests in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) for Year 9 in 2003, the overall performance of students was well above the national average and well above average compared with schools admitting students with a similar prior attainment on entry. Students enter the school with a wide range of attainment but overall it is a little above average. Results in Year 9 tests in English and science in 2003, were well above average and in mathematics, they were above average. Compared with similar schools, the overall performance was well above average in English, close to average in science and below average in mathematics. In 2003, boys' and girls' attainment was virtually identical, although nationally girls attain higher than boys. Results have been well above average over the past four years but the overall performance has remained constant and the trend is below the upward national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	37.8 (35.1)	33.4 (33.3)

Mathematics	37.5 (36.9)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	36.1 (36.9)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 202 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The students' GCSE results in 2003 were well above average compared with all schools and with schools with students having a similar prior attainment in Year 9. The overall trend at GCSE over the past few years has been above the national trend. The 2003 GCSE results were well above average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Girls' mathematics results were not as good as those of the boys. The subjects having the highest relative performance at GCSE relative to other subjects and national averages, apart from the core subjects, were art and design, French. The lowest performing subjects were ICT and to a lesser extent, history.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	65 (75)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	97 (98)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	39.2 (43.0)	34.7 (n/a)

There were 190 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In Years 7 to 9, standards seen are highest in English and music, and lowest in ICT, where students are underachieving. They are above average in other subjects, and average in geography, design and technology, religious education and physical education. Students achieve very well in English, art and design and music. In Years 10 and 11, standards are well above average in English, French, art and design and music. They are well below average in ICT. Standards are above average in mathematics, science, German, history and geography. In other subjects they are average. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good in English, music and art and design. It is unsatisfactory in specialist ICT in Years 7 to 11, but satisfactory progress is made with ICT taught in other subjects of the curriculum. Overall, there is no significant difference noted in the achievement of boys and girls, although there are variations in some subjects, for example mathematics where boys achieve slightly better than girls.
- Standards in literacy across the curriculum are above average, with speaking and listening skills being particularly strong. Competence in mathematical skills is also good, but opportunities for development are missed in several subjects. The students' use of ICT and their skills have improved since the last inspection and in most subjects are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11 owing to the regular practice and application. The use is still unsatisfactory in art and design, where the provision does not meet National Curriculum requirements and in science where students' use of the computer to record and analyse data is limited.
- Students with special educational needs do not make as much progress as other students in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education and geography. They make good progress in lessons designed to improve their literacy skills and when additional support is provided in other subjects of the curriculum. In subjects such as art and design and

music, where individual subject specific targets have been set, progress is always good. However, although grouping arrangements enable teachers to provide work at levels generally suitable for these students, not all subjects provide tasks and materials that cater specifically for their special educational needs and so their achievements are not always as good as they could be. Lower attaining students do not always achieve as well as others in mathematics.

6. Teaching group arrangements and extension work enable gifted and talented students to make good progress and achieve above average results in external tests and examinations in many subjects especially modern foreign languages, music and physical education. Achievement of gifted and talented students is not as high as it could be in English in Year 7, geography and ICT, for while most departments identify students who are gifted and talented, the practice of providing work to further challenge students is not universal.
7. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language, achieve at least as well as other students. None are at an early stage of language acquisition. The school's monitoring of the progress of minority groups shows that they reach slightly better standards than other students.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are **very good**. Behaviour is **very good** throughout the school. Students' attitudes to learning and relationships with each other and with adults are very good. The number of fixed term exclusions is average for this type of school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are extremely enthusiastic about joining in the activities available to them within the school and are willing to take on responsibility.
- Students' very good attitudes contribute to a good learning environment.
- Very good behaviour in the majority of lessons and very good relationships, result in a harmonious community.
- Very good attendance and punctuality are being improved still further by effective systems of sanctions and rewards.

Commentary

8. Students are very supportive of the school. They attend school willingly and with enthusiasm. Attendance is well above the national average and whilst figures have fallen slightly over the last few years the school has introduced very good procedures to further encourage improved attendance. The monitoring of attendance and encouraging of punctuality are very good. If a student does not arrive at school by a reasonable time the school contacts parents to find out why.
9. The vast majority of students behave very well but a small minority occasionally misbehave in lessons. There are effective rewards and sanctions in place to promote improved behaviour with a strong emphasis on celebrating the good points. Exclusion is only used when necessary. Students said that there is some poor behaviour but that it is infrequent and dealt with by the school. The students' council discusses the effectiveness of procedures to promote very good behaviour. Students have very good attitudes to learning, which, supported by the very good

relationships between adults and students, help to create a very good learning environment where they can participate fully and achieve well.

10. Overall, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Within this, students' spiritual development is good. Students have a weekly assembly that is built around a spiritual or moral theme. The school provides a daily act of collective worship in that there is a thought for the day shared throughout the school giving students ample opportunity for reflection. All students receive the required religious education in which there are opportunities for reflection and this contributes to raising students' level of spiritual and self-awareness. There has been good improvement in this aspect since the last inspection when it was a weakness.
11. The moral development of students is very good resulting from role models set by staff and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) provision. Trust of the students is demonstrated by the open access available to students to social areas at break times. Considerable self-discipline is shown by students in their behaviour in these areas. Students show an exceptional degree of respect and consideration for others. The cultural development of students, including the multi-cultural aspect, is very good as a result of curriculum studies, visits and visitors to school. Participation in extra-curricular activities involving sport, drama and music is extensive and exhibitions of art are frequently arranged. Very good opportunities for cultural and multi-cultural awareness are presented through diverse displays around school.
12. Students' social development is very good and this is clear from the interactions of students during the lunch break where they sit, stand or play in friendly groups within their social areas or around the school. Opportunities for responsibility and for contributing to school organisation are excellent with active school, advice, health and sports councils as well as in-class responsibilities; students are also given positions of responsibility both during the day and at school events. Students also take part in the interview process for new staff. The school develops a climate of mutual support and as a result relationships are very good. All groups, including those with minority ethnic backgrounds mix and work very well together.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.1
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	1.1

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

Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian

Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
994	19	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
5	0	0
6	1	0

Mixed – Any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0
Parent/student preferred not to say	3	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are good. Provision for the care of students is excellent. The school has established a good, broad and balanced curriculum that serves the needs of most students. Links with parents, other schools and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are **good** overall. Although assessment procedures and their use are satisfactory overall there is inconsistency between departments.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in the majority of subjects and very good in English, art and design and music.
- Teaching and learning in ICT are unsatisfactory.
- Very good attitudes and relationships between students and teachers contribute to the good learning.
- Matching work to attainment of students, including those with special educational needs is not consistent between subjects.
- The very good resources and accommodation ensure a supportive environment for learning.
- Marking of students' work does not always address literacy weaknesses, such as spelling, and does not consistently in all subjects inform students about their progress or how to improve.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory in ICT, religious education and citizenship.

Commentary

13. The good quality of teaching and learning together with the students' very positive attitudes have a significant impact on the achievement of the majority of students. Some minority groups of students, for example those with special educational needs, those who are gifted and talented or are higher attaining do not always achieve as well as they might in some subjects due to insufficient match of work to the individual needs. Teaching and learning are good in most subjects. They are very good in English, art and design and music, where the planning and high expectations are apparent. Teaching is good overall in modern languages, and the level of expertise and choice of teaching method particularly in Years 10 and 11, have considerable positive effect on the learning, which is therefore very good.
14. During the inspection, over 130 lessons were observed and written work of students analysed. Nearly three-quarters of all lessons were at least good or better, and over one-third were very

good or excellent. Teaching overall was found to be better in Years 7 to 9, than in Years 10 and 11 but the difference was not great. Five lessons were judged unsatisfactory or poor. These related to lack of challenge in ICT and science, unsatisfactory behaviour in design and technology and underachievement in science and history.

15. In science, geography in Years 7 to 9, and citizenship, the overall teaching quality satisfactory. In science, planning and matching work for the range of attainment in a class is inconsistent and teaching methods are not always stimulating enough to inspire students' enjoyment of the subject. Teaching of religious education is very good when specialists are involved but the extensive deployment of non-specialists leaves the depth and breadth of teaching being no more than satisfactory.
16. Teaching and learning in citizenship are satisfactory overall. In lessons where the topic is clearly resourced and identified, for example in PSHE, teaching in general is good. However, where it is taught in subjects without clear identification, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Topics are identified in the schemes of work and transferred to other subjects. Although this work is coordinated there is as yet insufficient assessment and monitoring to always identify the depth of material covered.
17. Teaching and learning in the specialist subject of ICT are unsatisfactory. The teachers' understanding of the requirements of examination syllabuses and National Curriculum programmes of study are insufficient to satisfactorily support students' learning. Weak teaching and poor management of the subject have resulted in staff being unable to plan appropriately or set challenges at the right level. Assessment data has not been used to support students or to track progress. Insufficient adaptation of schemes of work and inappropriate teaching methods has resulted in poor application of techniques by students and poor quality coursework.
18. The very good relationships between teachers and students contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the teaching and learning. Very good resources including electronic white boards and modern equipment together with some excellent displays are used effectively to enhance the learning. There are some limitations still in drama and religious education. Also, in the school as a whole, the heating and ventilation leaves rooms that are too hot and without a good circulation of air, which also has a negative effect on the learning. PE sports fields are often unusable.
19. Good quality teaching and individual support in lessons designed to improve literacy enables students with special educational needs to make good progress in developing their basic skills and to understand and respond to work they are required to undertake in other subjects. However, their overall progress is only satisfactory and slower than that of others in a number of subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants often provide good additional support in lessons to help students gain knowledge and improve their skills but too often fail to provide appropriate tasks and resources to achieve these goals. This weakness is noted in mathematics, English, modern foreign languages, ICT and geography.
20. There is inconsistency in the challenge presented to gifted and talented students in subjects across the curriculum and though they often achieve high standards teaching does not always extend these students as much as it could. There is no identification of provision to be made for gifted and talented in the majority of subjects and much is left to the discretion of teachers.

21. Assessment has been a focus for improvement within the school and is satisfactory overall. Improved monitoring of the comprehensive and detailed whole-school policy, within which departments develop their own policies, is helping to raise standards. Students in most subjects know how well they are doing and what they are capable of, because subject teachers set targets for individual students based on prior attainment and tests.
22. Systems of assessment are improving, and are becoming more consistent as good practice is being shared across the school. Periodically, students discuss their progress against these targets with their teachers. As a result, students know more about their standards of work. In some departments, for example, in English, art and design and music, this process has helped students to be more aware of how they learn and what they have to do to improve their work. In other departments such as maths, science, history and geography, and citizenship the process is developing more slowly. Assessment and recording of the work and progress of the highest attaining students and for those students with special educational needs are satisfactory overall.
23. Assessment is unsatisfactory in ICT. The department does not use prior attainment data or evaluate whether students are achieving as well as they might. In Years 10 and 11 students do not understand the GCSE grade criteria. Feedback to students is delayed so that students are not aware when they have failed or are falling behind. Assessment in religious education is unsatisfactory because in Year 9 levels have not yet been agreed, although they are being piloted.
24. Marking of students' work is inconsistent between subjects, and although work is often checked frequently and supportively, there is insufficient guidance given to students as to how they can improve. Spelling mistakes often go uncorrected.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 136 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (4%)	41 (30%)	53 (39%)	32 (23%)	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	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.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of academic examination courses offered to students is very good. However, insufficient provision is made for students' to pursue vocational courses.
- The school's specialist status for modern foreign languages provides students with very good learning opportunities.
- Extra-curricular provision is very good. Large numbers of students take part in activities.
- The provision for specialist ICT teaching is unsatisfactory and the curriculum for history and art and design do not meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

25. The range of learning opportunities provided for students is good in Years 7 to 9 and is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Students are very appreciative of this provision. They particularly like the range of examination subjects that are available to them. Opportunities for students to continue their learning outside the school day are very good. Teachers give their time readily to enable students to take additional examination subjects at the beginning and end of the school day. The school has responded well to being awarded Specialist Language College Status for modern foreign languages. The good provision for this curriculum area enables students to learn additional languages, such as Spanish or Russian, in addition to French and German, but there are no trips or residential visits organised. Overall, however, the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These activities include sports, music and the arts and are very well attended by students.
26. Insufficient provision is currently made for those students who would like to take vocational courses. The only vocational course on offer is in health and social care. The school is developing increasingly closer links with local colleges to address this area of the curriculum. Very good provision is made to prepare students for the next stages of their education and students are very appreciative of the guidance and support they receive. Often this support is provided as part of the very good provision made for students' personal, social and health education.
27. Although overall use of ICT in subjects is satisfactory, not enough use is made to support students' learning. The provision for ICT in art and design does not meet the requirements set out in the National Curriculum programme of study.
28. At the time of the last inspection the curriculum was judged to be good. Improvement since that time is satisfactory. The school now allocates a satisfactory amount of time for the teaching of physical education and makes satisfactory provision for a daily act of collective worship.
29. The school has undergone a complete rebuilding programme from a Private Finance Initiative, although through circumstances beyond the control of the school some features, for example eating areas, remain to be completed or changed. Overall, accommodation is very good and much improved since the last inspection. It is excellent in most subjects, although in some areas unsatisfactory heating and ventilation makes working conditions for students and staff uncomfortable. Timetabled use of accommodation for religious education is unsatisfactory because there is only one designated teaching room, many lessons take place in unsuitable areas. Also, the drama studio is really too small for extensive practical work. The physical education department has excellent indoor accommodation but outdoor facilities are unsatisfactory.
30. Learning resources have also been much improved since the last inspection and are very good overall. They are excellent in many subjects and at least good in all. Concerns of the last inspection have been addressed where for example the number of books in the library has been increased and there are now more books for geography and science. There is now excellent access to computers for all subjects and the only weakness is in specialist ICT lessons where the reliability of equipment and access is a problem.
31. There is a satisfactory match of teaching staff in terms of number and qualification to the needs of the curriculum, although there is only one specialist teacher in religious education, and some non-specialist teaching in other subjects. There is good provision for non-teaching staff to provide support.

32. Recent developments have provided gifted students with opportunities to sit examinations in subjects such as English literature, mathematics and modern foreign languages earlier than the norm and to broaden their curricular experiences through courses in additional subjects in the time thus made available. Advanced subsidiary level course are offered in sociology. Extra-curricular activities, including visits, Summer School and enrichment opportunities, widen horizons and provide good opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding beyond that gained in lessons.
33. There is good quality support from teaching assistants at lunch times and after school to help students with special educational needs to revise and reinforce work in a variety of subjects.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **excellent care** of its students throughout the school. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good, although there is a need to improve the use of assessment data in departments to ensure students know how to improve their standards. Systems to involve students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care, welfare and health & safety provision is excellent.
- Excellent involvement of students in school organisation is provided through the many councils and participation in staff appointment interviews.
- The school is very quick to make contact with parents in the event of unexplained absence.

Commentary

34. The school has excellent procedures for child protection and ensures that all staff are aware of requirements and the school's procedures. The school works well with external agencies and has systems in place to support children who are in the care of the local authority. A very strong feature of the school is the way it follows up absence to ensure the safety and welfare of the students. If a student fails to arrive at school and notification is not received, the school will telephone parents early in the day to confirm the student's safety – every effort is made to contact parents.
35. The school has comprehensive health and safety procedures in place and the buildings were fully assessed for health and safety compliance before the school occupied them. There is excellent welfare provision from caring pastoral staff and support staff. Medical provision comprises a full-time nurse, a medical room and several qualified first aid staff. Supervision of outside areas is good.
36. The school has a very well structured pastoral system where tutors know the students well and have good information about their academic progress to enable them to give well-informed guidance. In addition to the morning tutor period, all students have the regular opportunity for detailed discussion usually on an individual basis at the end of the day. The provision of PSHE is made in specific periods each week and delivered by the class tutors. This, together with the twice-daily contact at registration enables excellent relationships to be developed.
37. An unusual feature of the school is the excellent number of opportunities, which are provided for students to take an active part in the school organisation. As well as the school council there

are additional ones for advice, health and sports. The advice council is particularly effective as a peer support mechanism to address any concerns other students have and provide a route for students to identify bullying at an early stage. There are also responsibilities as head boy, head girl and within each year group as senior students. Students are also an integral part of the interviewing process for the appointment of staff.

38. Students with special educational needs are well cared for during their time in school. The special needs department effectively monitors their progress, reviews are undertaken as required and help is sought from local educational services when necessary. Students are well known by the staff of the department and individual education plans and good quality information is provided to assist all staff to meet special needs and set targets. Subject departments, however, provide too few subject-specific targets and more general targets are not always as explicit or short-term as they could be.
39. Currently, as the school identifies no students who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, no special provision is deemed to be needed for support. There are a small number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The pastoral care system supports these students well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents, the community and other educational establishments.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides excellent curriculum information for parents.
- Parents receive good information about students' progress and about the school.
- The school works very well with other schools.
- The community makes a significant contribution to students' education.
- There are minor weaknesses in the governors' annual report, related to reporting progress of students with special educational needs.
- Systems to seek parents' views are continually being developed.
- Very good arrangements are made for transition from primary schools, but extended curriculum links with primary schools are developing.

Commentary

40. Parents are generally very supportive of the school. However, a significant number of parents were concerned about the lack of information about progress and that the school does not always seek their views. A few parents also mentioned instances of bad behaviour and some bullying within the school. However, the school has procedures to deal with any occurrences effectively.
41. The information about students' progress comprises a good report each year supported by a parents' evening. Parents also receive a good quality prospectus and governors' annual report for the school together with informative well-produced newsletters. Within the governors' annual report the information on parent governor election and about the progress made by students with special educational needs should be more clearly identified. Each year parents are sent an excellent booklet detailing the curriculum content for the year. Attendance at parents' evenings is good but attendance at the governors' annual meeting is very poor. The school uses

a planner for students to allow parents to monitor the work and to communicate with the school and these are well used. The school has a strong and improving parent/teacher association (PTA), which raises funds and holds social functions. Some parents feel they would like more regular and formal parental consultation. The school has an open door policy and is developing its work with parents to produce a stronger partnership.

42. The school keeps parents of students with special educational needs fully informed about the progress of their children. Annual reviews of statements of special educational need take place as required and there is effective liaison between the school and primary feeder schools when students transfer at the age of 11. The school prospectus and Governors' Annual Report to Parents includes appropriate information about the provision made for students with special educational needs but the latter does not fulfil the statutory requirement to report their overall progress.
43. The Specialist Language College status has helped to build up very good partnerships with other schools to their mutual benefit. This includes joint teaching with primary schools and a local special school as well as a sixth form college. The school is actively working with other local schools to produce better opportunities for vocational courses as well as alternative 14-19 provision. As part of the Kingswinford Development Group with six partner primary schools, improvements in transition and learning from primary to secondary school are being developed.
44. Many local organisations and services support the school through visiting speakers and welcoming students on visits to them. Many local businesses were involved in supporting the language college bid and the partnership is continuing with the school offering language support to them. The school is currently consulting small local businesses to determine how they can help and work together with the school. The school buildings, including the swimming pool are well used by the community for adult education.
45. The school has very good links with the main feeder primary schools, which ensure that students settle into Summerhill very quickly. Significant curriculum links are in place with further ones planned. As part of the Specialist Language College status, teaching staff also support the primary schools directly by teaching in them. Guidance on further education and careers is very well provided for through the PSHE lessons.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school overall are **good**. The leadership of the head teacher is excellent. Management overall, including that of the heads of departments is satisfactory, although there is inconsistency in monitoring of teaching and use of assessment data. Governance is good overall and governors provide very good support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the head teacher is excellent and she is very focussed on improving the school
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is good through the whole school review, but is not sufficiently consistent in the rigour of approach between departments
- Financial management is very good
- The governors' role in strategic planning, for example in establishing the specialist college status and commissioning of new premises has been very good.
- The school makes a strong commitment to staff development.
- Leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory.
- The school does not meet statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in ICT, history, art and design.

Commentary

46. The leadership of the school has been very effective in establishing the move from older buildings onto the new site and in overcoming problems arising in the process. The school has successfully been awarded Specialist Language College status and the headteacher has an excellent vision for future development. Senior colleagues support her very well and demonstrate a strong commitment to the inclusion of all students in school life.
47. Staff with management responsibilities carry out their roles satisfactorily and show commitment and determination to raise standards. They embrace new initiatives and provide an exceptional level of care for students. Development planning is well established and fully integrated into the school. Staff have been inspired and invigorated by the acquisition of new accommodation and modern resources. The students share this enthusiasm.
48. The school is committed to raising achievement and in doing so, improving the teaching and learning. Considerable emphasis and time has been given to the development of alternative teaching styles and preferred methods of learning for students. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been carried out through departmental reviews involving the senior team in conjunction with heads of departments. This process is good but there is inconsistency in the rigour with which subject departments monitor the effectiveness of teaching and develop individuals' skills.
49. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The Chair of Governors has been particularly active in the strategic planning and private initiative financing for the new building and resources. His commitment to the school is excellent, and others also provide very good support and expertise.
50. The school leadership team provides very good role models for staff and students. The team members have a high profile in school and clearly defined responsibilities that are apparent to all. This results in an efficient and effective aspect of management. Performance data are very carefully analysed and the outcomes of the analysis shared with staff regularly. Staff

development forms a high priority and has focused on the effectiveness of different styles of teaching and methods of learning. Induction for new staff is good and the school is also very active in providing initial teacher training.

51. Departmental leadership is good overall. Management is satisfactory overall but there are inconsistencies in the use of assessment data and planning as well as monitoring of teachers' performance. Both leadership and management are very good in art and design and music. Some degree of staff absence has meant there are gaps in the procedures in mathematics, design and technology and geography where there is a new head of department due to take up appointment. Leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory.
52. The school has made satisfactory arrangements to establish and cater for the needs of both gifted and talented students and those with special educational needs.. Teachers and teaching assistants are adequately deployed to provide support to students. The facilities for learning support are good and satisfactorily managed by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Information of good quality is provided for all staff, classes are organised according to students' prior attainment and the curriculum modified and extended to challenge those with special gifts and talents in some subjects.. However, the intended outcomes of this provision are not consistently found across all departments and there is currently insufficient monitoring of the success of these policies or the progress of students at departmental level.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,935,176	Balance from previous year	42,508
Total expenditure	2,879,206	Balance carried forward to the next	98,478
Expenditure per student	2,784		

53. Financial management is very good. Procedures are very clear, well organised and the principles of best value applied in the management of resources. Development plans are well costed and expenditure controlled. The governing body provides appropriate oversight of financial matters; many of the governors have experience and expertise in this field.

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 **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE are well above average.
- Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Teachers make very good use of assessment to promote learning.
- Work in Year 7 is not always well matched to students' needs.
- Students benefit from excellent accommodation and resources.

Commentary

54. Results in the Year 9 tests in 2003 were well above average, both nationally and in relation to similar schools, with very high scores at Level 6 and above. This reflected a considerable improvement on results in 2002, halting the declining trend of the previous three years. Compared with similar schools, students' results were better in English than in mathematics or science.
55. In GCSE English language and GCSE English literature results in 2003 were well above average and very high in relation to similar schools. Girls achieved better results than boys, in line with the national picture.
56. Standards in the work seen in Year 9 are well above average, reflecting very good achievement from attainment on entry that was just above average. Students are articulate and contribute at length in class discussions, although girls tend to be more reticent than boys. The majority read fluently, with good comprehension, and most write well with a good standard of accuracy. Standards in Year 11 are further improved and are securely well above average again reflecting a very good overall achievement. These older students are able to write in a variety of styles and produce detailed, well-structured analytical essays, some of a very high standard. In all years there is lively, imaginative writing. They discuss and articulate their views extremely well. Students with special educational needs achieve well because they receive extra teaching from the special needs department, although only minimal support in English lessons. The achievement of those who speak English as an additional language is the same as other students of similar ability. Gifted and talented students achieve very well overall, although less so in Year 7, where some work is undemanding.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers' enthusiasm and good classroom management create an excellent climate for learning: warmth, humour and good relations mean that students want to do well. The brisk pace of most lessons ensures that time is not wasted, that students work with concentration and that group activities are well managed. A specialist support teacher provides valuable extra help across the ability range. Students are thoroughly prepared for tests and examinations, while rigorous marking, individual target-

setting and detailed comments provide guidance towards improvement. Very good use is made of the new resources, including ICT.

58. Leadership of the department is very good. There is a clear commitment to improvement, an innovative approach and good collaboration, with ideas and resources shared using the intranet. Management is good, although monitoring procedures need formalising and strengthening.
59. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. ICT is firmly within the curriculum, spiritual development is sound, and the department has responded positively to many national changes. New developments include the recent introduction of media studies and general studies at GCSE as well as the creation of a fast-track group in Years 10 and 11.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Standards of literacy are above average. Speaking and listening skills are strong in many subjects, including, notably, mathematics. Students are well able to meet the reading demands of the curriculum and research skills are well developed in history, geography, physical education, music and mathematics. Standards of writing are above average in many subjects, with particularly good opportunities for writing at length in a variety of forms in history, modern foreign languages and English.
61. All subjects, apart from ICT, contribute in some degree to the development of literacy in their teaching. Key vocabulary is taught in all subjects, although in religious education students need encouragement to use new terminology in oral work. More could be done to develop oral skills in science and design and technology. Teachers are not consistent across the curriculum in the extent to which spelling and grammar are corrected. There is good provision for students with weak literacy within the special needs department. The management of language development across the curriculum overall is good, but there is now a need to review developments.

Modern Foreign Languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in French were well above average in 2003. Girls achieved well above average results in both French and German.
- Good teaching provides many varied opportunities for students to express themselves in the foreign language.
- Very good attitudes and behaviour help nearly all students to achieve well.
- Good leadership and management provide clear direction and underpin effective teamwork.
- Teaching strategies are not always sufficient to match work to individual needs of lower-attaining students, including those with special educational needs.
- Curricular provision is very good, provides equal opportunities and is developing further to meet the responsibilities of being awarded specialist language college status.
- Currently, there are no trips, residential visits or exchanges to further develop language learning and cultural awareness.

Commentary

62. In 2003, GCSE results in French were well above average. In German, results were slightly above average. Girls did much better than boys, especially in German. The difference is greater than nationally in both languages.
63. Inspection evidence shows that attainment at the end of Year 9 is above average. Since attainment at the start of Year 7 is typical of the national picture, this represents good achievement. However, lack of strategies to match work to individual needs means that lower-attaining students, including many with special educational needs, make only satisfactory progress. Focus on boys' achievement is now improving their progress. Higher and average-attaining students develop communication skills of reading and listening well with some very good performance in speaking and extended writing. Standards in Year 11 are well above average in French, and above average in German, showing improvement in this subject. All students continue to achieve well, including lower-attaining students making good progress in a Spanish course, starting in Year 10. In both French and German, gifted students are well extended, and produce unusually sophisticated language in both speaking and writing.
64. Learning and teaching are good overall. Teaching is very good in some lessons, and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They use the foreign language effectively to conduct lessons, setting high expectations, providing good models and improving listening skills. They make increasingly effective use of new technology, energetic activities and games. Consequently students have fun as they learn. They benefit from rich opportunities to use the foreign language creatively, in pairs and groups, and to become less dependent on support. The best lessons feature pace, variety and challenge, with teaching well-focused on National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria, and students aware of their progress. Students' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute to their learning. Though planning is generally good; students in lower sets all do the same work, irrespective of individual progress and understanding. Homework is generally well used. Marking is related to appropriate criteria, but sometimes fails to provide guidance on how to improve. Opportunities to teach citizenship through modern languages are not always taken.
65. The director of languages and the head of department provide an effective partnership. Their good leadership and management have positive impact on learning, through developing shared strategies within a large team. Regular self-evaluation and analysis of data contribute to effective forward planning. Currently, the department does not share its good practice through a programme of lesson observation. Curricular provision is very good. Nearly all students study French and German in Years 7 to 9. The new provision of Spanish means that all students can choose to study up to three languages in Years 10 and 11. Specialist language college status already promotes teaching in feeder schools, and there are plans to extend the range of courses, within the school as well as for other local students, businesses and parents. The subject now benefits from excellent accommodation and very good resources. The surprising weakness in provision is the complete lack of educational visits abroad, though there are plans to remedy this. The award of specialist language college status confirms good improvement since the previous inspection, with good capacity for further improvement.

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics is taught to all students and statistics is an additional option for higher attaining students in Year 11.

Statistics

Statistics was sampled. The teaching was not observed because this GCSE course begins near to the end of Year 11. The analysis of students' written work shows that the standards are broadly in line with the national average.

Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well overall and standards reached are above average.
- Students' attitudes towards learning are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good overall but there are some inconsistencies in matching work to the needs of individual students, making for example, the achievement of those with special educational needs only satisfactory.
- Leadership is good but the monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour.
- Opportunities to develop ICT skills have improved but are not yet exploited sufficiently.

Commentary

66. In 2003 the results in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were above the national average, but below the average in schools with a similar prior attainment on entry. Tests results in mathematics were not as high as in English and science. In recent years, results have improved broadly in line with the national trend. In the GCSE results in 2003, were above the national average. The percentage of students gaining the highest grades A-A* is below national averages which suggests that the most competent students are not realising their full potential. In 2003 in Year 11 girls performed better than boys in obtaining the highest GCSE grades, A* - A, whilst boys were more successful at obtaining the full range of grades.
67. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9. Attainment on entry is broadly average and students reach above average standards at the ends of Years 9. Lower attaining students including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as work is not always consistently well matched to their need. Standards overall are further above average in Year 11 and achievement remains good. Most students in Year 11 make good progress in absorbing new ideas. Basic skills in numeracy overall are strong. The students have good skills in ICT, improved since the last inspection, but there is a need to further exploit these sufficiently in the teaching to improve learning further, particularly in Years 7 to 9. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
68. Teaching and learning are good overall. In some very good lessons, diverse teaching methods include the use of the excellent new electronic whiteboard facilities, which strengthens students' learning. Teachers generally expect hard work from the students, who reciprocate appropriately. Assessment data is used purposefully and constructively to assist students to make progress. Most students have very good attitudes towards learning. Their concentration and application help greatly in supporting good achievement. Students, particularly those in Years 7 to 9, show a good inclination to take an increased responsibility for their own learning but this is sometimes not supported with enough information for them to know what to do to improve.

69. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The leadership provides drive, direction and aspiration in relentlessly pursuing the improvement of the students' achievement. The recent recruitment and selection of a young and well-qualified team of teachers is bearing fruit and their enthusiasm and expertise are already making an impact upon standards. The head of department manages the department successfully on a daily basis. However, the monitoring of teaching is limited in scope and rigour resulting in some inconsistencies in effectiveness. The department has made good improvement since the previous inspection. Students are given more opportunities to use and apply mathematics, the teachers' use of ICT has improved, although further development is needed and the accommodation and resources for teaching and learning are markedly better.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Students' knowledge, understanding and skills in the use of number are very good. The mathematics department has successfully built upon the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy in the primary schools and has effectively extended this initiative into Years 7 to 9. Good use of numeracy in the teaching of mathematics is leading to better confidence in the students' use of number. Some subject departments, including science, history, and geography and, to a lesser extent, music are exploiting the students' mathematical skills. Others however miss opportunities, for example, to develop analytical and problem-solving skills. The school numeracy policy is embedded in schemes of work but inconsistently implemented across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards on entry to the school in science are above average; overall they are above average by Year 11, which represents satisfactory achievement.
- Students' theoretical knowledge and understanding of the subject are stronger than their practical and investigative skills.
- A small proportion of the higher attaining students are underachieving because work is not sufficiently matched to their needs
- In the best lessons careful planning, students' positive attitudes, and good relationships promote good learning.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning does not ensure sufficiently rigorous identification of teachers' strengths and weaknesses.
- Marking and assessment are regular and precise but do not give enough guidance to students about how to improve their work.
- Opportunities for students to use computers to record and analyse experimental data are not sufficient, and only just meet National Curriculum requirements.

Commentary

71. In 2003, results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were well above the national averages for all schools. Performance was average compared with schools admitting students in Year 7, with similar prior attainment, indicating satisfactory achievement. Results were not as good as

in English but were slightly better than in mathematics. The percentage of GCSE grades A*-C gained in 2003, was well above average but was lower than in 2002. Boys' performance was broadly similar to that of girls in both National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations. Results have fluctuated year-to-year, but are broadly similar in comparison with national average as those at the previous inspection.

72. From work seen, standards in Year 9 and in Year 11 are above average and not as high as those indicated by recent national tests and GCSE examination results. Students enter the school with above average levels of attainment and their current achievement by Years 9 and 11 is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 11, most middle and lower attaining students, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory and often good progress. When work indicates satisfactory achievement, students have an adequate knowledge of the science of life and living processes and an appropriate understanding of materials and their properties and of physical processes. The latter is slightly weaker than the first two areas. However, in many classes in Years 7 to 11, a small proportion of the highest attaining students are underachieving. Teachers set work to meet the needs of middle and lower attainers, but do not always provide work of sufficient challenge, difficulty and relevance for all students.
73. Students have relatively few opportunities to research appropriate information, think critically about it and produce original extended writing. Consequently, their answers sometimes lack depth and understanding and knowledge is not applied sufficiently well. This situation is similar to the previous inspection. Overall, students' practical and individual investigative skills are not as strong as the knowledge-based areas of science. They seldom plan their own experiments from which they can evaluate the results and draw conclusions.
74. The development of literacy skills is generally well supported and most students can confidently use scientific terminology. The use of mathematics is quite well developed, although on occasions there are too few worked examples for students to become sufficiently competent at using formulae or equations. Students' ICT skills, although improving, are not well developed because they lack the opportunity to use computers to collect information when performing their own experiments.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is slightly more good teaching in Years 7 to 9, where teachers are beginning to implement the National Science Strategy.
76. In the best lessons, teachers plan effectively and students understand the relevance of what they are doing. The lesson has pace and teachers question with skill, and enthusiasm. Explanations are clear with a good range of interesting activities. There is a good atmosphere with high expectations. Consequently students develop curiosity and a thirst for knowledge, asking as well as answering questions.
77. In some lessons, which were otherwise satisfactory, teachers do not allow enough participation and contribution from students. The structured nature of the work, especially practical work, leaves insufficient scope for students' own initiative. Consequently these lessons progress more slowly and higher attaining students in particular can accomplish too little. Two lessons were unsatisfactory. In these, planning was weak, and the level of difficulty was not matched well enough to students' differing attainment needs. Sometimes there is an over-emphasis on uninspiring worksheets, which provide little opportunity for extended writing or discussion. In these lessons teachers' expectations of students are too low and many students become bored.

78. Most teachers mark work frequently and encouragingly. However, they rarely give students a clear enough indication of how well they are progressing and how to improve. The best practice makes students think, thereby encouraging further progress. However, insufficient steps are taken by teachers to check that comments have been acted upon.

79. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory with the potential to effectively raise achievement. The new head of department has only been in post for a few weeks, but is beginning to understand the department's strengths and weaknesses. Currently, planning is skeletal needing further development before any restructuring. She is conscientious and caring. Recent initiatives, for example, the provision for gifted and talented students, support for those with special educational needs, the development of students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills; and monitoring these requirements are being integrated into departmental development. Overall, good progress has been made since the previous inspection, particularly in terms of the very good accommodation and resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well below average, and achievement in Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient guidance for students in Years 10 and 11, and marking does not help them to improve.
- The use of ICT across most subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory.
- The quality of leadership and management of ICT is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers are generous with their time in supporting students with their work outside lessons.

Commentary

80. GCSE results for ICT in 2003 were poor in comparison with the national average, and very much lower than the previous year.
81. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 during the inspection are below average, and achievement is unsatisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, higher attaining students are not being effectively stretched to apply their knowledge of the basic computer programs in different situations, or to think critically about the work that they have done.
82. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 are well below average and achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. However, additional support from external advisers is helping to raise the standards of students approaching their GCSE examinations in 2004. A large number of students underachieved last year because they did not complete coursework.
83. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Although an advanced skills teacher seconded from another school has recently begun to demonstrate very good practice to the teaching team, established approaches are not challenging all students sufficiently. More appropriate strategies have been introduced in Year 7 and in some of the work in Year 8, but the work in Year 9 is not sufficiently demanding. In Years 10 and 11 students are required to complete large amounts of coursework, but they are given too little guidance. Marking does not help them to improve, and does not identify when they are falling behind until it is too late, though the after school catch-up sessions are appreciated. Although students have positive attitudes and behave well, they do not know how well they are doing, or how to improve, and so spend too much time working on tasks which require low levels of thought and skill. Teachers do not give enough attention to students' individual learning needs or evaluate whether more competent students are learning as well as they should.
84. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, because there is insufficient guidance on how to approach teaching so as to provide enough challenge for all students. Insufficient understanding of the curriculum has led to inappropriate tasks and expectations. Long-term absence of staff has contributed to the difficulties. Temporary and replacement teachers have not been supported and monitored effectively so that students received inadequate guidance on how to do their work or feedback on how well they were doing.

85. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. Though most of the issues from the previous report have been addressed, standards have declined seriously, and teaching methods have not developed quickly enough.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. Criticisms from the previous report have almost all been dealt with effectively. Significant investment means that students now have enough access to computers, and most subject areas use ICT satisfactorily to help students to learn. There is better use in Years 10 and 11. Good examples were seen in health and social care lessons where ICT added realism to a project where students researched to give clients advice on healthy lifestyles. In French and mathematics lessons teachers use specialist software on the electronic white boards to bring learning to life, especially for students who learn best when they see clear examples. However, overall use of ICT is limited in mathematics and the provision is unsatisfactory in art and design, because students in Years 7 to 9 have very little opportunity to use ICT to generate and manipulate images. In science, use of ICT meets National Curriculum requirements but a shortage of specialist equipment means that students can only watch somebody using a computer to measure and record data, but do not have the opportunity to use this technology themselves.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning in preparing for examinations in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- The commitment of staff contributes to the good learning.
- With the newly appointed head of department not yet in post, departmental development and management, including monitoring of teaching and learning are currently limited.
- Tasks set by teachers do not always match appropriately the attainment of students, including those who are gifted or have special individual needs.
- Fieldwork is a good feature of provision for all year groups, although the breadth of activity needs more scope.
- Students' work is well marked.

Commentary

87. The GCSE examination results were above average in 2003, and have been consistently above average for the past four years. Students enter the school with broadly average knowledge but have slightly below average geographical skills. They achieve satisfactorily to reach average standards in all aspects in Year 9 and then achieve well to exceed the national average in Year 11. They have a good, detailed knowledge of geographical terminology, use it well in written work, explain process and concepts accurately and reinforce their knowledge by the good use of specific examples. Students' work indicates good knowledge of geographical concepts and

exemplars. In Years 7 to 9, work is less detailed than expected for the age and some students have gaps in their work record. Throughout there is little difference between the attainments of boys and girls.

88. Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because teaching and learning are good. Students' learning is well guided to achieve good results in external examinations. Teaching and learning are well planned and focused and there are increasing efforts to involve students more directly in learning. Students undertake fieldwork in all year groups, though the breadth of activity is limited. Resources are well chosen, and students are interested. Good relationships are established in lessons. Students are fully engaged in the work, concentrate well, make good use of prior knowledge and work successfully together. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. However, in one good Year 7 lesson students were actively engaged comparing local maps and aerial photographs and were very motivated to achieve good results. Marking of work is regular but assessment depends mainly on end of topic tests. Links to National Curriculum levels and external examination grades have been gradually introduced.
89. Students with special educational needs and gifted students make satisfactory progress. However, too little attention is paid to providing appropriate tasks and resources to help them achieve as well as they could.
90. The department awaits the arrival of a new head of subject. In the meantime staff have made every effort to ensure that the needs of students are met. Good schemes of work and mutual support provide helpful guides to teaching and lesson planning, particularly for visiting teachers, but management tasks in respect of monitoring, evaluation and assessment are temporarily insufficient.
91. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained, book resources are much improved, information communication technology makes a greater contribution to learning, especially through course work and investigation, and accommodation for geography is very good.

History

Provision in history is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall students achieve well because teaching is good.
- Students' source analysis and evaluation skills are insufficiently developed.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes are good, leading to positive and productive classroom relationships.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory but could give students a clearer indication of how well they are doing compared to their counterparts nationally and how they could improve.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The programme of study does not meet National Curriculum requirements

Commentary

92. The proportion of all students achieving grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations in 2003 was average. Boys' results reflected a rising trend since 2001 and were at the national average. Girls'

results, which had been well above average two years ago, and above average last year, were well below average in 2003.

93. In Year 9, standards of work, as seen during the inspection, are above average. This reflects good achievement, because in history, the students' overall attainment on entry to the school is average. Students extract information from a range of sources well, although they are unlikely to question the provenance of sources in assessing how reliable or useful they are. There are strengths in historical enquiry and extended writing and literacy standards are above average. Students use computers for communication and research, although some are insufficiently critical in the use they make of their findings. Students know little about the culture of non-European societies, as their studies do not include a pre-1900 world history element. The programme of study does not meet National Curriculum requirements.
94. In Year 11, standards are above average and students' achievement is good. Students complete large quantities of well-presented work written in technically accurate English. In their coursework, higher-attaining students make accurate inferences from contemporary sources about the probability of support for Irish independence. All students undertake extended writing on challenging topics. As in earlier years, students do not analyse and evaluate sources sufficiently in using information from them.
95. The quality of teaching is good and students learn well. Nearly all students respond positively to their teachers and each other, and make good progress as a result. In the best lessons, detailed planning, skilful classroom management and a wide range of materials and tasks accessible to all, contribute to good learning. Additionally, when teaching assistants are deployed, they make a significant contribution to the good achievement of lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs. Learning is hindered when a lack of subject knowledge or familiarity with historical skills amongst non-specialist teachers, undermines progress. Work is marked regularly but factual and spelling errors are sometimes overlooked, and the assessment structure is less helpful than it might be, in identifying scope for improvement.
96. The subject is well managed and led. The head of department has a reflective and questioning approach to the subject in her quest to drive up standards. She analyses examination statistics thoroughly and has a clear understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Satisfactory improvement has been sustained since the last inspection.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory but the specialist teaching is very good and promotes students' understanding of the subject very well.
- There is a very good range of courses for students of different levels of attainment in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment and marking do not show students well enough how they can improve.
- There is only one specialist teacher of religious education and several non-specialists from other departments, making sharing of ideas, planning and meetings difficult.

- Monitoring of non-specialist teaching and use of assessment data to evaluate students' progress is under-developed.

Commentary

97. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average and achievement overall is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching. However, higher-attaining groups reach well above average standards in lessons and very low-attaining students achieve well. By Year 9, both the quality and quantity of their handwritten work is above average overall and word-processed projects are of an above average standard. Understanding, shown in oral work in class, is of a much higher standard than written work in Year 9, with boys, particularly, making a very good contribution. Lack of literacy skills and constructive marking prevent their knowledge and understanding being reflected accurately in their written work. Girls' written work is better than boys'.
98. Standards in the core work of Years 10 and 11 overall, based on the written work seen and very limited lesson observation, are average and achievement is satisfactory.
99. In 2003, GCSE short course results were above average and 77 percent of students achieved A* to C grades. Currently, students on this course are reaching standards that are closer to average. The school provides very good courses for students of different levels of attainment. The achievement of some lower-attaining students is very good and sometimes excellent.
100. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory resulting in satisfactory overall achievement. Specialist teaching is very good and promotes students' understanding of the subject very well. Teaching by non-specialists leaves the depth and breadth of teaching being no more than satisfactory. An excellent range of stimuli used makes lessons very interesting. Teaching and learning in the core provision for religious education for the majority of students in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory but the specialist teaching is very good for GCSE. Overall, teaching and learning across the school are satisfactory.
101. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Whilst good use is made of assessment to set students for different courses it is not used sufficiently to show students what standard they have reached and how they can reach the next level.
102. The subject is led satisfactorily. The head of department has a clear vision for the subject shown by the introduction of the Certificate of Achievement in Religious Education (CARE) course and GCSE full course. Whilst religious education is part of the humanities department, a number of the non-specialist teachers are deployed and do not have the same breadth of knowledge to develop wider discussion. Departmental meetings are difficult to arrange and the monitoring of the teaching is not satisfactory. Learning resources are generally good but library books are not readily accessible to students and accommodation can be cramped when taught in music rooms. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, but lack of challenge for some groups and non-specialist teaching are still evident.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement is good as a result of good teaching.
- Leadership of the department is very supportive to learning.
- Food and textiles teachers have particularly high expectations of students.
- The link between designing and making is not strong enough and drawing skills are below average.
- ICT is not yet fully integrated into the department's work.
- Assessment is satisfactory but spelling is not often corrected in the marking of books.

Commentary

103. GCSE examination results in 2003 were well above average. The work seen in Year 7 –9 and in Year 10 and 11 in school is average. The girls' work is better than the boys'. Their folio work is better presented, more organised and refined than the boys'. There are occasions when excessive use of computer effects complicates students' work and the data from their research becomes difficult to follow. The design process is at the heart of students' work but students sometimes forget the link between planning and making and seldom have working drawings alongside them when they construct prototypes, especially in graphics and resistant materials. Below average drawing skills reduce the quality of research.
104. The best work is in food technology where students analyse food for appearance, nutritional value, content and taste, recording and writing up their findings. They cook and clear away with good regard for hygiene. Students select and use tools correctly and safely. There was some lack of originality when Year 10 students were challenged to modify an everyday object. Most chose the mobile telephone but few considered differently sized fingers or recognised left-handedness in the population. By Year 11 the work is more innovative with investigations as diverse as party packs for line dancers and boarding kennels for cats. Recognising the students' below average skills in design and technology when they arrive in school, their achievements by the end of Year 9 are good. A smaller number of the more able students choose to study design and technology to GCSE and standards of entry to the course in Year 10 are below average. However, a positive response to challenging work results in good achievement overall and average standards reached by the end of Year 11. Teachers know their students well, encouraging the least able students to make good progress. The most able also make good progress and above average numbers gained the highest A* and A GCSE grades.
105. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and generate interest in students. Lesson endings are not always well planned and opportunities for students to reflect on their own and their classmates' achievements are often missed. Food and textiles teachers are particularly well organised and have very high expectations of their students. Teachers encourage their students to accept responsibility for their work, promoting independent learning. Year 11 students made very good progress testing snack food, recording their judgements on its appearance, taste and convenience. Their ability to use their knowledge to modify the flavour and texture of the food by for example, adding limejuice, was impressive. Students' attitudes are good. Occasionally, a small minority of students, mainly Year 9 interfere with the learning of their classmates. Spelling errors often go uncorrected in students' work so missing opportunities to promote students' literacy.
106. Good advantage is taken of the excellent new accommodation and very good resources. The machinery for computer-aided manufacturing is installed but not in use. Students are, however,

becoming increasingly familiar with computer-aided design. The textbooks in the department are not plentiful enough to support all of the courses offered.

107. The department is well led by a head of department who is ambitious for his students and committed to higher standards. There is clear direction, strong teamwork and a significant capacity to improve. The management of the department is satisfactory. Planning is focused on raising attainment. The monitoring of teaching and learning requires more rigour. Contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development needs to be further established in schemes of work.
108. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. GCSE results are now amongst the best in school and achievement is good. Girls continue to outperform boys. ICT is playing a more important part in the work of the department.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design, and music were inspected in full, and drama sampled.

Drama

Results in GCSE drama have varied from very high in 1999, to well below average in 2002, and were just above average in 2003.

109. Standards seen are average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11. Younger students do not achieve as well as they could because they do not have a consistent experience of drama, nor do they all have specialist drama teaching. Considering students' variable starting points, achievement is good in GCSE classes; this is in part a result of students' enthusiasm and good motivation.
110. Teaching and learning in drama were good in the few lessons seen. The main strengths in GCSE classes are good subject expertise, with well-structured lessons, so that students' learning progresses. The main weakness is that time management slips, endings are rushed, and opportunities for reflection and evaluation by students are sometimes missed. Accommodation for drama is unsatisfactory. The new drama studio is too noisy, too cramped for large classes, and has to be vacated when the hall is being used for general purposes. Management arrangements need to be reviewed, and should include more rigorous monitoring of teaching and standards.

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good as a result of challenging and sometimes excellent teaching.
- Presentation skills of students are excellent.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Drawing for different purposes and the use of sketchbooks for investigation and experiment are in need of improvement.
- National Curriculum requirements are not fully met in the use of ICT in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

111. GCSE examination results are well above average and amongst the very best in school. Almost twice the national average of students gained a GCSE A* grade in 2003. Students achieve very well. Standards are above average in Year 9 and well above in Year 11. The students research subject matter from the Internet, books and family photographs. Students' presentation skills are excellent in both two and three dimensions but their attention to presentation limits their investigation and experimentation. The work on display adds to the school's ethos. Students have very well developed painting and designing skills. They draw well from observation, particularly when using pastels for large-scale drawings of natural objects. However, drawing is not used to record specific information about light, space, form or texture. Sketchbook work tends to be space precious rather than being research into methods and materials or collections of visually stimulating imagery. There is insufficient use

of ICT in presentation of computer-generated imagery. The way students respond to challenging work clearly enjoying lessons, ensures their achievements are very good. The least able students achieve very well. The most able students also make very good progress. Students' personal development through art is good. They are introduced to art from Europe and other cultures and also gain a good insight into spirituality in artwork.

112. Teaching and learning are very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers know their students and tailor their teaching as they circulate in lessons, prompting and offering suggestions to help move work on. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and deliver their lessons in an engaging, encouraging way. Classes and activities are very well managed. Teachers and students alike have high expectations of behaviour and industry. Lessons start promptly when activities are identified and usually demonstrated. The ends of lessons are not so well planned and opportunities for students to evaluate their own and their classmates' achievements are sometimes missed. In an excellent lesson the teacher gave a compelling demonstration of joining slabs of clay, offering advice to ensure the quality and permanence of the work. The students were soon assisting and learning from each other. The work was well above average. Students enjoy art lessons and feel particularly secure in an atmosphere that allows creativity and reflection. Teachers make very good use of assessment to identify different groups of students and give them a clear view of current performance and how they might improve. The curriculum provides good opportunities to work with two and three-dimensional processes. ICT is not used sufficiently to enhance the learning or fulfil the National Curriculum requirements. Accommodation and resources are excellent, creating an environment that invigorates learning and generates a capacity to improve yet further.
113. The department is very well led and managed. The head of department has vision and ambition for her students and her subject. The Artsmark (silver level) was awarded in 2003. There is strong teamwork. Planning focuses on raising standards. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly. Assessment data is used very well to strengthen weaknesses in the curriculum. The department has improved well since the last inspection and standards remain high.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Overall the quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- There is a consistently high level of achievement at GCSE.
- The accommodation and resources for music are excellent.
- The procedures for monitoring students' progress are very good.
- There is insufficient use of homework in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

114. Taking account of their starting point, students in Years 7 to 9 achieve very well and reach well above average standards. Students perform with confidence showing very good rhythmic sense. Their compositions are varied, for example blues and ragas, and show a very good feeling for style. In Years 10 and 11 they continue to achieve very well, reaching very high standards by the end of Year 11. They perform very well, showing sensitivity and

musicianship. Their compositions show a very good awareness of form and structure; their written evaluations of the composing process are very perceptive. The GCSE results reflect these high standards and are outstanding. A one hundred percent A*-C pass rate with a high proportion of A-B grades is the norm and has been maintained for the last five years. Students with special needs make very good progress and achieve very well. There are no significant differences observed between the performance of boys and girls or of students of different ethnic background. Talented students also achieve very well and take advantage of the very good extra-curricular opportunities and the specialist instrumental teaching.

115. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Lessons are very well planned and exploit the department's excellent accommodation and resources well. There is very good individual help given to students and the work is well matched to their needs. This is particularly helpful to students with special needs and enables them to make very good progress. The students have very good attitudes and behave very well; as a result they collaborate very well and work well independently. Students' work, particularly in Years 10 and 11, is well marked and tells the students how they can improve. In Years 7 to 9, more use could be made of homework, to consolidate and develop the classroom activities.
116. Leadership and management are very good. There is clear direction and sense of purpose related to raising standards. Assessment procedures are very good and monitoring and analysis is well done, with trends noted and acted upon. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Attainment in Years 7 to 9 has risen, the quality of teaching has improved and the teachers have high expectations, which are made clear to the students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average because the quality of teaching for examination classes is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning for core physical education is good overall.
- Arrangements to assess students' attainment and progress are good but teachers do not always provide students with enough opportunities to evaluate their own learning and that of others.
- The physical education curriculum and provision for extra-curricular activities is very good in many aspects but the playing fields are subject to flooding and as such are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

117. By Year 9 standards are above average. These students joined the school with average standards and their achievement is good. Standards in the current Year 11 are average but their achievement has also been good. Standards are improving and in general students, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority groups, achieve well because the quality of teaching is good and the breadth of the curriculum provision is very good. GCSE results are well above average. This is because students are offered a good choice of practical activities that enables them to achieve very well. The theoretical aspects of the subject are also taught very well and students' show very good attitudes to their learning.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers have very good relationships with their students. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they provide well for the full range of abilities in the classes they teach. Arrangements to assess students' attainment and progress are good. Teachers are very clear about how well students are doing and about what they need to do to improve further. However, in many lessons, teachers do not involve students sufficiently in these processes or provide students with enough opportunities to express how well they think they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
119. At the time of the last inspection the quality of accommodation was poor. Since that time significant improvements have taken place and the quality of indoor accommodation, which includes a sports hall and swimming pool, is very good. These improvements together with good teaching are enabling students to achieve well. Standards in swimming are above average although standards in gymnastics are average. Until recently, because of poor accommodation, it was not possible to teach basketball satisfactorily. The new sports hall and teachers' good subject knowledge are now enabling basketball to be taught well and standards are improving rapidly. Unfortunately the building programme has resulted in damage to the playing fields, which flood easily and are unusable for much of the time. This aspect of provision is now unsatisfactory.
120. The leadership and management of the subject are good and the quality of the provision is recognised by Sport England through the national 'Sportsmark' award. Arrangements to review and improve the quality of provision are good. This includes the addition of dance to the range of options provided for the GCSE examination groups. The new indoor accommodation means the department can now offer a very good range of learning opportunities. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and levels of participation are high. Links with two local specialist sports colleges are supporting wider curriculum development. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The school currently offers a vocational course in health and social care, and GCSE courses in Business Studies and Business and Communications Systems (ICT).

121. Intermediate GNVQ in ICT was taken in 2003, and 18 out of 23 students gained the equivalent of A*- C grades. Most students entered for health and social care in 2003 gained a pass at foundation level. This subject was sampled, one lesson being observed and work of students analysed. Students are achieving very well as a result of very good teaching. Accommodation and resources are very good for independent work. The subject is very well managed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship was inspected in full and provision for personal, social and health education sampled.

122. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. The programme, which is overseen by the Year Head Co-ordinator, includes citizenship elements as well as careers education. Heads of Year undertake responsibility for elements of the course, which are regularly reviewed in conjunction with year teams. Lessons were seen in all years except Year 9; teaching was always at least good and often very good. Comprehensive study booklets

covering a wide range of topics including sex, drugs, health and relationships, and decision-making, further enhance students' learning.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 'wider work' of the school offers a student very good opportunities for active citizenship.
- Aspects of the programme of study for citizenship are identified and taught well in PSHE lessons, assemblies, talks and visits.
- Teachers responsible for the subject work very effectively together and with LEA advisers.
- Citizenship elements taught in subjects are not made explicit or recorded by students.
- Arrangements for formally assessing students' progress in Years 7 to 9 are being implemented in conjunction with other local schools through joint questionnaires, but assessment of contributions from departments is not clearly undertaken.

Commentary

123. Citizenship is taught as part of the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, through the other subjects in the curriculum and through extra-curricular and other opportunities to enhance the learning. A thorough audit of provision using the guidelines of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has taken place.
124. Standards of work seen in PSHE lessons and in the students writing are average and overall achievement is satisfactory. Typically lessons contain elements from the citizenship programmes of study integrated into the PSHE topic. For example, issues in a topic on prejudice were understood well and students gained a very good insight into moral and social responsibility towards authority and each other. Students also learn well about being involved in the community. This was seen in a talk on domestic violence by police trainers. Active group work enabled students to offer opinions and share views on what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. Work experience has a significant place in the school's programme for careers education and often enables students to learn a great deal about service in the community. Achievement in lessons in other subjects is satisfactory overall, although often the identification of the citizenship element is not always clear. Issues on democracy for example are understood well though history and English. First hand appreciation of democratic principles are realised through the exceptional elected student school councils.
125. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A good range of methods is effectively planned and mapped together with topics from the programmes of study. There is insufficient match of the work to the students' attainment in PSHE lessons or whole year activities, and elsewhere in the curriculum it depends on the overall arrangements for that subject. Students are managed well in citizenship sessions because often the topic is made relevant and the style of learning is varied and interesting.
126. Assessment in citizenship is unsatisfactory. A weakness of the teaching and learning is that citizenship elements are not clearly enough identified in lessons, so that students do not always appreciate what they are learning. Assessment is being established though a questionnaire in Year 9, and results are being compared with another school, but there are no clearly established

procedures to cover the whole programme of study. The school works closely with the Health Promoting Schools Advisory team on curriculum and assessment patterns.

127. The various school councils offer students many opportunities to actively participate in the running of the school. For example, the Year Council and School Council have taken responsibility for reviewing the rules governing the use of social and work areas at break and lunchtimes, and are currently discussing amendments to them. Police liaison is a well-planned feature of the citizenship work. For example, a joint visit to a local skateboard park produced recommendations for which the local authority has now allocated funds. Students are given opportunities to engage in responsible action by deciding which charities will benefit from their fund-raising activities. As part of the local Healthy Schools project, senior students have evaluated drugs education videos for use in Dudley schools.
128. Overall leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory. Citizenship as a relatively newly identified National Curriculum subject is centrally being well developed. It is becoming established slowly but subject heads of department are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating their contribution to citizenship, and formal departmental assessment is not carried out. The two teachers most closely involved work effectively together and all staff are engaged in evaluating the programme through regular year team meetings. Planning meetings are held with the local education authority adviser. Improvement over the past few years in the provision of citizenship is good. There remains a need for it to be firmly established within subjects, fully assessed and evaluated at the same level as any other National Curriculum subject.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Students' achievement	3
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well students learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets students needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Students' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for students	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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