

INSPECTION REPORT

CRESTWOOD COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Eastleigh

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116445

Headteacher: P J Munday

Reporting inspector: Michael Owen
22926

Dates of inspection: 17-20 September 2001

Inspection number: 188427

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shakespeare Road Eastleigh Hampshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Kitchen
Date of previous inspection:	10/05/96

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22926	Michael Owen	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9646	Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development and attendance</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
23393	Brian Dower	Team inspector	English Drama	
23528	Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics Equal opportunities	
19267	Philip Gibson	Team inspector	Science	
18638	Tim Wright	Team inspector	Art and design	
22491	Lorraine Small	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
22590	Robert Castle	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curriculum opportunities?
30427	Felicity Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	History Religious education	

4617	Roslyn Fox	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	
8139	Barbara Johnstone	Team inspector	Music	
2493	William Martin	Team inspector	Physical education	
4411	Ann Sydney	Team inspector	Special educational needs	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	23
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	24
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	34

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Crestwood Community School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-16, situated close to the centre of Eastleigh. Since 1997 it has had a unit for 25 pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). The school has 625 pupils, which is smaller than other secondary schools. Pupils come from average social and economic backgrounds and their attainment on entry is below average. Just over 13 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. There are 36 pupils from ethnic minorities, mostly of Indian heritage. There are 27 pupils for whom English is an additional language, which is higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with special education needs is above the national average and the proportion with Statements of Special Educational Need is average. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of the work of the special educational needs unit, Years 10 and 11 and special educational needs assessment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory overall. Teaching is now good, after a period of staffing difficulty caused by recruitment problems. Most pupils have positive attitudes, behave well and want to learn. The headteacher and staff are committed to welcoming and including all pupils and to raising standards. They have responded adequately to changes in the school's circumstances since its last inspection and improvement is satisfactory. Taking into account the nature of its intake, its funding and its results, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well
• The quality of educational provision in English is good
• Teaching and learning are good
• The school provides a safe, caring and welcoming learning environment for all its pupils
• Because of this environment pupils have a positive attitude to school
• Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall
• There is good educational provision in the special educational needs department
• A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances and enriches the curriculum

What could be improved
• The extent to which teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated to identify how improvements can be made and the extent to which middle managers contribute to this
• The implementation of improvements, to help all staff to be clear about what needs to be done and to support effective monitoring
• The extent to which information and communication technology (ICT) is used to improve teaching and learning
• The teaching of numeracy across the school
• Marking, to ensure that it is effective in enabling pupils to increase their progress

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected in 1996. Although the attainment levels of pupils on entry have fallen, the school has made appropriate adjustments to its provision to take account of this. Standards, having fallen, have risen again and achievement is satisfactory. Recruitment difficulties have affected standards in some departments, but most of these are now resolved and the quality of teaching and learning is now good. Development planning, involvement of governors, use of assessment data, sharing information with parents, resources and

training for independent learning have all improved adequately. The cost effectiveness of the school was good and is now satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	B	B	C	B	

In 2000 the results of Year 9 pupils in the National Curriculum tests were close to those of all schools nationally but below average by comparison with schools in similar contexts. The average point scores for mathematics and science were in line with the national average; in English they were below. In 2001 results were better in English and science but worse in mathematics. However, given that the attainment on entry of this year group was well below the national average, the results reflect good achievement in English and science and satisfactory achievement in mathematics. GCSE results in 2000 were average, but compared to schools whose results in Year 9 were similar, they were above average. This indicated good achievement. The proportion gaining five A*-C grades in 2001 was lower, with boys doing better than girls. The average point score of girls was higher than of boys, though overall the average point score continued a downward trend, reflecting the lower attainment of pupils on entry to the school. The school has set itself challenging targets, but has not succeeded in meeting them.

In work seen during the inspection standards are average. Standards of Year 9 pupils are average in all subjects except French and music, where they are below average. Standards of Year 11 pupils are also average in most subjects, with the exception of mathematics, French and music, where standards are below average, and geography, where they are above. Standards of literacy and ICT are average, but standards of numeracy are below average. Achievement from Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory overall; it is good in English, design and technology, geography and Spanish. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those from ethnic minorities achieve as well as others.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and participate in the many extra-curricular activities on offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils are well behaved, but when teaching is not pitched at the right level or lacks pace, some pupils quickly become disruptive.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils from all backgrounds mix well together and support each other. They cope well with school life.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is just below the national average.

Pupils say they would recommend the school to others. Most pupils are friendly, helpful and look after the buildings. The rate of exclusions for unacceptable behaviour is falling. There are opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility, although they do not show enough initiative in

planning and organising their own work. The attendance of some potentially disaffected pupils has improved because of a curriculum designed to meet their needs in Years 10 and 11.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good. Teaching in English is good throughout the school. Teachers plan interesting and varied lessons and challenge pupils' thinking by skilful questioning. Teaching in mathematics is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Although teachers plan well and challenge pupils through questioning, lessons lack variety and marking does not show the way to improvement. Teaching in science is good throughout because lessons are well planned and structured, except that assessment information is not used enough to ensure lessons meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers know their subjects well and plan thoroughly. Very good lessons make clear what the learning objectives are, include a variety of strategies and are conducted with pace. Less good lessons stick with one activity and do not keep all pupils engaged in learning. Discipline in most lessons is good but day to day marking is not helpful enough. Teaching is good in drama, geography, Spanish, music, physical education, in the special needs department and in Years 7 to 9 in religious education; it is satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, history, ICT, French, music and in Years 10 and 11 in religious education. Teachers give good attention to literacy, but attention to numeracy and ICT is inconsistent. Teaching meets the needs of most pupils but is not always adjusted sufficiently to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils or those with special educational needs in mainstream lessons.

Learning is mostly good. Pupils respond well to interesting and varied lessons, particularly when the structure of the lesson stimulates the pace of learning. They show more interest and concentration in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, where there is not enough evidence of pupils, particularly girls, taking responsibility for their learning and showing initiative in working to reach their targets. Pupils from different ethnic groups learn equally well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum offers good alternative courses to meet pupils' needs. Provision for numeracy and ICT is inadequate.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils in the Unit for specific learning difficulties are well provided for.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language are second generation children and none is at the first stages of language acquisition. The normal curriculum meets their needs and they achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, although there is no policy to ensure consistent and coherent planning of this aspect. Moral, social and cultural education is better than spiritual education, which is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The pastoral system is a strength of the school. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory and improving.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs, although current statutory requirements are not fully met for the use of ICT and a daily act of worship. The work-related curriculum and community links are good. The personal support and guidance given to pupils is good. Assessment is satisfactory but information is not fully used in the planning of teaching or to help pupils understand what they need to do to achieve more.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and senior staff have implemented significant change and have a clear idea of the way forward. The detail of improvement plans does not fully support effective delivery and the quality of middle management varies.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors know about the strengths and weaknesses of the school but are less clear about how to ensure planned improvements work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good idea about what needs to be done and is making adjustments to its leadership and management to drive improvements forward.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has matched spending to priorities. It has put particular effort into making some good staff appointments, despite difficulties in recruitment.

Staffing is good. After a period of recruitment difficulties, the school appointed well-qualified staff. The accommodation is satisfactory but there are some practical problems and indoor facilities for physical education are inadequate. Learning resources are adequate but despite improvements the library is too small and ICT facilities insufficient to meet needs. The application of best value principles is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like going to school • The good progress of their children • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem • The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best • The way the school promotes good relationships between boys and girls and different ethnic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of some pupils • The amount of homework provided • The quality of information about how their children are getting on • The extent to which the school works closely with parents

The inspection team agrees with the positive points made by parents. Inspectors judged that behaviour, homework, information to parents and working with parents are satisfactory. However, the team – and the school - agrees that there is still room for improvement. There is a need for greater support by parents of their children's education. Inspectors noted the low turnout to the parents' evening and that only a quarter of the parents' questionnaires were completed and returned.

PART AND DESIGN B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Since the previous inspection results compared to all schools nationally have declined. This reflects a change in the attainment levels of pupils entering the school and the addition of the Unit for pupils with specific learning difficulties. However, achievement overall is satisfactory.
2. In 2000 the results of Year 9 pupils in the National Curriculum tests were close to those of all schools nationally. In English and mathematics the proportions achieving level 5 were below, in science the proportion was close to, the national average. The proportions achieving level 6 in all three subjects were close to the national average. The lower attainment of boys reflects the national picture. Teachers' assessments in all three subjects were higher than test results. The trend in results in both English and mathematics was below the national trend, reflecting the significant change in the school's intake. The trend in science, however, was better than the national trend. Overall results were below average by comparison with similar schools, based on the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, because the attainment on entry of this year group was well below the national average, they made good progress.
3. In 2001 the proportions attaining level 5 or higher in English and science were close to and in mathematics were below the national average, giving cause for concern; in all three subjects, however, they were higher than for the previous years. The proportions attaining level 6 or higher in English were above the national average but in mathematics and science they were below. Comparisons with schools in similar contexts were not available at the time of the inspection. The results represent good achievement in English and science and satisfactory achievement in mathematics.
4. In 2000 the GCSE results of Year 11 pupils were in line with the national average. The proportion gaining 5 or more A*-C grades and 5 or more A*-G grades was also in line with the national average, as was the average point score per pupil. The proportion achieving one or more A*-G grades was below the national average. Compared to schools whose pupils attained similar grades in Year 9, results were above average. In this respect the proportion who gained 5 or more A*-C grades was well above average and the proportions gaining 5 or more A*-G grades and 1 or more A*-G grades were in line with the national comparison. This represents good achievement from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4.
5. National comparisons for GCSE results in 2001 were not available at the time of the inspection. Overall a lower proportion of pupils than in 2000 gained 5 or more A*-C grades, with boys performing better than girls. A higher proportion attained 5 or more A*-G grades and all pupils gained at least one A*-G grade. The average point score was lower than in 2000 and continues a trend that has been below the national trend since the last inspection. This reflects the lower attainment of pupils on entry and lower results obtained by pupils who transferred from other schools during Years 7 to 11. Although a higher proportion of boys than girls gained 5 or more A*-C grades, the average point score of girls was higher than of boys. Test and examination data is closely monitored in terms of performance trends and differences in gender and the school is aware of the annual fluctuations across departments by boys and girls at ages 11, 14 and 16. For the most part, these fluctuations have reflected their prior attainment levels but the evidence suggest that girls did not do as well as expected in 2001 and did not meet their targets, despite the fact that many were given additional support.
6. The school sets challenging targets at both key stages but has generally not managed to reach them. This is because the targets have been ambitious in relation to pupils' attainment. Changes in staffing and unevenness of provision in previous years have made it difficult to ensure that targets are met.
7. Work seen during the inspection confirms a picture of broadly average standards. By the end of Year 9 standards in English are average, with pupils expressing themselves well and

listening attentively. They read with understanding and appreciate the way characters are presented in stories. They can write in a range of styles for different purposes, though some struggle to organise their writing. In mathematics standards are average. Higher attaining pupils have good numerical skills but are not good at estimating. Average and lower attaining pupils lack confidence in applying basic skills. In science standards are average. Pupils can describe what they observe but cannot explain it scientifically. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty recalling information, such as the name of a flower. Standards are average in art and design and design, design and technology, history, geography, ICT, physical education and religious education. The standards of higher attaining pupils who are just beginning to study Spanish in Years 8 and 9 are in line with expectations for this stage of a second language course. They are below average in French and music.

8. At the end of Year 11, standards in English are average. Pupils are articulate and speak with confidence in both formal and informal situations. They read more challenging texts, showing increased understanding. The standard of extended writing is good. They write with insight and publish their creative writing for wider audiences. Their mathematical skills are close to average but written work is unsatisfactory. They use only a narrow range of ways of communicating and recording mathematical information. Standards in science are average. Pupils understand chemical processes and can undertake some analysis of data and present their findings, but the analysis and interpretation of high attaining pupils lacks the depth that would enable them to understand new situations. Standards are average in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, Spanish, physical education and religious education. They are below average in French and music.
9. Standards of literacy throughout the school are average. Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills and express themselves with confidence when they reach Year 11. They take account of context and audience when speaking and can debate, discuss and give presentations. Pupils are attentive when others are speaking. For example in science lessons, they sustain their concentration well and this benefits their learning. In a small minority of lessons poor listening results from teaching that is unsatisfactory. Reading and writing standards are satisfactory. A minority of pupils has difficulties with the basic skills of spelling and punctuation but the majority makes progress to the point where they write clearly at length and in a variety of forms. There is a good range of writing attempted and pupils make progress in extending their vocabulary.
10. Standards of numeracy are unsatisfactory because not enough attention is given to numeracy in all subjects. However, there are examples of good practice. In ICT, tally charts and formulas in spreadsheets are used well. For example, pupils in Years 7 to 11 can use spreadsheets to carry out more complex tasks such as calculating the cost of a Christmas party of varying size. In design and technology, pupils in Years 10 and 11 estimate before measuring. They conduct surveys as preparation for a design brief and process their data in the form of charts, designs and graphs. In science, numeracy is below average in Years 7 to 9, though pupils in Years 10 and 11 understand the relationship between pressure, force and area, using graphical representations and lines of best fit. In geography, pupils can use pie charts and designs when comparing temperature and rainfall. In music, pupils in Years 7 to 9 understand rhythmic patterns and can count bars. In other subjects there is insufficient evidence of pupils' ability to use number.
11. Standards in ICT are average. Pupils are now developing a range of basic skills in applications such as word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets and databases. Pupils capture measurements and use control and a variety of electronic devices such as scanners and digital cameras. They can use electronic mail and the Internet to research information they need in a number of subjects. In geography pupils make good use of word processing; they gather data and present information in the form of graphs, charts. They also use the Internet to search and find information. In English, pupils use word processing to draft and edit work. They also use the digital camera well when researching information. In design and technology, pupils cover aspects of control technology when they use computer-linked sewing machines and a machine that produces shapes and lettering in plastic. In music, pupils in Years 10 and 11 use ICT well to devise and refine their compositions. In religious education, pupils use ICT well to research and present information, for example, on the Shabbat. They

present information in the form of leaflets and word process their essays. In music, pupils compose and write scores. However, pupils are coming into the school from primary schools with higher level skills and the school has recognised that it can develop higher level skills at an earlier stage. Skills in Year 11 are basic because insufficient resources were available in the school at an earlier stage for these pupils.

12. Standards of attainment of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. The ability of pupils coming into the school is below the national average, and has dropped since the last inspection, but all pupils are leaving with at least one GCSE. Standards for pupils with special educational needs are improving. There is no separate analysis of exam results for pupils on the special needs register but work seen during the inspection shows higher attainment by pupils with special educational needs in history, geography, music and religious education than in other subjects.
13. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the attainment levels of pupils entering the school in Year 7 have fallen but in the last two years they have been improving and are now close to average. The attainment on entry of pupils in 1997 was well below average and in 1998 it was below average. By the end of Year 9 in 2000 and 2001 standards in English were below average and close to average, representing good achievement. The majority of pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well, along with reading and writing skills. They make especially good progress in reading as a result of well planned teaching strategies. In mathematics pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their understanding of shape, space and measurement and how to handle data. But higher attaining pupils are not developing enough skill in estimating before using a calculator. In science achievement is good, though pupils' understanding of scientific processes does not develop enough. Boys make better progress than girls. Pupils from ethnic minorities do as well as other pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language also make similar progress to others.
14. In Years 10 and 11 achievement in English continues to be good and by the time pupils leave school most of them are reading well. The progress of all pupils in speaking and listening and in writing is good. In mathematics their achievement has been unsatisfactory but is now improving as a result of better teaching. Achievement in science is satisfactory, and results are in line with those achieved by pupils with similar prior attainment at the end of Year 9. Higher attaining pupils do not make good enough progress because the teaching does not challenge them enough. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Boys continue to make better progress than girls. Pupils from ethnic minorities achieve well.
15. Achievement is good in design and technology, geography and Spanish and is good in physical education in Years 7 to 9. It is satisfactory in art and design, history, ICT, French, music, religious education in Years 7 to 9 and in physical education in Years 10 and 11. In religious education those pupils who have opted to do the full course achieve well; the achievement of the rest is unsatisfactory. In several subjects the achievement of higher attaining pupils is not as high as it could be, because their learning needs are not given enough attention.
16. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is good progress in the small Year 7 sets in English and mathematics taught by learning support and Unit staff, and in individual support lessons. Pupils and school staff notice an improvement in pupils' confidence and self-esteem as well as academic standards. Progress is unsatisfactory where subject lessons are not well matched to the pupils' needs, or where extra help is not available in the classroom. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls, or different racial groups.

17. There are no equal opportunities issues, and the school promotes inclusion very well. Pupils with English as a second language make good progress. They are fully integrated into lessons and all other aspects of school life and the school analysis of examination results shows that they are achieving well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Attitudes to the school were reported as excellent at the time of the last inspection. However, this inspection team judges that pupils' attitudes are good overall and there are factors to explain this. The nature of the school's intake has changed since 1996. The pupils' good attitudes to school and their work were reflected in interviews with them in which they said they would recommend the school to friends. Pupils from all year groups spoke positively of the support they receive from tutors, heads of year and the peer supporters. They had few complaints; almost all those interviewed enjoyed the wide range of clubs, activities and visits. Although thirty four per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire do not feel that behaviour in the school is good, the overwhelming majority of pupils are well behaved. However, there is a small number of pupils who lack self-discipline, particularly in Years 10 and 11. When teachers plan lessons to match the needs of all in their class these pupils do not cause problems. In other lessons where tasks are not well planned or the pace is too slow, disruptive behaviour can surface and not enough learning takes place. For example in a Year 9 French lesson on media and television there was a lack of teaching strategies to ensure that all of the pupils understood the language being used. This resulted in some pupils responding in a sullen manner.
19. The rate of fixed period exclusions is high. However, there was only one permanent exclusion from the school during the year prior to the inspection and this is an improvement since the last report. The school works exhaustively to support the pupils before exclusion, but uses the sanction of both internal withdrawal and external short-term exclusion as part and design of its disciplinary structures. Given the care taken with pupils before exclusion, the present figures are reasonable. Certainly, the mostly good behaviour around the school, the very low number of permanent exclusions, and the orderly, but friendly, atmosphere show that present policies are effective and supportive of the pupils.
20. Pupils move around the school in an orderly way; they queue sensibly outside classrooms and in the busy canteen. Pupils show respect for the school buildings and there is little litter around the site. They clearly appreciate being in a place where the quality of the environment, including the state of decoration, is good. There is a wide range of appropriate rewards and sanctions that pupils understand and feel to be fair and they appreciate that awards are given for a range of strengths, not just academic ability.
21. The good personal development of the pupils is illustrated by the way they involve themselves with the many opportunities offered by the school, particularly extra-curricular activities. The House system encourages healthy competition through sports and the awarding of merits and credits. The annual Festival of Achievement allows the whole school community to celebrate pupil achievement and personal development through practical demonstrations and live performances. In lessons, pupils are usually well prepared and organised, and work co-operatively together and the majority show respect towards their teachers. For example, in a good Year 7 science lesson introducing 'big ideas', the pupils were keen to contribute to the teachers' questioning. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, due to restricted space the library is not well used for personal research and ICT skills are not developed enough in many curriculum areas. Pupils are able to take responsibility in the life of the school. Year 11 pupils act as prefects, some of them are assigned to year groups to support younger pupils. Pupils in Years 9 and 10 train as peer supporters and help their fellows to sort out problems. The school council is made up of representatives from all year groups and is popular as a way of being involved in school decision-making. A good example of this involvement is the development of the Crestwood Community School Travel Plan. The school is successfully meeting one of its aims 'to encourage everyone to use common sense, to be considerate, co-operative and courteous'. While some parents expressed concerns about bullying, the few incidents that occur are quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils have positive attitudes to pupils from different

backgrounds, including ethnic backgrounds. These pupils feel themselves to be a normal part of the school community and their attitudes, behaviour and personal development is no different from other pupils.

22. Attendance at the end of the summer term was 91.43 per cent; this is just below the national average. However, the rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. The satisfactory rate of attendance is having a positive impact on standards of learning. The alternative curriculum introduced to meet the needs of some pupils in Years 10 and 11 has increased the level of attendance and helped to reduce the number of fixed term and temporary exclusions and other school sanctions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good. As a result, the achievement of pupils, many of whom struggle with learning, is at least satisfactory and often good. Nearly two out of three lessons observed during the inspection were good, very good or excellent. Only a very small proportion was unsatisfactory or poor. The school has successfully raised awareness of what constitutes good quality teaching and learning; it has also made good appointments for the school year in which the inspection took place. This has improved the situation in several areas where previously there had been staffing difficulties that affected the quality of teaching and learning and impacted upon standards and achievement.
24. Teaching and learning in English is good throughout the school. Teachers know how to plan interesting and varied lessons to meet the needs of different pupils. Good use of questions challenges pupils' learning and stimulates higher attaining pupils. Lessons are well paced except that not enough time is allowed for review of what has been learnt at the end of lessons. Pupils are clear about the targets ahead of them and are keen to learn. Pupils from varying backgrounds work well together.
25. Teaching and learning is good overall in mathematics, after a period of difficulty in recruitment of mathematics teachers. Planning is good and teachers do well to tell pupils at the start of lessons what they are going to learn but they often fail to consolidate learning at the end. Good questioning makes pupils think and discipline in lessons is good. But there is not enough variety in teaching strategies to enable pupils to learn in different situations and ICT is under-used. Marking does not give enough guidance on how to improve work. Although pupils know what their targets are, they do not have a clear idea of how to improve.
26. Teaching and learning is good in science, where lessons are well planned and include a variety of learning activities, but more time needs to be given to reviewing what has been learnt at the end of lessons. Pupils are able to carry out practical experiments safely, observing and recording results. When teachers explain well and structure learning activities carefully, pupils develop their understanding well. But there are not enough planned opportunities for discussion that will enable pupils to understand fully and apply what they are learning. Teachers are not making enough use of assessment information to tailor teaching to meet the learning needs of individuals, particularly the more able. There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning.
27. Teaching and learning have been adversely affected in the last two or three years by the large number of staff changes, particularly in design and technology, modern foreign languages and music. However, the staffing situation had improved at the time of the inspection, so that good teaching was often observed in these subjects. Teaching and learning is good in geography, music, Spanish, physical education and at Key Stage 3 in religious education; it is satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, history, ICT, French and at Key Stage 4 in religious education.
28. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, which enables them to respond well to pupils' questions and to create interest. They expect pupils to work hard and to behave well. Planning is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good when teachers are clear about the learning objective and share these with pupils. In some lessons they create a good structure, which ensures pupils are clear about each stage of their learning. For example, in a Year 7 ICT

lesson pupils were well organised so that they were able to set up folders to store their work on the school's computer system. While teachers think through how they are going to conduct their lessons, often lessons do not take account of the attainment range of pupils and as a result some are allowed to coast or they become a nuisance.

29. Good, probing questions stimulate pupils' thinking at all levels in some lessons. For example in a geography lesson on the weather the questions stimulated an investigation into the pressure and movement of air. In a Year 11 music lesson good questioning enabled pupils to identify the composer of a piece of music. But in a number of subjects, for example art and design, design and technology, ICT, French and religious education the more able pupils do not receive enough challenge. Varied methods are used to good effect in art and design but generally there is a need for more variety in many lessons, including more opportunities for pupils to become actively involved in learning activities. In history, for example, too much use is made of worksheets that restrict pupils' learning opportunities. Teachers do not always take account of the differing learning needs of pupils in the class when planning the range of activities. They do not give enough opportunities for independent learning, for example by ensuring that pupils make use of dictionaries in lessons in modern foreign languages. When teachers review at the end of the lesson what has been learnt, pupils' thinking is clarified and learning is consolidated. However, this good practice was not often evident.
30. Teachers give good attention to the teaching of literacy. There have been developments in the use of key words to extend pupils' technical vocabulary, the use of writing frames to give structure to written work and the use of a spelling policy, although the latter now needs updating. However, there is not enough planning of opportunities to develop numeracy skills or ICT skills. This was evident in almost every subject, though there was some good use of ICT in design and technology, music and religious education.
31. Relationships between teachers and pupils throughout the school are invariably positive and this helps to encourage good motivation and behaviour. All pupils are welcomed and included in lessons, even though the teachers do not often enough follow this up by organising different work for those with different needs. Teachers and classroom assistants give good support to pupils.
32. While teachers ensure that most pupils have a clear understanding of the National Curriculum levels they are working at, they are not given enough guidance as to what is needed to get to the next level. In the same way, although the assessment and marking of major assignments is good, day to day marking is too often cursory and does not provide enough help to pupils about what they must do to improve.
33. Teachers have access to much more information about the prior attainment levels and current performance of pupils, but not enough use is made of that information to ensure that teaching is appropriately pitched. Despite some good liaison with the main partner primary school, and the good data now provided on pupils' attainment levels when they transfer to secondary school, teachers were not taking this into account often enough when planning lessons. For example in science, pupils were undertaking practical work that they had already done – and the pupils were, with justification, complaining about it. Assessment information is not being well used in art and design and in French, where teachers know their pupils well but do not track their progress systematically or offer them sufficient advice about how to improve.
34. Teaching within the special needs department is always at least good. In Years 7 to 9 it is usually very good. Teachers know their pupils well, are well qualified and several have had valuable previous experience in special schools. They plan lessons well, with pace and humour, and include a variety of well-matched useful activities. Staff in the unit have specialist qualifications in dyslexia and keep well informed about new developments. Good use is made of ICT within the Unit. There is a good range of software, including a touch-typing program, screen reader, and voice recognition as well as spelling programs. Small word processors are loaned to pupils to use around the school, and these are proving useful. There is room for development in providing software that allows whole phrases to be put quickly into pupils' work and that helps with planning and organising writing.

35. In the main school, teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. It is good where special needs support staff alter work to suit pupils' abilities. It is also good where teachers use more active forms of teaching and demonstration. In very good lessons, the teacher gives support staff a written outline of their role in the lesson and directs them to particular pupils and activities. They ask the support staff to complete their observations at the end of the lesson. This practice should be extended across the school. Progress is unsatisfactory where lessons do not cater for the whole range of ability or where teachers are not familiar with what pupils already know and can do, for example in some ICT lessons.
36. Learning is good at both key stages. Pupils respond well to structured lessons, as in design and technology when pupils were shown how to work in teams in competition with each other to design and build the tallest tower. When pupils are given opportunities to undertake research or participate in lessons by role-play, for example in history, they respond well and good learning takes place. When they are expected to work through routine exercises, their interest and concentration flags and little learning takes place. Because they are not given enough information about what is needed to reach their targets, pupils do not take enough responsibility or show enough initiative in their learning. Most pupils are very dependent upon the teachers. However, given the opportunity to use resources such as computers, they do so in a mature and sensible way. Pupils in the special needs department are enthusiastic, learn well and value their lessons. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour within the department are very good and sometimes excellent. Older pupils in the Unit show perseverance and a willingness to tackle new approaches to their difficulties. Records of pupils' work are not always dated or kept in a way that pupils could show off the progress they have made. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language learn equally well as others.

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

37. Overall, the quality of the curriculum offered to pupils is satisfactory, with some good features. The school provides a varied and wide range of learning opportunities with some good innovations, like the alternative curriculum for Years 10 and 11, which meet the needs of individual pupils. Curriculum time is slightly above the nationally recommended figure; the time allocation for each subject is broadly in line with national norms.
38. Most subjects offer a broad, balanced and relevant provision and make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. However, at both key stages the curriculum fails to meet the full statutory requirements in art and design because there is insufficient use of ICT. In Years 7 to 9 the provision of numeracy and ICT across subject areas is under-developed. In English, poetry enriches the curriculum and allows high attaining pupils chances to celebrate good quality work. Year 8 pupils contribute poetry to a national company's magazine. In the top English set pupils have the opportunity to take Spanish as their second language as they lose one English and one French lesson. Schemes of work in mathematics are good and support progress. Although the mathematics department has adopted the national numeracy strategy, planned strategies for improving pupils' numeracy through teaching and learning in all subject areas are not in place. Numeracy is developed in some subjects, for example in geography, when pupils use charts, graphs and scale in their work. However, there is no consistent school approach and as a consequence provision for numeracy is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this and it is a target for future development. The geography curriculum provides pupils with good quality opportunities to learn more about the world, especially the nature of the earth and the physical geography. Enquiry skills are well developed through fieldwork visits and through good use of the school's Intranet. There are good links between the three humanities subjects of geography, history and religious education in topics like the Holocaust and American indigenous peoples. Arrangements to ensure that all requirements of the ICT curriculum are taught within subjects are not secure. As a result, the experiences of pupils are varied, and many do not receive their full entitlement to ICT. There is no complete analysis of the ICT curriculum to check where and what ICT skills are taught and learned, and this absence hinders the improvement of standards overall. Within Key Stage 3 the provision of ICT does not fully meet statutory requirements in art and design and for pupils with special educational needs. In French out-of-date schemes of work do not assist planning and ensure that pupils' progress is well managed. The physical education curriculum is dominated by games, a

consequence of the limited indoor accommodation. However, both the timetabled classes and extra-curricular activities provide pupils with challenge and enriching experiences, which have a positive impact upon standards.

39. Links with the school's feeder primary schools are good. The head of Year 7 frequently liaises with the feeder primary schools and Year 6 pupils have some good opportunities to visit Crestwood to participate in taster lessons prior to coming to the school. There is also a useful induction day. The school benefits from helpful background information from the primary schools, which enables them to prepare pupils for their time at Crestwood. Heads of the English, mathematics and science departments meet regularly to review curriculum continuity. Other subjects do this on a less formal basis. A weakness is that information about what has been taught in the primary schools is not always taken into account in curriculum planning and there are examples of pupils repeating work already covered.
40. The range and quality of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory and there are some particular strengths. Fifty-eight pupils have been formally dis-applied from the current National Curriculum in Years 10 and 11 in design and technology and modern foreign languages. This is a high number. However, it reflects the school's efforts to make adjustments to the curriculum so that the needs of low attaining pupils are met. In consequence the Key Stage 4 curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. In addition to studying the core subjects, pupils select from a wide range of other subjects so that their overall programme is varied and broad. In science the top set studies three GCSE sciences in the time allocated for double science. English has a good curriculum that provides for extended work. For example, pupils produce an anthology of poems and some are involved in public speaking competitions. The music curriculum is enhanced by the provision of steel bands. The physical education curriculum includes an opportunity to pursue the subject at GCSE. Extra-curricular activities, inter-house and school matches enhance physical education. The religious education course meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, and is a well-planned and valuable course. The time allocated to subjects is in line with national averages, although timetabling of double lessons does not help learning as many pupils are unable to concentrate fully for long periods.
41. The provision made for vocational education is good and for work-related learning it is very good. In developing work-related learning, the school has been innovative and has succeeded in developing a worthwhile package of courses. Pupils travel to Eastleigh College to undertake NVQ courses in motor mechanics, catering and engineering; these vocational courses been introduced since the last inspection.
42. The school has a literacy policy in place and progress has been made over the last academic year in implementing the strategy. The improvement of literacy standards is a prominent feature of school and department improvement plans and staff are aware of how literacy skills underpin learning. A literacy co-ordinator has been appointed and, with the support of a committee with representatives from across the curriculum, has secured a range of improvements in provision. The committee undertakes the monitoring of such developments. There is a commitment to continuing this work and an acceptance that, at the present time, not all curriculum areas provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and writing skills.
43. The school has a strong educational philosophy of entitlement and inclusion with equal opportunity for all reflected in its planning and decision making. It is particularly effective in providing personal guidance and support. Pupils and parents are involved in changes to the alternative curriculum for Years 10 and 11.
44. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. While many pupils on the special needs register have support in class, some are withdrawn for extra help in pairs or individually twice a week. All pupils in the Unit for specific learning difficulties have some specialist individual lessons as stipulated by the local authority. About one third of the Unit's pupils have been dis-applied from French with the consent of their parents, and this time is spent working, often individually, in the Unit. However there are individual difficulties with some pupils being withdrawn from their only lesson, for example in music, for half a term at a

time. These pupils are unaware of how they should catch up with work and this adversely affects their achievement in the subjects concerned.

45. The school has appointed a co-ordinator for able pupils with responsibility for establishing a register of able children. Whilst gifted and talented pupils have opportunities to develop their skills, provision for them is less assured. In particular, opportunities for challenging extension homework tasks for individual pupils are not regularly provided. In consequence, they are less assured about managing their own learning and their achievement is held back by the pace of the majority in the class.
46. The curriculum is enhanced by a good and very effective, well-structured programme of personal, social and health education (SHAPE). This is taught in both key stages by year tutors; the courses have been well conceived and planned successfully by heads of year with their team of tutors. The programme is conducted through timetabled weekly lessons. There has been a shift in emphasis with a stronger emphasis on careers in Years 10 and 11. There has been improvement in this aspect of provision since the last inspection. From Year 9, pupils have access to a good programme of careers education. All pupils undertake useful work experience weeks in Years 10 and 11. The school has good links with their local college of further education. This impacts beneficially on the overall quality of the curriculum as well as on standards achieved in classes. Eastleigh College and local businesses provides a good thorough programme of support throughout the year for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and as a consequence pupils make informed decisions. Pupils are well prepared for their transition either to the world of work or into further education. The school has a good careers programme, which is well supported by the county's careers advisers; a thorough process, which assists pupils to make good decisions about their lives after leaving Crestwood. The outcomes in terms of boosting confidence, improving attendance, improving behaviour and improving employability are all good.
47. The school has other good links with community organisations and local and national businesses. Officers from the police and fire brigade are involved in units of work in the Year 10 alternative curriculum. For example, a vivid presentation was made by fire brigade officers about arson; pupils were stimulated to consider through a role play the moral issues related to the topic. Parents have given informative talks to pupils about subjects such as falconry; senior citizens have shared their experiences of the 2nd World War. The school holds a variety of after school events, which have included successful drama productions, for instance, *Oliver* and *Les Miserables*. These examples indicate the breadth and richness of the school's links with the community in its curriculum provision.
48. About one third of pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities. The school's good extra-curricular programme also includes flute and jazz groups, steel bands, art and drama classes. These activities enrich provision, as well as bringing variety to the pupils' social and cultural experiences. The school organises a good range of educational visits to places both near and far, providing particularly valuable experiences. For instance, there are French language trips, visits to the Normandy beaches and Great War battle sites, trips to the Dorset coast for geography fieldwork, to the Gurdwara in Southampton, to The Imperial War Museum in London. Year 7 pupils are all involved in an outdoor activities residential course.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education

49. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
50. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The previous report stated that the spiritual development of pupils was less well developed. The school has made some improvement to its provision. For example, assemblies enable pupils to think about the issues that are important in their lives. An assembly was held to remember and to reflect upon the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York. A Year 11 assembly considered the plight of the asylum seeker. Pupils were encouraged to regard each person as an individual and to accept that people have different reasons for doing things. Pupils make their own contribution to assemblies. They read short extracts of text well and members of the steel band enhance the music provision. Although there are regular assemblies, the school does not

meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Planning for pupils' spiritual development is evident in some subjects. In others however, it is not. There is very good provision in religious education. Year 7 pupils study the Creation, imagining the world from space and describing what they see. In music, pupils discover the way different sounds can be combined and the impact that this has on the listener. Other significant contributions are made in design and technology and history.

51. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Honesty, fairness and respect for the truth are promoted well by the school. Most pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The behaviour policy is based on the school's four Cs of courtesy, co-operation, consideration and common sense. The SHAPE programme provides further opportunities for pupils to discuss moral issues. Adults in the school provide good role models for pupils. There is good provision in some subjects for moral development. In English, pupils explore the moral dilemma facing a young woman when a former admirer returns unexpectedly. In history, pupils consider animal rights and the effect of man on the environment. They complete a local history project on the Basque refugees and empathise with their plight. In physical education, pupils are taught the importance of fair play. Pupils discuss wider moral issues in religious education, including the effects of racial discrimination. Provision for drugs and sex education is planned in the SHAPE programme. Elements are covered by form tutors and outside agencies; for example, the police contribute to the drug education programme.
52. The provision for pupils' social development is good. There is a school council, as well as year councils. These provide opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas about the school. A peer-supporting scheme is run by Year 9 and 10 pupils, who have received training in helping other pupils. Opportunity is given for pupils to show initiative. They collect for a variety of charities, including local ones. Provision is made for pupils to develop an understanding of living in the community. Speakers from outside the school occasionally visit during lessons and assemblies. Good social provision is evident in lessons where pupils work in pairs or in groups. The good extra-curricular provision provides further opportunities for pupils of different ages to work together.
53. The provision for cultural development is good. It is strong in history and religious education and good in English, art and design and music. There have been visits to the Black Country Museum, the Imperial War Museum and the First World War Battlefields. Pupils make visits to France and there is a link with the Pablo Picasso School in Normandy. There are residential visits in physical education. Pupils are given good experiences to enrich their understanding of other cultures. They make comparisons with the cultures of the United Kingdom and those of Kenya and Bangladesh in geography. They visit a Sikh temple and the local church in religious education. They study poems from other cultures in English. The school acknowledges and celebrates well the different ethnic groups within its own community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

54. Procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are good, as reported at the last inspection. Risk assessments are undertaken with recommendations being acted upon and reported to the governing body. There are some health and safety issues in the crescent that are currently being pursued through the local authority. The school has an adequate number of qualified first-aid staff and suitable arrangements are in place for reporting injuries occurring to pupils during the school day. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. The headteacher is the named responsible person and he has received appropriate training for this role but the school needs to ensure that all staff have had the required training. The school has good strategies in place to ensure the inclusion of as many pupils as possible. For example the alternative curriculum provided for a number of the older pupils. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance. Registers are taken very promptly at the beginning of the morning and at the end of the afternoon sessions and at the start of every lesson. Lateness and absence are monitored regularly and tutors and heads of year quickly pick up and follow up any concerns.

55. There is a good pastoral system, which is a strength of the school. Pastoral care is based on year teams with tutors and heads of year having good knowledge about the pupils' individual circumstances and the challenges they face which may affect their learning. Procedures for monitoring personal development are good; these include the academic pupil monitoring system, which is well used by tutors to record personal and academic progress and discuss any problems. Pupils interviewed during the inspection were positive about these opportunities to meet their tutor privately.
56. The procedures for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour and eliminating oppressive are good. An effective system of rewards and sanctions is in place, which is applied consistently throughout the school, and through the home/school agreement pupils and parents are aware of what is expected of them. The school monitors the number of pupil exclusions and similarly logs all sanctions to assess if any particular groups, including ethnic minority groups, are requiring additional support. Pupils are in agreement that bullying is not a significant issue in the school and they are confident that any bullying is tackled sensitively and firmly by teachers and discussed in personal and social education lessons. They also feel that racism and sexism are not issues in the school. The school's programme for personal and social education (SHAPE) makes a significant contribution to the overall provision for ensuring pupils' welfare. Guidance on careers, health, sex and drugs education are all included.
57. The school successfully meets one of its aims 'to promote high self-esteem and positive self-image for everyone'. It is committed to a policy of inclusion and this allows some pupils to remain in school despite significant behavioural problems. That the teachers and fellow pupils cope well with little disruption demonstrates their skill and patience. Seventy-five per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are happy that the school is encouraging their children to become mature and responsible young people.
58. Overall the monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance is satisfactory. Much has been done to address the monitoring of pupils' academic performance, although more work still needs to be done to provide appropriate support. The school complies in full with all statutory assessment procedures, although levels reported for modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3 in 2000 did not reflect the national changes required. Some strong aspects of assessment include the well-established testing arrangements and the detailed, rigorous analysis of available data, which enable the school to predict and set realistic targets for subjects and individual pupils to work towards. There are very good target setting mechanisms in place in Years 10 and 11, which the school is beginning to extend to Years 7 to 9. Liaison with the main partner primary schools is good, enabling the school to build on pupils' attainments. Academic data is now indicating their attainment in Year 6 tests. The school is beginning to use this information to set up systems where both teachers and pupils are aware of pupils' attainment on entry to the school and what targets pupils should be aiming to achieve by Year 9. Many Year 9 pupils know their target levels but pupils in Years 7 and 8 are less aware of these. Both assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress by teachers and heads of departments is satisfactory. The school now ensures that pupils (and their parents) are aware of the current level at which they are working. However, teachers and heads of department do not always ensure that academic monitoring data is used effectively to plan learning activities that enable all learners to make progress. This means that information about pupils' current levels should be translated into what they know, understand and can do and what they need to do to make the next steps in their learning. Pupils' planners are used to record targets but these are not sufficiently precise to focus on improvements in learning.
59. The Academic Pupil Monitoring process is valued by pupils in Year 11 where they feel that one to one interviews with tutors, reports and parents' consultation meetings help to keep them informed of how well they are doing. For example in science, teachers monitor progress using both coursework marks and marks from externally assessed tests. This information is used to keep pupils informed of their likely grades for GCSE. Assessment data is better used in Years 10 and 11. For instance, in English pupils are aware of their target grades and what they must do to achieve them. The head of department monitors pupils' results using national comparative data and interviews under-performing pupils. Assessment data is also well used in music, with good support offered to pupils to help them improve composing at GCSE. There are variations between departments, which demonstrates the need for further

refinements to ensure the school's satisfactory procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' academic progress impact more effectively. Day-to-day marking contains few constructive comments with little advice on how pupils might improve. A new marking policy has been introduced but there is little evidence of this in operation. Marking does not provide pupils with enough information about how well they are doing and what they need to do better. Much work is pitched for the middle of the attainment range of the group with little evidence of extension tasks for higher attainers or modified tasks for low attainers.

60. Assessment on entry to the school is good. Primary records are supplemented by other assessment tests. Reading and spelling ages are assessed frequently and standardised results are distributed round the school. Departments have examples of the materials that pupils with different 'reading ages' could cope with so that they can assist their progress. However, the use of different reading tests over time confuses the tracking of progress. Various diagnostic tests are used well in the Unit to help with planning individual programmes of work, and assessment is built into each lesson. The head of the Unit recognises that there are pupils in the main school who have a similar level of difficulty to those in the Unit, but who do not get the same degree of help. Identification and planning is not sharp enough to ensure that these pupils get an adequate level of help to improve their achievement.
61. The Learning Support department, which includes the Unit, looks after pupils well. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils, and many pupils use the department outside lesson times. Some use literacy and numeracy programs on the computers, and others come for a pleasant social experience. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need, and all pupils in the Unit, have very thorough annual reviews, and there is frequent contact with outside agencies such as the educational psychologist. The provision in statements is met, although some therapy services are in short supply, for example speech and language therapy. Information about pupils is communicated very well within the department. A special needs register is circulated to all school staff, with additional medical notes. While the register is strong on test data, and satisfies the requirements of the special educational needs audit, it is not in a form that is useful to teachers. It should include fundamental things that will help to improve achievement, such as which pupils should wear glasses and which have problems with comprehension.
62. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are provided for pupils as required by the Code of Practice. However they vary in quality, sometimes containing too many targets, or targets that are too broad to help pupils progress faster. Subject departments are not involved in drawing up IEPs, and consequently do not always find them useful. They are therefore not always being used in lesson planning. Targets are reviewed three times a year, but on two of these occasions the reviews are held between the pupil and tutor and the emphasis is on academic targets. There should be a closer check on progress of pupils with IEPs alongside a general streamlining of their content to ensure that they support pupils' progress more effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. There was a low response to both the pre-inspection questionnaire and to the parents' meeting and a number of parents and carers expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of the school. However, nearly all agree that their children are working hard and making progress, and said that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were pleased with the way the school promotes good relationships between boys and girls and ethnic groups.
64. A high percentage of parents do not feel they are well informed about how their children are getting on. The inspectors judge the overall quality of information about pupils' progress to be satisfactory. The planners are used more effectively than they were at the time of the last inspection to keep parents informed of the outcomes of the academic pupil monitoring. Formal meetings between parents and teachers are generally well attended and help to keep parents aware of the progress their children are making, as well as identifying those areas that need further development. End-of-year progress reports are written in easy to read language but do

not provide enough specific detail about what pupils have achieved in each subject. Also, some teachers do not always identify or include clear learning targets for the future.

65. The overall impact of the involvement of parents is satisfactory. Generally, good use is made of the pupils' planners to communicate between teachers and parents. While a few parents feel some teachers do not regularly look at the planners, most parents value the planner as a link with the form tutors and heads of year on their child's progress. The majority of the pupils use their planners to record their homework and form tutors monitor them every week. Thirty three per cent of parents who returned questionnaires said that their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home and at the meeting, some parents thought that the quantity set is variable. The inspection team did not find other evidence to support these negative views, as satisfactory amounts of homework were set during the inspection week. The academic year booklets give guidance to parents on how much homework to expect in each subject. The Year 8 pupils interviewed during the inspection stated that teachers do set homework regularly, they are expected to complete it and it is marked.
66. There is good day-to-day information provided for parents through good quality newsletters and the prospectus. However, the prospectus and governors' annual reports to parents do not contain all of the required information on special educational needs. Meetings are held for the parents of children transferring from primary schools and for the parents of Year 7 pupils. In Years 10 meetings are held about work experience and the requirements of GCSE coursework. There are two information evenings organised for Year 11 pupils about study skills and post-16 educational opportunities. The school also benefits from the small group of parents who raise money through the parent teacher association (PTA) annual firework event but the PTA committee is suffering from dwindling support from parents. In the past the PTA has been used as a forum for discussion and consultation with parents on issues such as the Home/School Agreement. However, the response of parents to attend a meeting to discuss this important development was very poor. The Home/School Agreement is an integral part of the planner and tutors check that the agreements have been signed. Communication with parents was also reported as a concern of the last inspection and the school has identified this as a key area for action on the school improvement plan.
67. Parents usually attend annual reviews of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need and pupils in the Unit. However they are not involved in drawing up or reviewing individual education plans, although they are informed of targets. Information to parents does not meet statutory requirements, for example in the governors' annual report to parents, and in the school prospectus and special needs policy.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher is clear that the priority in the school is to raise attainment at the same time as maintaining a secure learning environment that welcomes and includes all pupils. He and the deputy heads work hard and well as a team. Since the previous inspection they have consulted widely with staff, parents and governors to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses and to establish appropriate priorities for improvement. Because of significant changes in the nature of the school's intake it was clear that teaching had to adjust to the learning needs of a different range of pupils. Good attention has been given to identifying what constitutes effective teaching and learning and how best to deal with challenging behaviour. Some weaknesses in performance have been tackled and there has been some effective work to strengthen middle management.
69. Undoubtedly the staff rallied round to support the development of an effective behaviour management policy and despite residual and understandable parental concerns, inspectors judged behaviour to be satisfactory. The commitment to welcoming and including all pupils is shared by all and as a result the school provides equal opportunities for every pupil and promotes racial harmony well. The curriculum has been modified and although there are one or two areas where it does not fully meet current statutory requirements, it does provide an effective alternative to the traditional curriculum to meet the needs of a group of older pupils in Years 10 and 11. There has been satisfactory delegation of responsibilities to heads of department, in that the priorities identified in the school improvement plan are included in

department improvement plans. Heads of year are working well together to strengthen the academic monitoring of pupils' performance, which is now central to their role. Governors have increased their involvement with the school; they are aware of its strengths and weaknesses and they are now more closely involved in strategic planning. All these developments are examples of effective management.

70. However, while there have been many discussions about effective teaching and learning and documents produced that identify good practice, the implementation of policy across the school is as yet inconsistent. Though updated yearly, the school improvement plan was produced three years ago. Its priorities are appropriate, but there are many outcomes and strategies trying to compete for attention at the same time. The step changes required to manage their implementation are not all spelled out enough to help weaker managers. In consequence too much depends on how effectively individual staff are able to clarify what they need to do next. The desired outcomes of the school improvement plan are sound but are not always focused clearly on quantifiable improvements in standards. This makes it harder for senior managers and governors to monitor the impact changes are having. Good leadership at head of department level has made a difference in English, science, geography, music, drama, physical education, religious education and special educational needs. The leadership of ICT has some satisfactory features but the overview of how ICT is used across the curriculum is insufficient. In other departments leadership is satisfactory but it is unsatisfactory in mathematics and modern foreign languages. There have been problems of recruitment and staff turnover in the last few years and some of the consequent weaknesses in teaching and learning have impacted upon standards. But these would not have been so weak if effective leadership had ensured good schemes of work had been in place and if there had been clearer guidance about expectations. Already some of the more recent appointments, for example in music and design and technology, are making a difference. Where particularly effective leadership has built a strong team working with clarity about their aims and expectations, as in the English department, the impact on attainment and achievement has been marked. The school leadership is aware of the developments needed in school management for it to reach a good standard and appropriate plans are in place.
71. Governors, senior managers and middle managers all recognise they have a responsibility to monitor what is going on, evaluate its effectiveness and to take action to bring about improvements. The urgency of the concerns about behaviour united all staff in a concerted and effective plan to tackle the problems. Now the need to strengthen the effectiveness of all middle managers and to ensure that they are improving teaching and learning has been flagged up but not yet fully addressed. Leadership at all levels needs to be quite clear about what is needed, and then monitoring of progress can be sufficiently rigorous to acknowledge the effort of those who are carrying out what is expected and to call to account those who are not. A good policy for performance management is in place to support further developments. The governors have recently agreed to an appropriate restructuring of the senior management team. New appointments have strengthened the team. The role of the middle managers' steering group is being reviewed in order to create a more effective engine for agreeing and seeing through improvements. These changes provide a good opportunity to evaluate the school's performance with greater clarity, and to spell out exactly what the priorities are for improving teaching and learning. Strong leadership is required to ensure that they are addressed consistently across the school in order to drive up standards.

Special Educational Needs

72. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good overall. The special needs co-ordinator is well placed to bring about improvements, being a member of the senior management group and a governor. He manages the Learning Support department well, chairing meetings, developing staff and communicating information within the department, as well as monitoring teaching. Staff respect the confidentiality of pupils' files. More clerical help is needed within the department. The head of the Unit has made a very good start with strategic planning for its development. However, within the main school, the Teaching and Learning task group has had little effect on teaching styles and matching work to pupils' special educational needs in some departments. Strategies should be developed to address this quickly. The Learning Support department needs to be involved with subject departments

at the planning stage, and to share good practice. The department has made a satisfactory start on addressing numeracy teaching, using the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines. Pupils would benefit from close liaison between the Learning Support department and the mathematics department to identify and support pupils with numeracy difficulties when they join the school.

Strategic use of resources

73. The school's finances are generally well deployed to support educational priorities and grants are used for their designated purposes. Funding from the Standards Fund is used to support inclusion, the alternative curriculum, behaviour support assistants and clerical support to heads of year. Funds have been set aside to meet appropriate and agreed future priorities, such as a new minibus, installation of CCTV for security purposes, painting and decorating and the proposed sports hall development. This partly explains the large carry forward in previous years. In addition, extra funds from the government were in some cases received too late to spend in the year they were allocated. However, there are some deficiencies in teaching resources that have not been addressed adequately. Good financial support is provided for all families in difficulties over trips, visits, kit and equipment. The team of administration staff work effectively and unobtrusively to facilitate the smooth running of the school. There is good use of ICT to achieve efficiencies, though consideration should be given to widening access to, for example, information about pupils. This would assist heads of year and heads of department in particular, and reduce pressure on the school office.
74. Staffing is good. Appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and support staff facilitate the effective delivery of the curriculum. The school has in recent years experienced some difficulty in filling vacancies in some key areas, notably food technology, modern foreign languages, mathematics and music. This has had a negative impact on standards. More than 25 per cent of the teaching staff joined the school in the six months prior to the inspection. However, at the time of the inspection, staffing was stable as a result of good procedures and a good effort to recruit new full-time and specialist temporary staff. There is now a very good match of well-qualified teaching and support staff to the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
75. The procedures for the induction and support of staff new to the school, including newly qualified teachers (NQTs), are good. Documentation to support new permanent and temporary teachers is comprehensive and effective. An induction programme for new staff includes a variety of meetings and other support strategies designed to ensure rapid and effective support and information is available. The statutory requirements for NQTs ensuring the provision of Induction Tutors and a reduced teaching workload are fully met.
76. Arrangements for staff development and training are well managed and in all cases linked, via the performance management process, directly to priorities in the school's development plan. The headteacher and all other staff have agreed objectives for the current year, in line with statutory requirements. However, training is needed for support staff in child protection and in how computers can help with literacy. The school has made effective use of funding for recruitment and retention of staff, awarding additional (temporary) pay incentives to support curriculum development. The appointment of Assistant Head Teachers and an Advanced Skills Teacher also indicates the intention of the school to provide for the continuing professional development of its staff. Progress on staffing issues since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
77. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is attractively designed, with a central covered crescent. The crescent presents a good opportunity to manage pupil' behaviour and movement around the school but also causes problems because it is used for eating at break and lunchtimes. There are health and safety issues, caused by birds in the roof space and condensation on steps that become slippery. Staff and pupils take care to reduce the amount of litter in the area to make it less attractive for these birds but it is a constant concern. The local education authority is investigating solutions to both problems. The school does not have a space large enough to accommodate the whole school comfortably for assemblies and, as reported at the last inspection, indoor accommodation for physical education is inadequate, so

that the curriculum is restricted and is heavily biased to outdoor sports. There are good outdoor facilities, the changing rooms have been improved and good displays enhance the environment.

78. As reported at the last inspection some of the classrooms are only just big enough for teaching and in geography, for example, the size of the rooms constrains map work. Access to mathematics teaching rooms is via a narrow stairway and the teaching rooms are small, which affects the range of teaching strategies. There are also problems with noise levels between partitioned rooms and this is particularly noticeable in the Unit for pupils with specific learning difficulties when using voice-activated equipment. Accommodation in the design and technology department is very good and there are two good-sized ICT suites. The special educational needs department has good accommodation: it is pleasant and welcoming, with a range of offices and teaching spaces. However there are flimsy partitions between teaching rooms that make quiet individual work and the use of voice recognition software difficult at times. The school site, inside and outside, is well maintained by the site manager; it is clean, and decorated with imaginative colour schemes. Despite the inadequacies, overall, the accommodation is satisfactory and the ambience of the buildings and grounds creates a positive learning atmosphere.
79. Resources are adequate overall. They are good in physical education and for pupils with special educational needs, where they contribute effectively to the good standards attained. They are barely adequate in French, ICT, geography and history, where there are not enough textbooks for some areas of the course. In French in Year 7, for example, pupils are currently sharing textbooks; in geography, there are not enough textbooks for Years 7 to 9 and in history in Years 10 and 11 there are not enough books on the French Revolution. Resources in the Learning Support department are very good with a variety of suitable books, computers and equipment. There are not enough ICT resources across the school to ensure high enough standards.
80. Since the last inspection the school has increased the size of the library but it is still too small to allow pupils regular access to develop their independent learning skills and to further raise standards. The stock is in good condition and pupils are beginning to withdraw more books and to return them more regularly. This is in part due to the fact that additional supervisory time has been provided during and after school. Nevertheless, the borrowing rate per pupil remains below both the national average and the county average. Pupils are not using the library enough and it is not supporting teaching and learning as well as it could.
81. The school applies the principles of best value in a satisfactory manner. The governors and senior managers have given appropriate attention to comparing results and costs with those of other schools. Proposals are challenged and alternative strategies and spending plans discussed. Services and goods are only bought after judgements are made about competing offers and opportunities. Staff and pupils are consulted about spending needs and priorities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. In order to raise the standards of attainment and achievement, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Develop the role of middle managers to increase their effectiveness in improving further the quality of teaching and learning and raising standards.* Identify specific areas of teaching and learning that could be improved and draw up a step by step action plan to make clear what must be done, by whom and when (*paragraphs 28-30, 32-36, 60-62, 64, 70, 71*);
 - (2) Limit the number of improvements addressed at any one time, ensuring that everybody is clear about the steps that define what needs to be done. Ensure that desired outcomes are quantified wherever possible to support the monitoring of progress (*paragraphs 70, 71*);

- (3) Increase the extent to which ICT is used to improve the quality of teaching and learning* (*paragraphs 11,25,26,30,38,91,101,117,126,134,148,157,178*);
- (4) Implement the whole-school policy for numeracy* (*paragraph 10,30,38,72,104,113*);
- (5) Review the marking policy and ensure that it is used effectively to enable pupils to improve their achievements (*paragraphs 32,59,106,165,172,187*).

In addition to these key issues, the governors should consider addressing the following issues in their action plan:

Ensure statutory requirements are met in the governors' annual report (*paragraph 67*). Ensure that the health and safety issues identified are pursued with the local education authority as a matter of urgency (*paragraph 78*).

Items marked with an asterisk () are already included in the school development plan*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	160
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	22	79	52	4	1	0
Percentage	1.25	13.75	49.40	32.50	2.50	0.60	0.00

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll		Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll		625
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		85

Special educational needs		Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		151

English as an additional language		No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language		27

Pupil mobility in the last school year		No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission		31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving		27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.5
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	71	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	26	44	46
	Girls	29	24	26
	Total	55	68	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	47 (63)	59 (57)	62 (51)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (24)	38 (30)	26 (20)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	38	52	58
	Girls	34	35	37
	Total	72	87	95
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	62 (78)	74 (63)	81 (75)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	24 (42)	29 (33)	37 (32)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	55	45	100

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	31	49	51
	Girls	20	43	45
	Total	51	92	96
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	51 (49)	92 (98)	96 (99)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	38.4
	National	38.4

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	39	100
	National	N/A	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	28
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	4
White	587
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	361

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.5
Key Stage 4	20.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	23

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	61	1
Other minority ethnic groups	2	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	1862044
Total expenditure	1844491
Expenditure per pupil	2971
Balance brought forward from previous year	94537
Balance carried forward to next year	112090

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	592
Number of questionnaires returned	146

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	20	64	12	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	30	54	8	5	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	40	21	13	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	51	23	10	2
The teaching is good.	13	61	15	3	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	48	20	9	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	41	10	5	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	49	8	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	14	46	30	10	1
The school is well led and managed.	16	51	16	9	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	50	12	8	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	48	16	5	13

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching, which is good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- The quality of leadership and management, which focuses on the improvement of teaching and learning and seeks to raise levels of achievement further.
- The commitment of the staff to raising standards and enriching the educational experience of the pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to improve the use of data to inform teaching and learning and increase the levels of monitoring of pupils' academic progress.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support and extend their work in the subject.

83. Standards are average overall. In the national tests taken in 2000 by pupils at the end of Year 9, the proportion achieving level 5 was below average, though the proportion achieving level 6 was close to the national average. The average point score was below average and below by comparison with similar schools. Teachers' assessments were higher than test results. The trend in results in recent years has been below the national trend, reflecting a significant change in the school's intake. However, given that the attainment on entry of this year group was well below the national average, the results overall represent good achievement.
84. Attainment in the 2001 tests was in line with national standards for the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above and a little above the national average for those obtaining level 6 or above. Girls did better than boys at levels 5 and 6 but the boys improved significantly on what was attained by boys in 2000, reflecting a higher level of attainment on entry to the school.
85. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades in the 2000 GCSE English Language and English Literature examinations was in line with national averages. Boys' results were above those of boys nationally in both subjects but girls' results were below the national figure. In both subjects all pupils attained an A*-G grade, which was above the national average. This reflects the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with English as an additional language also achieved well.
86. The 2001 English Language results were slightly down on those attained in 2000 but achievement in relation to prior attainment on entry to the school was good. This was especially so when account is taken of the fact that a number of these pupils sat the examinations a year early. These pupils then studied the Communication Studies course in Year 11 and did well in the 2001 examinations, with all candidates gaining grades in the A* to B range. Unlike the English Language results of 2000, girls performed better than boys in obtaining A*-C grades. The results of the 2001 English Literature examinations were similar to those of 2000. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieved well in both subjects. GCSE results have been consistently good over a period of time and are higher than those of other subjects in the school. This was noted at the time of the last inspection and remains a strength of the department.
87. Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with national averages. Standards of speaking and listening across are satisfactory. In speaking, pupils are increasingly fluent as they mature and so progress in this skill is good. By Year 11 they are confident and articulate. Listening was also good in the majority of lessons seen. There was one exception resulting from less than satisfactory teaching which failed to engage the pupils because the work was undemanding and classroom management was poor. In the best lessons pupils were able to explain their thinking clearly, concentrate and reflect on the points made by others, discuss and debate, and also speak formally when giving presentations. In a Year 11 lesson on the

work of Simon Armitage pupils could explain the way the structure of the writing and the meaning of the poetry were linked and could present their reasons clearly and with textual references to illustrate their points.

88. Standards of reading are also satisfactory across both key stages as a result of the effective schemes that are in place to help those who need support with this skill. In lessons pupils are introduced to a range of texts which present increasing levels of challenge. These they read with understanding and when asked to read aloud they do so with appropriate emphasis and expression. In a Year 8 lesson pupils with special educational needs had been reading the work of Paul Gallico. They were enthusiastic about the work and appreciated the way character had been developed in the story. Reading in other subjects is satisfactory. In ICT, for example, pupils select and read from the Internet and acquire information from textbooks, tables and charts.
89. Standards were satisfactory in the written work seen. Throughout the school the majority of pupils write with reasonable levels of accuracy, although a minority of younger pupils have difficulty with sentence and paragraph structures, spelling and punctuation. A wide range of writing is attempted for varied audiences and standards of extended writing are good as a result of pupils' ability to draft and revise their work. Examples of this were seen in the commentaries on set texts where older pupils wrote with insight on the work of Shakespeare and supported their analysis with textual references. Pupils understand how written forms can vary and can adapt their own writing to a particular audience. In a Year 9 lesson pupils used persuasive techniques effectively in their writing to arrest and hold the reader's attention. The standard of creative writing was impressive and pupils are afforded every opportunity to publish their work in journals and anthologies that have a wide readership beyond the school. Pupils are using computers to present their work in a variety of forms and make use of the Internet to research their set texts. Computer resources have now been increased but not enough opportunities are created for pupils to use ICT to enhance the quality of their work. Standards of writing were also satisfactory in other subjects. In a Year 11 science lesson, for example, pupils wrote succinct and accurate explanations of a hydraulic system and in history pupils encountered a range of writing in the form of essays, diaries, poetry and letters.
90. Overall, achievement is good in relation to pupils' levels of prior attainment on entry to the school. This pattern of good progress has been maintained since the last inspection. Achievement across both key stages in reading, writing, speaking and listening is good. This is particularly apparent in pupils' reading skills when on entry a significant number of pupils had reading ages below their chronological age. Most are now reading with reasonable levels of fluency and understanding by the time they leave school. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson where pupils showed good recall of the nature of the relationships portrayed in Michele Roberts's work "Your Shoes". Achievement in speaking and listening is good, as is the progress made in developing writing skills. This is the case for pupils of different levels of prior attainment and for pupils with special educational needs and those from different ethnic backgrounds.
91. Pupils achieve well because of the good quality of the teaching in the department. Teachers know their subject well. They make good use of questions to consolidate understanding of previous work and to extend learning and there is open-ended questioning to challenge the more able. Lessons have pace and rigour and teachers deploy resources judiciously. Time management in a few of the lessons seen was not effective when insufficient time was allowed at the end to consolidate and evaluate the work covered. Classroom management is good and is characterised by an appropriate use of praise and encouragement. This results in a productive working atmosphere. Attention is given to individuals and small groups to ensure all make progress. This was evident in a Year 11 lesson where the needs of high attaining pupils were met through careful planning and then challenging questioning on the link between structure and meaning in poetry. Teachers encourage pupils to use ICT to draft and edit work and to make use of a digital camera, though they do not make as much use of ICT as they could. Teachers' plans take account of the needs of individuals and groups of pupils and clear learning objectives are set. Pupils know what is expected of them in terms of target levels at the age of fourteen and target grades at the age of sixteen. Varied teaching techniques are deployed and pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively.

92. Learning is good. The good pace of learning is driven by the challenging teaching. Pupils are fully engaged in lessons and reflect on their work. In a Year 7 lesson pupils increased their understanding of technical vocabulary and were able to use the words accurately in their writing by the end of the lesson. They had also learnt to work collaboratively and resolve disagreements about the use of such words. In a Year 10 lesson pupils learnt about the effects of isolation on the morale of marooned explorers and how to describe those effects clearly, illustrating their writing with telling examples. In another Year 10 lesson pupils made good gains in learning how to choose appropriate words to include in their persuasive writing.
93. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department provides clear direction for the development of the subject and he works to promote high standards. Clear aims and values underpin that development and the working documentation provided underpins the standards of teaching and learning. Good use is made of test and examination data and this is disseminated to all staff and used for target setting and curriculum planning. This is an area the department sees as needing further refinement and it features prominently in the improvement plans. Those plans contain appropriate priorities and targets with accompanying action points. The head of department is supportive and encouraging in his approach and has created a shared commitment to the success of the department. Good systems are in place to monitor, evaluate and develop the quality of teaching.
94. Improvement since the last inspection is good. At that time pupils' thinking was identified as poorly focused and there was concern about the way teachers dominated class discussion. This is no longer the case. The challenge presented by the teaching concentrates pupils' minds and ensures that they are engaged throughout the lesson. Ample opportunities are afforded for discussion, which is used to promote effective learning. The last report also concluded that there was too much written work set. In the work seen during the course of this inspection the balance was right in all lessons between speaking and listening and reading and writing. In 1996 assessment practice was developing but marking and feedback for pupils sometimes lacked detail. The department continues to refine its monitoring and assessment practices but marking and feedback are now regular and supportive, with detailed indicators for improvement.

Drama

95. Standards in drama are good. Results in 2000 were in line with national averages with 68 per cent of the entry gaining A* to C grades. In 2001, 70 per cent gained A*-C grades. This mirrors the trend over recent years when results have been consistently good. The work of the current Year 11 shows attainment at an average level but this is consistent with their levels of prior attainment. The work of one of the current Year 10 groups is well above average and that of the other is good. Most Year 9 pupils are working at or above the expected levels.
96. The reason for such high standards is the quality of the teaching, which is consistently good. Detailed lesson planning ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. This is done through the judicious choice of teaching strategies and the careful structuring of lesson content. Attention is focused on the development of skills and pupils' analytical ability to evaluate their own work. Clear objectives are set and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Lessons have pace and rigour and targeted support ensures that all make progress. Class management is very good as a result of the mutually respectful relationships. Each lesson ends with an evaluation when the pupils are challenged to think about what they have achieved. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson where pupils were alert to stereotyping when developing characterization.
97. The leadership of the department is very good. The newly appointed head of department has a clear vision of what she wants to achieve with her pupils and how to get there. Departmental documentation is excellent and provides a secure framework for those who undertake some teaching of the subject. Good foundations of discipline are successfully instilled by the implementation of clearly defined practices across all Year 7 and 8 classes. Monitoring of both staff and pupils is very good and is undertaken regularly by the head of department. There is a

good take-up of the subject in each of Years 10 and 11 and pupils go on to study related subjects after they leave school.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall, resulting in good attitudes and behaviour by pupils.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good.
- Pupils respond well to challenging questions, helping to maintain the brisk pace of lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because department policy is not effectively monitored and evaluated to ensure that standards and targets are being met.
- Marking is not as thorough as it should be; some basic errors are being overlooked, poor work often goes unchallenged and comments do not diagnose how improvement could be made.
- GCSE results, which show a marked decline in 2001 compared to the previous year.

98. Standards are below average. In 2000, the proportion of pupils in Year 9 achieving level 5 or above was below the national average for all schools and below average when compared to similar schools. The proportion achieving level 6 or above is close to the national average and below average when compared to similar schools. These results do not compare closely with teachers' assessments and indicate a need for closer monitoring of pupil performance. The levels in mathematics are not as good as in English and science. Boys perform better than girls. The average point scores are close to the national average for all schools and below average when compared to similar schools. The average point scores are similar to science and better than English.
99. In 2001, results were also below the national average for Year 9 pupils. The proportions achieving level 5 or above and level 6 or above are below the national average. Levels achieved in mathematics were as good as English and science. There has been a steady improvement in average point scores in the last three years, with boys performing as well as boys nationally but girls performing less well than girls nationally.
100. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C is below the national average, with boys performing significantly better than girls. The proportion achieving GCSE grades A*-G is close to the national average with girls performing slightly better than boys. The average point scores in mathematics are not as good as English and science. In 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE mathematics grades A*-C was well below the school's target. Over the last three years there has been a steady decline in the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades compared to other core subjects and the national average for all schools.
101. The standard of work seen of Year 9 pupils is average. In one lesson, high attaining pupils drew well on their numerical skills to identify and describe the relationship between two variables, making connections between one set of numbers and another. However, there is insufficient emphasis on writing and recording work that is completed in class. The quality of pupils' written work, particularly the average and lowest attaining pupils, is unsatisfactory, with poor work going unchallenged. High attaining pupils' work is often at a level above national expectations and is recorded well in exercise books using a variety of means to convey information and support their learning. Work that is completed now is better than work completed in previous years. However, pupils make only limited use of ICT.
102. The standard of Year 11 work is below average. Pupils cover a range of topics in line with the GCSE schemes of work, but the quality and quantity of written work is not good enough to aid learning. Pupils do not make full use of various means of conveying information, such as words, graphs, statistics, examples and exercises; they make only limited use of ICT. Their work is legible but presented without concern for layout and appearance. Higher attaining pupils persevere with tasks until completed and produce a good record of work. In one lesson,

average attaining pupils in Year 10 successfully established a proof for the sum of the angles of a triangle but lacked the guidance to support the recording of their findings. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 performed well, investigating the impact on trigonometrical functions by changing the coefficients and using the graphic calculator to observe the translation produced.

103. The standard of literacy in mathematics is satisfactory. Pupils develop speaking and listening skills through discussion and group work more at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. Reading and writing skills are not strongly reinforced by teachers. The literacy policy included in the department handbook does not provide for formal opportunities for developing literacy skills through the scheme of work other than through the planned coursework.
104. While the standard of numeracy in some subjects is satisfactory, in others there is no evidence of numeracy being applied to support pupils' learning. In ICT, tally charts and formula on spreadsheets are used well; pupils in Years 7 to 9 can vary the data and recognise the change in outcomes. In Years 10 and 11, pupils can use spreadsheets to carry out more complex tasks such as calculating the cost of a Christmas party of varying size. In design and technology, pupils in Years 7-9 can estimate before measuring. Product and design planning is accurate. Year 10 and 11 pupils conduct surveys as preparation for a design brief and process their data in the form of charts and graphs. Material costs and equipment costs are included in the findings. In science, Year 10 and 11 pupils develop an understanding of the relationship between pressure, force and area, using graphical representations and lines of best fit. In geography, pupils in Years 7-9 make satisfactory use of pie chart and designs when comparing temperature and rainfall and complete a cross-section of a footpath during fieldwork studies in Years 10 and 11. The scheme of work includes numerical worksheets, for example, on the distribution and supply of water. In music, pupils in Years 7 to 9 use rhythmic patterns and count bars. However, despite this evidence of applying number in some subjects, the school numeracy policy is only just being addressed. No audit has been conducted across the curriculum and there is no guidance regarding key words, definitions, methods and timing across the curriculum. There has been no interrogation of school data to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, who is numerate and who is not, and opportunities for formalising the teaching of numeracy are missed within the mathematics department revised scheme of work for pupils in Years 7 to 9. As a consequence, not enough has been done to raise standards of numeracy and the achievement of pupils is unsatisfactory.
105. Achievement in mathematics overall is satisfactory, given the below average levels of attainment on entry to the school. This is the case for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. In 2000 pupils' achievement by Year 9 was good. Their achievement by Year 11 in relation to their prior attainment in Year 9 was satisfactory. In 2001, the achievement of Year 9 pupils was satisfactory. Their achievement by Year 11 in relation to their prior attainment in Year 9 was unsatisfactory. However, the high expectations of recently appointed specialist mathematics teachers are improving achievement, particularly in Years 7 to 9. In consequence pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developing in line with national expectations. High attaining pupils in Year 9 have learnt to calculate the volume of various prisms but lack the skills to complete and record the inverse. Pupils gain a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the rules of algebra. They gain a good knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measurement. They learn to handle data well. For example, pupils in Year 8 can calculate the mean, mode and median for sets of discrete data and explain in detail the best representative value. Low attaining pupils in Year 8 are making good progress, completing a variety of differentiated tasks appropriate to their needs and powers of concentration in a brisk and purposeful fashion. Opportunities for extending gifted and talented pupils are not evident in the scheme of work and lesson plans, which undermines their achievement. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy into the scheme of work has had a positive impact on progress. However, the inconsistent use of mental 'starters' to lessons limits the opportunities for pupils to refine and improve their numerical skills. Pupils make only limited progress in the use of ICT to support their learning, owing to difficulties in time-tabling access to the computer room. High attaining pupils' numerical skills develop well but they lack an appreciation of the power of estimation prior to using the calculator or establishing hypotheses. Average and low attaining pupils do not develop their confidence in applying basic numerical skills and there is scope generally for more systematic and rigorous setting out of calculations and recording completed work in exercise books. Pupils from

different ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.

106. Teaching is good overall. After a period of turbulence in staffing, recently appointed teachers are making a difference to the quality of teaching and learning, which is beginning to impact upon attainment and achievement. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good. Teachers' planning is effective; learning objectives are often shared with pupils, providing a clear purpose for lessons. However, teachers do not always plan a plenary session towards the end of lessons to enable pupils to consolidate what has been learnt. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high. They ask good questions, which challenge pupils' thinking, involve intellectual effort and deepen their understanding. Teaching methods that reflect pupils' capacity to concentrate and draw on previously taught skills are occasionally not well thought through, as in a Year 7 lesson, when plotting the co-ordinates of points on a graph given a linear relationship confused a number of pupils. Teachers help pupils to understand the language of mathematics by emphasising key words. In many good lessons teachers use time and resources very effectively to promote good behaviour and learning. For example, work for the lowest attaining pupils is broken down into a variety of 'bite' size activities to take account of their capacity to concentrate. Available resources are used well but emphasis remains on the published worksheet and there is insufficient use of ICT to support learning. Homework of an appropriate standard is regularly issued. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' work are satisfactory, but the quality and use of ongoing assessment and marking is unsatisfactory, with insufficient diagnosis of weaknesses. Homework is often unmarked and work marked by pupils is not monitored. Pupils are aware of the level they are working at but are unaware of how to improve. Poorly presented work often goes unchallenged.
107. Learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, because of the wide range of ability in some classes, which is often not catered for in some teachers' lesson plans. Many lesson activities clearly focus on pupils' learning, for example giving opportunity for pupils' personal development through group work or work at the whiteboard. Pupils do not engage in enough independent learning and investigations. Pupils work well in lessons when effective teaching demands much of them. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning create an ethos where many feel secure in volunteering answers and opinions. This contributes well to their achievement.
108. Leadership and management is unsatisfactory because department policies lack effective direction that is tangible, observable and measurable. Leadership lacks the strength of purpose to ensure standards and targets are met. Policies, such as marking, are not being effectively monitored and evaluated to ensure they are being consistently implemented. The drive for improvement has not been well coordinated across the department and has depended on individual teachers, some of whom in the past have had limited experience and expertise.
109. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The collection and analysis of test and examination data is extensive but its interpretation in terms of identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses and informing classroom practice is insecure. A new scheme of work, reflecting the requirements for years 7 to 9 from September 2000, has set the stage for the improved teaching observed and for a consistency of approach across the key stage. Since the last report, Year 9 results have steadily improved but predicted GCSE grades have not been reached and pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. Opportunities to enrich pupils' learning, such as extra-curricular activities, numeracy across the curriculum, celebrating achievement through displays of pupils' work, sharing good practice, use of the library and ICT have been missed.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- A team of well-qualified teachers with good classroom management, capable of offering science learning-experiences that engage and motivate most pupils, most of the time.

- Planning that offers a range of activities in lessons including practical work that supports learning in the subject.
- Good support for the development of pupils' science coursework

Areas for improvement

- Broaden the range of teaching and learning strategies to include more active pupil involvement and opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas in pairs and groups.
- Use assessment data as part of lesson planning to take more account of what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- Develop activities that offer greater challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Develop marking strategies which offer pupils feedback on what they need to do to improve.
- Increase the use of ICT to support learning.

110. Standards are average overall. The results in 2000 of the national tests for pupils aged 14 show that the proportions of pupils reaching level 5 and level 6 or were close to the national average, despite their relatively low attainment on entry to the school. The average points score was also close to the national average, with boys doing better than girls. Results were in line with schools with pupils with similar backgrounds. Pupils' attainments in science were better than their attainments in English and mathematics. After the previous inspection results improved then declined dramatically, but since 1998 there has been continuous improvement, broadly in line with the national trend. Teacher Assessments indicate that a higher proportion than average was expected to reach level 5. In 2001 the proportions reaching level 5 and level 6 improved again slightly and were close to the national average.
111. Overall results in GCSE science for 2000 are above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades were above the national average; the proportion gaining A*-G grades was in line. Results were in line with pupils' attainments in other subjects. They are well above those of pupils with similar prior attainment in other schools. Science results at Key Stage 4 have improved since a decline in 1998. Boys' attainment is well above the national average whilst girls' results are just below. There are fewer grades awarded at the highest level than in other schools. Results in 2001 were lower than the 2000 results, but at the time of the inspection national comparisons were not available.
112. At the end of Year 9 standards in work seen during the inspection are average. Attainment in Years 7 and 8 is better than in Year 9, reflecting the improving attainment on entry of these pupils. For example in a Year 7 class, pupils are able to classify materials as solids, liquids or gases and explain how particles are arranged in a solid. In a Year 8 class, higher attainers are able to recall the names of vitamins and minerals and explain why they are needed in the diet. But lower attaining pupils in Year 9 have difficulty remembering the names of parts of a flower. In another Year 9 class, most pupils are able to equate how plant adaptations aid their survival but few can explain how root hairs increase the surface area for absorption. In a higher attaining Year 9 class, pupils are not able to distinguish between elements and compounds attempting to find glucose in the Periodic Table. In discussion with pupils and observation of their work a general theme emerges where most pupils are able to describe but fewer able to explain events using appropriate scientific language.
113. Standards in work seen in Year 11 are also average. For instance pupils know the difference between alkenes and alkanes but are unable to recall the test for a double bond. They understand how the particle model relates to the behaviour of gases and liquids under pressure. They analyse data and recognise that pressure and volume of a gas are inversely proportional and draw accurate graphs with lines of best fit, recognising why this is an appropriate means of display. They know about atomic number and atomic mass and can use data presented to them to draw atomic configuration of elements. They understand how properties of elements are related to their structure and how the Periodic Table represents trends and patterns in these properties. But to attain the very highest grades at GCSE they need to show more ability in analysing and interpreting data and applying their developing understanding to new situations. Standards of pupils' literacy are average but standards in numeracy are below average in Years 7 to 9. ICT skills are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but

below expectation in Years 10 and 11. GCSE coursework shows good development of pupils' investigative skills.

114. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Pupils make good progress by Year 9 given their low attainment on entry. More pupils progress in line with expectation than in other schools within the local education authority, where results overall are above the national average. The 2000 GCSE results for all pupils in science are broadly in line with the attainments of pupils with similar prior attainment in other schools. Examination results show that girls do not make as much progress as boys. The highest attaining pupils do not make enough progress because there is insufficient challenge in lessons. For example, higher attaining pupils in a Year 11 class understood the relationship between force and pressure from one set of data collected in the lesson. However, their understanding was not challenged by the development of a generalised relationship or the use of problems to test this understanding fully. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. For instance in a Year 9 lesson, lower attainers were able to extend their knowledge and understanding of plant reproduction. This was because the teacher promoted active participation by the pupils and provided useful strategies to help them remember key words. This helped to both engage and motivate them. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.
115. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned, with a variety of learning activities. Learning objectives and key words are made explicit, but not always used at the end of the lesson to review the learning. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils carried out practical work safely, using a Bunsen burner for the first time. They made observations and recorded these accurately. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were beginning to learn about how plant roots are adapted for water uptake through the teacher's good use of resources such as microscope slides and display materials. In another Year 9 lesson pupils were challenged to extend their understanding of photosynthesis by attempting to transform a word equation into a symbolic equation. However, they lacked the necessary knowledge and understanding to be able to do this and the teacher did not give them sufficient opportunities to discuss their thinking. In Year 10 pupils developed their understanding of polymerisation reactions through well planned teaching, with brisk pace and careful classroom management. Pupils were interested and asked for further explanation when they did not understand. They supported each other in their learning through discussion of their ideas, although this was often unplanned. In a Year 11 class, lower attaining pupils developed their understanding of the pH scale through well-selected practical work and questions linked to textbook resources.
116. The department is well led and managed and good support is provided for newly qualified teachers. Teaching staff are well qualified and well deployed. The department is well supported by the science technician to ensure that appropriate practical experiences support pupils' learning.
117. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, standards having risen again after falling. Pupils' skills in scientific investigations are developing well and support structures are emerging to ensure pupils reach their full potential. Pupils' achievement is good, given their low attainment on entry. However, there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Some improvement in the planning of opportunities to use ICT has been made but this still requires further development. The department knows more about pupils' levels of attainment on entry but is not clear about what pupils already know, understand and can do. Information about attainment is gathered but it is not used enough to modify teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are not monitored and evaluated enough and to identify how standards could be raised. The department's improvement planning includes both monitoring and evaluation but it is not sharp enough, so that the impact of strategies to secure improvements and raise standards can be measured.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils
- The curriculum at Key Stage 4

Areas for improvement

- The Key Stage 3 curriculum, notably provision for information and communication technology (ICT), which does not currently meet statutory requirements
- Curriculum planning to ensure equality of access, continuity and progression for all pupils
- Use of day-to-day assessment
- Provision of opportunities for experimental and expressive work for all pupils but particularly higher attaining pupils.

118. In 2000 the proportion of pupils reaching grades A*-C in GCSE was below national average and close to the national average for A*-G grades. In 2001 the results were better. However the pattern of results over recent years has been uneven and the underlying trend from 1997 shows an improvement rate below the national average. Girls do better than boys.
119. In work seen during the inspection standards of pupils in Year 9 are variable but overall are average standards of Year 11 pupils are also average.
120. By year 9 pupils have developed good practical skills in a range of media, and their use of colour and understanding of colour theory is often good. The range of media they use is good and craft skills in 3D and printmaking are at least sound. The skills and knowledge they acquire are well developed in other practical areas of the curriculum and provide a very good basis for work in Years 10 and 11. ICT skills are not well developed.
121. The understanding of the methods and styles of other artists is satisfactory. Some good work reflecting an understanding of style and cultural influences was seen in Year 7. For example the 'Gargoyles' project provides good opportunities for pupils to explore unusual and fantastic imagery. However, sketchbook work is too often limited in scope and when carried out at home it lacks the sophistication and depth of research that can be achieved under the direct guidance of the teacher.
122. The standard of Year 9 work seen during the inspection was average, although that of higher attaining pupils was below expectations. A satisfactory range of experiences including dry colour media, painting and graphic techniques was seen in all pupils' work. Drawing from observation is the stimulus for most projects. Direct exploration and analysis of observed objects and situations is however seldom pursued beyond this initial drawing. As a result, the development of work into different ideas stems directly from the first recording and important exploration and experimentation is missing. The subsequent development of ideas therefore lacks rigour, depth and vitality. This expressive quality is noticeably scarce in the work of higher attaining pupils. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the process through which their projects develop. Although restrictive to the more able pupils, the simple process provides a secure framework for the lower attaining pupils whose practical work is often more advanced than expected.
123. Achievement at both key stages is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 pupils develop some competence when using and applying the formal elements of line, tone and form. However pupils do not develop the presentation of their ideas or make enough progress in experimental work in projects at this stage. The achievement of most pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory, with the exception of the most able and gifted who have too few opportunities to extend their thinking and ideas through experimentation.
124. Literacy skills are generally good and frequently addressed in lessons in both key stages through the introduction and explanation of new terms or specialist vocabulary. Written work, however, is often brief, usually factual and related to a particular artist or style.
125. Teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some good lessons seen. The best teaching results from well pitched tasks that challenge all pupils in the group. For example in a Year 9 lesson on 'Shoes', the teacher provided structured yet demanding work from direct observation. The

teacher's knowledge and skills were effectively used to demonstrate technique; and the varied method – whole group, individual tuition and frequent questioning - constantly supported and challenged all pupils and promoted effective learning. Expectations of pupils' capability were high. Similarly in a Year 11 'figure drawing' lesson the task was presented in a structured, stage-by-stage manner, enabling pupils to work on potentially demanding 'line' and 'tonal' studies in a supportive atmosphere. The effect of the structured teaching was clearly seen in the developing confidence and understanding of the group.

126. Less effective teaching was seen where tasks are often over-prescribed and fail to provide enough opportunities for exploration and extension. Subsequently outcomes were too similar and lacking originality. Also at this stage most pupils do not have a clear understanding of how their work is assessed and therefore they find it difficult to recognize the significance of the guidance they are given. In the majority of lessons, however, teaching promotes at least satisfactory rates of learning. The tasks may not always provide appropriate challenge to all pupils, but teachers' methods usually address the range of abilities within the mixed ability groups, with the exception of the most able pupils. Teachers use their knowledge of the subject to enhance learning through demonstrations and the interaction with individuals. However, they do not plan enough opportunities for the use of ICT in Years 10 and 11. Assessment is not a significant part of teaching, enabling all pupils to see their work in the context of the assessment objectives by which it will be judged.
127. The learning opportunities provided through the 'taught curriculum' offer a sound range of media and experiences. However, planning is not sufficiently coherent to ensure equality of access to the National Curriculum and a secure balance of experiences. Plans for the delivery of the curriculum at in Years 7 to 9 are not explicit enough and in Years 10 and 11 they do not ensure that pupils cover all of the syllabus in an orderly manner. There is not a good enough balance of opportunities for expressive, explorative and experimental work for all pupils, but especially the more able and boys in particular. Provision for ICT does not comply with statutory requirements.
128. The subject is well managed on a day-to-day basis and the head of department provides care and support to staff and pupils. The ethos created and maintained by the head of department and other teachers is secure and encouraging to pupils. Their efforts and determination to promote a steady improvement in the subject are however limited by the lack of coherence in the subject documentation. This does not set out a clear agenda for improvement and is lacking detail in curriculum planning to secure continuity and progression against curriculum objectives. The formal system of monitoring should be embraced to ensure the continued development and improvement of teaching. Steps to develop the subject are currently inadequate to deliver sustainable development or to build on the success already achieved. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The GCSE results in design and technology were well above the National Average in 2000.
- Curriculum planning has improved.
- Accommodation is very good and resources are good.

Areas for improvement:

- Attainment, which is below the national average.
- Planning for pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented.
- Opportunities for pupils to use the design process in Years 7 to 9, linked more closely to the assessment process.
- Use of ICT to raise levels of achievement.
- Provision of a specialist teacher in food technology and technician support in resistant materials.

129. Teacher Assessments for pupils in Year 9 for 2000 were not available at the time of the inspection because of staffing difficulties. The assessments for 2001 indicate that pupils are working well above the national average, with girls out-performing the boys. This did not match the level of work seen during the inspection, which was broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C was well above the national average. Girls outperformed boys, although boys achieved better results than boys nationally. Pupils achieved better results in design and technology in 2000, than they did in most other subjects. Results in 2001, however, have dropped considerably.
130. In work seen during the inspection, attainment is broadly in line with the national average at the end of Year 9. Pupils can analyse a limited range of products. They have basic skills in designing and making products in food, graphics, resistant materials, textiles and electronics. A good range of knowledge is covered in the projects pupils do in Years 7 to 9. However, they have little experience of using the full design process and as a result they work less independently. In both practical and written design tasks, pupils apply a good range of numerical skills. They measure and mark out the dimensions they require to make their products, use scale in designing graphic products and gather data on surveys they carry out. They present this data in the form of charts and graphs and some pupils in Years 7 to 9 use ICT to support this task. The school also plans to introduce new software to increase computer-aided drawing and to use further computer-aided manufacturing equipment. In all specialist areas pupils use numerical data to plan their work and present the results in the form of charts and graphs as well as calculating the nutritional value of food products. In graphics, pupils apply the skills of two- and three-dimensional drawing well to their work in other specialist subjects within technology. Pupils are guided by the structure that teachers provide in the lessons; this is often in the form of structured worksheets as seen in textiles. This was seen in a Year 8 resistant materials lesson where pupils were making a mechanical toy. As a result pupils became familiar with using the required tools and following the processes of creating joints. They were then able to design the moving parts of the toy themselves to develop their own ideas. Lower attaining pupils were able to apply all the basic skills to improve the overall quality of their work.
131. The work of Year 11 pupils seen during the inspection is also average. This is lower than the level achieved by pupils in the GCSE examinations in 2000 but higher than 2001 results. This improvement is because of the appointment of a new head of department and the better co-ordination of the work of pupils in Years 10 and 11. All pupils use a wide range of investigation and research skills, and evaluate strengths and weaknesses effectively as they progress with their design ideas. They develop work of good quality, including a range of making skills that involve them in considering methods of large-scale manufacturing processes. In graphic products, pupils develop a good range of drawing skills and work methodically through each stage of the design process. This was seen in a Year 11 graphic products lesson, where pupils were designing an Easter egg box. Folders showed good use of thick and thin line, page layout techniques and application of rendering and colour to show texture. Higher attaining

pupils produce designs well supported with accurate, well-developed plans and their work is guided by detailed specifications. Folder work includes the testing and modelling of nets and packaging as they were being developed. Although the work showed some analysis of existing products, their analysis was limited to only a few products and the features of the products and explanations were very brief and lacking in detail. Higher attaining pupils apply accuracy and show a good level of designing. Lower attaining pupils design products well suited to the courses and produce work that reflects the requirements of the examination. Pupils who follow the school's "varied curriculum" are encouraged to concentrate on practical tasks, which gives them less opportunity to design their own products. In some of these groups, lack of appropriate work led to complacency and unsatisfactory behaviour. The department has recognised the need to increase the challenge for these pupils and is now planning to enter them for a suitable examination.

132. Achievement at the age of 14 is good overall. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well when compared to the levels they achieved when they entered the school. In Years 7 to 9 pupils experience work in a range of materials, use a variety of tools and acquire a good base of knowledge about the products they make. They have less experience, however, of using the design process to guide their design work. Some evidence of using this process was seen in textiles but this experience was not consistent in all material areas within design and technology. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils increase their competence in applying the design process. They develop a more advanced range of design skills and make a range of products to meet the needs of the commercial market. In developing their products, pupils explore the needs of consumers. They use a wide range of investigation and research skills, to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of their design ideas. They produce work of good quality, including a range of making skills that involve pupils in considering methods of large-scale manufacturing processes.
133. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Some good lessons were seen. In lessons where teaching is good, teachers provide a good structure to the lesson and clear objectives give guidance and support to pupils in their work. Teachers provide examples of similar work. Teachers use methods that enable pupils to understand how to work as a member of a team. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson where pupils were grouped into teams to form their own companies. Teams were challenged to build the tallest structure. The teacher helped pupils to make their decisions together and develop strategies to achieve success. There was insufficient guidance, however, on how to achieve a strong structure and the importance of triangulation to include strength. Pupils showed a high level of interest and as a result the learning was good. This was particularly effective, giving pupils the opportunity to evaluate product development strategies and also to identify the need for good teamwork. Teachers plan their lessons well and have high expectation of their pupils. However, higher attaining pupils are often unchallenged by some of the tasks, which are not always well suited to their needs. Teachers give good individual support to lower attaining pupils with special educational needs. Some teachers succeed in stretching pupils of all levels of attainment, but this is not consistent across the department.
134. Teachers place a good emphasis on developing technical vocabulary when pupils record their findings; this is having a positive effect on literacy skills. This is developed further when pupils are required to write in a variety of styles such as making notes, writing work in sequence, when they give instructions of how to make their products and when evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the products they have made. As part of their research pupils are also required to read from a range of sources such as textbooks, worksheets, graphs and charts, as well as the Internet, to gather information. As a result learning is varied and strengthens literacy skills in a range of contexts. In general pupils make satisfactory use of ICT to support their learning. For example, they can use ICT to calculate the nutritious value of foods, use computer-aided sewing machines and experience batch production methods using a computer-controlled plastic cutting machine. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 show greater use of ICT to process the data they gather during surveys. There is a need to use ICT more effectively to raise the overall standard of work and the department has planned some improvements. Pupils form good relationships with their teachers and work hard for them. Teachers have a positive approach with all pupils and as a result all pupils are included well in

all the learning activities. Pupils behave well because they know what is expected of them. The pace of lessons is appropriate.

135. The management of the department is satisfactory and is improving considerably with the appointment of a new head of department, who has focused on the introduction of new schemes of work. The department now benefits from a stronger team approach. There is an appropriate system in place to monitor and record the attainment of pupils and targets are set to help them make further improvements. However, the information gathered from this is still under-used. Although there are some examples of good marking, teachers' comments are not always sufficient to support pupils' progress. The level of marking is inconsistent across the department.
136. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Funding now meets the needs of the department and health and safety issues have been resolved. Schemes of work still need to include more information for teachers to plan work for pupils with special educational needs and to increase the strategies used to provide appropriate work for pupils who are gifted and talented.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Good planning of work ensures that teachers work to a common syllabus that ensures continuity from year to year and underpins pupils' progress
- Teachers' good knowledge and enthusiasm produces good standards.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, of pupils' involvement and work.
- The department makes good use of ICT for investigating aspects of geography.

Areas for improvement

- Work should be better assessed to identify where the achievement of boys and girls differs
- Day to day marking does not give enough guidance on how to improve
- The monitoring of teaching, so that it is systematic and formalised and good practice is shared.
- Teachers need to further extend the range of learning activities and tasks in order to meet the needs of all pupils.

137. Teachers' Assessments show that by the end of Year 9 pupils attain average standards; this is confirmed by work seen. By the end of year 11 those pupils who have chosen to study geography achieve above average standards in the GCSE examination. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in the 2000 GCSE examinations was well above the national average. The 2001 results were better still and the results over the last five years show a good year-to-year improvement. All pupils entered in 2000 gained A*-G grades. There is a difference in the performance of boys and girls in both examination work and, at times, in work in Years 9 to 11; in all instances boys significantly out-perform girls. Pupils with special educational needs or those from ethnic minorities show no discernable differences in attainment.
138. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are average; achievement in relation to pupils' attainment on entry to the school is good. In Year 7, most pupils, including lower attaining pupils, successfully master the basic skills of map work, scale and direction. Pupils successfully chart their links with other parts of the United Kingdom. For instance, they locate and record on a map the birthplace of their parents. Some locations are noted for Europe and the world, such as Disney theme parks in Paris and Florida. All pupils show competency in using the Internet to research details about the earth. High attaining pupils successfully explain why they know that the inner core is solid and yet the outer core is liquid. Pupils improve their geographical skill; some pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs, use spider diagrams in brain storming ideas about the development of a county. Average attaining pupils and high attaining pupils make notes, often using bullet points; some pupils produce good pieces of written work, showing satisfactory levels of literacy. High

attaining pupils link together human and physical geography more effectively than lower attaining pupils. Most pupils show a good understanding of deforestation and start to understand different ways in which areas under threat could be conserved; the moral issues of conservation and sustainability are beginning to be understood. Pupils' exercise books reveal a good understanding of environmental issues, for example, renewable energy in Japan. Year 9 pupils have a secure knowledge of coastal erosion through local fieldwork. Pupils' numeracy skills are used to good effect in geography. For example, pupils successfully use data to draw graphs and bar charts representing features like temperature and rainfall in Bangladesh.

139. By the end of Year 11 standards in work seen in are above average. Both literacy and numeracy skills successfully support pupils' work in geography; they make use of pie charts to successfully plot data and show good use of technical words in their correct context. Pupils can clearly differentiate between weather and climate. They know the sources for obtaining weather data and make use of a number of them, including Internet sites. Pupils show good understanding of physical geography, as seen in a lesson about climate and weather. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, successfully demonstrate that they understand the concepts about air movement from one area to another, how temperature decreases as you climb a mountain and the heating and cooling of land and water. Pupils understand the different ways that fresh water is stored within the earth and how it transfers from one area to another. Work is well illustrated through good use of photographs and maps. These are all well annotated and work was often further enhanced through the successful use of computer graphics, especially when data needed to be represented pictorially.
140. Achievement is good. Achievement in Year 7 is good and in Year 8 pupils continue to build on their basic geographical skills and refine them further. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a good knowledge of aspects of physical geography. They show a good understanding of the nature of our planet; all pupils know that the earth is comprised of a crust, mantle, and outer and inner core. Overall both boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in map work, use of keys, scales and observational skills. By the end of Year 9 they have achieved well. In Years 10 and 11 pupils build well on their earlier achievement. They understand more fully the links between physical, human and economic geography. Year 11 course work shows good achievement and pupils are able to use a good range of skills. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well.
141. Teaching and learning is good in all years. The teachers have a good knowledge of geography and apply their knowledge well to promote pupils' learning. For instance, in Year 9, very extensive knowledge of the earth and the related geology successfully extends pupils' learning about the earth. Good learning is encouraged by the teachers' high expectations of both pupils' work and behaviour. There are good examples of probing and challenging questions to stimulate investigation, as seen during a Year 10 lesson on weather. In this lesson the teacher used an excellent method to illustrate the movement of air using a candle; this generated an intense silence, an important moment of awe and wonder. Pupils were deepened their understanding of the pressure and movement of air. In the same lesson good use was made of weather features outside on the field and this too led to good learning. Sometimes there are not enough strategies of a practical nature to involve pupils in their learning. The range of tasks can be too narrow to meet the needs of all pupils in a class; in consequence, learning is constrained. Teachers make good use of a range of resources, such as a high quality video extract on planet earth with Year 9 pupils, which enhanced their understanding of tectonics. They make good use of ICT to extend learning. Teachers are sufficiently flexible in their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well included in lessons and receive good support from teachers, learning support assistants and their peers. Overall, the pupils' behaviour, attitudes and relationships are good and this helps them to learn well.
142. The leadership and management of the department are good. Planning of the curriculum, including schemes of work, is a strength as it ensures that non-specialist teachers in Years 7 to 9 are clear about what they have to do. Good planning makes for consistency in the teaching and learning. The monitoring, assessment and moderation of pupils' work,

highlighting gender differences, are insufficiently developed. Marking is associated mainly with assignments and special pieces of work; it does not sufficiently show pupils how they can improve their work. The monitoring of teaching takes place, but there is insufficient time for this to be undertaken in a regular and systematic manner that would enable good practice to be shared.

143. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Provision of homework is better and there has been steady and sustained improvement in examination results. However, the range of teaching strategies remains too narrow in some classes. Teachers work well together and are all very enthusiastic and committed to further raising of standards.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The knowledge and understanding of the teachers.
- Use of question and answer to review prior learning and to enable pupils to build upon it.
- Use of links between current affairs and events of the past.

Areas for improvement

- Develop greater opportunity for independent research
- Develop more activities that encourage more analysis of information and events
- Identify clearer and more realistic objectives for lessons.

144. Teachers' Assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate standards in line with the national average in 2000 and in 2001. Work seen during the inspection supports this judgement. Standards have remained relatively constant over the last three years. Results in the GCSE history examination in 2000 were below the national average for grades A*-C. Results in 2001 show an improvement. All pupils achieved a grade A*-G in 2001. No pupils have achieved the highest grades over the last two years, suggesting some underachievement by higher attaining pupils. There has been no clear trend, as results have fluctuated. However, boys have been achieving more A*-C grades than girls and their results are in line with the national average for boys.
145. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards by the end of Year 9 are average. Pupils can source material with confidence to select and extract information about opinions and attitudes of the time. A particularly good example is the sensitive work on the conditions in the 1st World War trenches. Pupils recognise that people may have different views of events, for example on the justification of the war in Vietnam. Pupils have a good grasp of the characteristics of the period studied, in particular in Year 9 the events of the inter-war years in Europe. They have a sound grasp of the concept of propaganda and higher attaining pupils recognise the emotions and values that may be manipulated by the use of such information. Lower attaining pupils recognise propaganda, although they are less able to identify the methods used to achieve its aims. The opportunities for extended written work are limited; however, higher attaining pupils demonstrate that they can present well-balanced responses to questions, supporting their conclusions with evidence. The written work of lower attaining pupils is generally short and contains little analysis, relying mainly on factual information. Pupils are encouraged to compare evidence and to make their own judgements as in a debate on the justification of the bombing of German cities in the 2nd World War. With support, most pupils present the different views. Higher attaining pupils make more independent decisions in their response. Pupils can identify change, as in the presentation of churches before and after the Reformation in England in Year 8, although they do not readily make links across time periods or consider the reasons for change without teachers' support and direction.
146. The standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 11 are average overall. Pupils use a range of sources to respond to GCSE questions and factual responses are handled well. With support they respond to more analytical questions. Oral work demonstrates greater thought

and explanation than written work; this generally lacks analysis, the majority of pupils limiting their answers to description of events and simple explanations. Higher attaining pupils display more skill in analysis particularly when undertaking assessment tasks. Their work can be thorough and of high quality, for example when considering the successes and failures of the League of Nations. They can discuss the terms of the Treaty of Versailles from a neutral perspective and recognise motive in the progress of events following its implementation. Most pupils are able to make links between the treaty's terms and the rise of Hitler in 1930s. Pupils do not generally make links between the different periods studied, for example between the pre-war suspicion of communism and the development of the 'Iron Curtain'. Pupils have a general understanding of the concepts of capitalism and communism. However, understanding is not secure and is based largely on the characteristics of the countries rather than the ideologies themselves.

147. Achievement is satisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9 pupils display interest in their studies and acquire a sound view of the periods studied. They rely on the information provided by their teachers and although they respond to written questions correctly they do not generally offer explanations or demonstrate enquiry and investigation. Facts are generally taken at face value and pupils are reluctant to develop original ideas. Responses tend to demonstrate dependence on the pre-prepared information sheets provided by the teacher. The provision of this information reduces the opportunities for enquiry and to develop the skills of independent research. Where opportunities to do so are presented, pupils make greater progress. In Years 10 and 11 pupils display a greater willingness to think independently in their oral response. The reluctance of some pupils to analyse written work independently and their dependence upon the teacher for guidance restricts the achievement of many pupils who fail to take responsibility for their own learning. Absence and lack of concentration affects the progress of some pupils in Year 11. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory because of the supportive nature of the class teaching. This does, however, limit the challenge for higher attaining pupils.
148. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; in many lessons teaching is good. Teaching is best when lessons are carefully structured and the outcomes are realistic. Lessons are weakest where teachers seek to cover too much and do not prepare clear questions. As a result pupils are left 'fishing' for the required response or with hazy perceptions of the answers. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to respond to pupils' questions, adding colourful detail to promote interest. Good use is made of praise and as a result pupils are generally keen to respond. Teachers have high expectations in the use of specialist vocabulary, which enables pupils to build up a good body of historical terms, and the display of historical terms around the walls supports pupils' learning. Display is well used to extend learning in the humanities rooms. Teachers take pains to involve pupils actively in the work of the class. However there is still a predominance of worksheets, which restricts pupils to one level of activity at times. These sheets support the work of lower attaining pupils but they limit the challenge for pupils with higher attainment. When pupils have the opportunity for research and role-play they respond well. The use of ICT is still being developed. Teachers do ensure it is used for research and for presentation of written work. A feature of the department is the use of contemporary events to promote understanding of the past. The local study project on the arrival of Basque refugees in Southampton at the time of the Spanish Civil War is an excellent opportunity to relate history to the pupils' own experience and to enable them to learn from the past. Pupils' attitudes to history are generally positive; however, many pupils are content just to complete their tasks rather than to strive to produce their most developed response. At times work is left unfinished and the presentation suggests a lack of care and concern for standards. Pupils are most engaged during the oral work of the lessons.
149. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of the department has undergone a period of change over the last two years. A temporary head of department, who is a part-time member of the staff, has ably maintained the work of the department. As a result there has been only limited opportunity for development. Units of work have been revised and some new topics have been introduced. Self-assessment by pupils has been introduced into Year 11, but has yet to be developed elsewhere. The subject has developed a series of assessment tasks that will enable it to monitor progress in the key elements in history. There has previously been limited monitoring of pupils' progress over time other than at GCSE level.

The temporary nature of some appointments has resulted in limited development of new initiatives such as use of ICT and support for literacy and numeracy. There is a shortfall in resources in some areas of the subject and not all pupils studying GCSE have their own textbook for use at home. The use of videos is restricted by the need to share between classrooms, which results in delay and loss of pace in lessons. The recent appointment of the head of history will enable the department to move forward and there is a clear commitment to raising standards.

150. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Pupils now have good opportunities to handle source material and the review of some topics has resulted in more confident delivery by teachers. Self-assessment has been introduced into Year 11, which will enable pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good computer network provision.
- Systematic planning for specialist ICT lessons.
- Good relationships between staff and pupils.
- Behaviour is good

Areas for development

- ICT schemes of work should provide more information to support teachers' planning of work for pupils of differing levels of attainment.
- The use of ICT should be increased to raise standards in other subjects across the curriculum.
- The monitoring of teaching should be developed and strategies for teaching pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented should be shared.

151. Standards are broadly in line with the national average both at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11. Standards are satisfactory as a result of the basic skills pupils cover in specialist ICT lessons in Years 7 to 9 and within the examination courses, as well as the use of computers in other subjects. Teacher Assessments in 2001 of pupils at the end of Year 9 indicate that standards are above the national average. This did not fully match the level of work seen during the inspection, which was broadly in line with the national average. In previous years the school has offered an examination course in ICT as an extra-curricular activity. All pupils in Year 11 now follow the GNVQ Key Skills course and since September 2001, pupils in Year 10 have started a GCSE short course. The school has invested heavily in the development of a new whole school computer network. This has benefited the development of ICT skills of all pupils.
152. In work seen during the inspection the standard of work of pupils at the end of Year 9 is in line with the national average. The computer network has provided pupils with the opportunity to develop a better foundation of skills. In Year 7, pupils set up folders on the network to organise their work and research information, using the Internet as well as the school's intranet. They edit text and combine graphics with text to present a variety of desktop published documents. In Years 8 and 9 pupils increase their range of desktop publishing skills. They master skills in setting up a simple database and spreadsheet. Pupils also vary the data they use in order to see the overall impact on calculations when they change the data they enter. Pupils in Year 9 present information using multi-media software. The department has therefore re-structured the work and pupils in Year 7 are now developing skills at a higher level. Pupils also research information using both CD-ROMs as well as the Internet in other subjects. Their experience of producing their own data for project work is limited by a lack of open-ended tasks. This restricts the opportunity to apply these skills to more individual work.
153. Standards at the end of Year 11 are broadly average. Pupils following the GNVQ Key Skills course, increase their skills in desktop publishing to produce a range of material for a variety of audiences. They set up and retrieve information using databases, enter data and apply

formulae using spreadsheets to process and present data in the form of charts and graphs. They gain knowledge on aspects of health and safety with particular reference to using a computer and keyboard safely to prevent back and eyestrain as well as safety relating to cabling and electricity. In Year 10, pupils following the GCSE short course begin to apply their basic skills in presenting information, use simple spreadsheets in preparation for their individual coursework projects.

154. The achievement of all pupils in Years 7 to 9, including those with special needs and with English as an additional language, is satisfactory. They achieve competence in basic research skills using ICT. Higher attaining pupils show greater confidence and are more independent in the way they work, completing tasks faster. However, they are not always sufficiently challenged by the work that are set. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson where pupils were developing basic skills in preparing a multi-media presentation. Many pupils, particularly boys, found most of the work easy. When questioned, they outlined skills already covered in primary school and software used at home. The tasks lacked the challenge to enable pupils to apply the more advanced level of these skills. Lower attaining pupils covered a good range of basic techniques and were well supported by the teacher to produce satisfactory work.
155. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Pupils of all levels of attainment increase their knowledge and understanding when applying skills in the use of spreadsheets and databases, multi-media presentations and desktop publishing. They do, however, continue to work at a basic level as a result of the limited skills they developed during Years 7 to 9. For example, they learn to prepare multi-media presentations and develop the skills of animating graphics, which was not covered earlier in Years 7 to 9. This has resulted from the small proportion of time given to specialist ICT lessons for pupils in Years 8 and 9. Achievement is slowed down by the limited number of computers in the ICT suites and pupils having to share computers in specialist ICT lessons.
156. Teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory overall. Teachers show a good level of organisation and preparation. In lessons where the teaching was good, there were clear objectives to guide pupils in their work. Learning was good when teachers structured the lessons. An example of this was seen in a Year 7 lesson where pupils were learning to set up and organise their work in folders and covered work using the Internet and school intranet. The teachers structured each part of the lesson and gave pupils sufficient guidance to enable them to perform each task independently. All pupils managed to create their own work folders as well as finding the information they needed from the Internet. When questioned, pupils used a good range of technical vocabulary when talking about their work. Teachers use a range of methods to ensure pupils, particularly those with lower than average reading skills, develop a suitably wide range of words and knowledge in ICT specialist lessons. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to read from a variety of books, CD-ROMs and the Internet. They have a good knowledge of their subject and some teachers use questions effectively to assess how well pupils understand and retain knowledge. As a result pupils show good levels of concentration. This, however, is not consistent across the department. Higher attaining pupils were not always well challenged because teaching resources did not specifically match their needs. In lower attaining groups, some pupils showed less interest in the work they were doing and concentration levels were not sustained. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and include pupils of all levels of attainment effectively in the learning activities in the classroom. Where pupils experience difficulty, they are given good individual support from teachers. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils show good attitudes to their work. They form good relationships with their peers, the teachers and other adults they work with within the department. This has led to a good ethos in the department and had a good impact on the learning. Pupils work in a mature way and ask their teachers for help when they need it. The specialist ICT suites are well organised and pupils work sensibly when they use resources.
157. The use of computers in other subjects is satisfactory, although in most subjects across the curriculum it is at a basic level. Pupils are now developing a range of skills such as word processing, desktop publishing, using spreadsheets and databases. Pupils capture measurements and use control and use a variety of electronic devices such as scanners and digital cameras. They have good opportunities to use electronic mail and the Internet to

research information they need in a number of subjects. In English, pupils used word processing to draft and edit work. They also use the digital camera well when researching information. In science work using ICT is included in the planning but the computers in the department were under-used during the week of the inspection. In music, pupils compose and write scores. In design and technology, pupils cover aspects of control technology when they use computer-linked sewing machines and a machine that produces shapes and lettering in plastic. Good use of ICT was seen in geography, where pupils used word processing, gather data and present information in the form of graphs and charts. They also use the Internet to search and find information. In religious education, pupils use ICT well to research and present information, for example the project on the Shabbat. They present information in the form of leaflets and word process their essays. In music, pupils compose and write scores. Statutory requirements are not met in mathematics and art and design. ICT is used to a limited extent to raise achievement in the special needs department. The library is well resourced and the seven computers are well used during lunchtimes and after school.

158. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. There has been some considerable investment to upgrade the level of computers, which is now better than the national average, but in specialist ICT rooms there are not enough computers and some pupils have to share. The increase in the number of computers has enabled better access for pupils in their work in other subjects. Pupils' progress in ICT is now measured and their attainment is reported to parents. The technician support is good and this has had a positive impact on teaching and learning. These developments have been well managed.
159. However, although ICT is now taught as a specialist subject, not all subjects across the curriculum contribute fully to the development of skills. This results in the pace of learning for some pupils being slower than others. An unsatisfactory feature of the management of the subject is that there is no overview of how pupils use ICT in subjects across the curriculum, or of how the National Curriculum is being covered. Planning does not give sufficient guidance to teachers on the strategies to use when organising work for gifted and talented pupils or pupils with special educational needs. There is a need to increase the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and then to share the knowledge to support the further development of teaching in the department.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strength

- A new, well qualified and committed team of teachers is working well together.

Areas for improvement:

- Leadership and management, to provide clear direction for improvement.
- A scheme of work should be produced which fully supports teachers in meeting the needs of all pupils.
- Assessment procedures need to be reviewed.

160. The inspection covered the teaching of French throughout the school and the teaching of Spanish for higher attaining pupils. Standards in French are slightly below average by the end of Year 9 and are average by the end of Year 11. Most pupils achieve appropriate standards in relation to prior attainment although considerable turbulence in staffing has had a detrimental effect upon the standards of some groups. Standards in Spanish are in line with expectations for second language learners.
161. Teachers' Assessments in French at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were slightly above the national average and were higher than work seen during the inspection. Results for 2001 are invalid since the department failed to take account of the changes to National Curriculum levels. GCSE results for 2000 were slightly above the national average and were broadly similar to the work seen. Boys did much better than boys nationally and girls did slightly worse; neither group did as well in French as in other subjects. The 2001 results cannot yet be

compared with national averages but they were significantly lower, particularly the results of girls, with few higher grades. Two thirds of those entered for the Certificate of Achievement gained distinctions. In the 2000 GCSE examinations in Spanish the proportion achieving A*-C grades were in line with the national average and all pupils entered achieved an A*-G grade. Girls did slightly better than boys. In 2001 there were no entries for Spanish.

162. By the end of Year 9 standards in work seen during the inspection were slightly below national averages. Higher attaining pupils use past and present tenses well but average attaining pupils have difficulties understanding the teacher's fluent use of French. Lower attaining pupils give opinions about television programmes and use the vocabulary associated with them confidently. Standards in Spanish in the Year 8 and 9 beginner classes observed are in line with expectations for this stage of a second language course.
163. By the end of Year 11, standards are broadly in line with national average. Writing and reading skills are better than listening and speaking. In the Year 11 lesson observed higher attaining pupils recalled a wide variety of vocabulary when reading the Jacques Prévert poem 'Déjeuner du Matin', whilst average attaining pupils used past tenses with support. Lower attaining pupils lacked confidence speaking in French, finding it difficult to understand the French used by the teacher and not always copying correctly. Standards in Spanish are in line with the national average. Pupils discuss the formation of verbs with confidence and have a clear understanding of structure and form. Their listening skills are less well developed and some have difficulties understanding the teacher's instructions in Spanish.
164. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Achievement from Years 7 to 11 has been inconsistent in French and often has not been good enough. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9, for example, developed their reading and writing skills well last year but average attainers regressed. Similarly in Years 10 and 11, progress was adversely affected by the amount of disruption encountered and the number of teachers teaching the group. The progress of pupils with special educational needs, of those from different ethnic backgrounds and of those for whom English is an additional language is similar to other pupils. Achievement in Spanish is good.
165. As a result of new appointments, teaching is satisfactory in French, with significant strengths. It is good in Spanish. Teachers give clear aims for lessons and ensure that pupils are fully involved in the learning. They control classes well. In the best lessons, mime and visuals are used effectively to ensure that pupils understand the teacher's French. There is not, however, enough emphasis on independent learning, such as the use of dictionaries. Gifted and talented pupils have few opportunities to deal with unpredictable situations to enable them to attain the very highest standards, and lower attaining pupils lack adequate support. Pupils are not given enough information about the quality of their work and how to improve. As a result of this satisfactory teaching, learning is also sound at both key stages and sometimes good. Higher attaining pupils learned effectively in the lessons seen and a group of lower attaining pupils mastered the words for transport well because of the teacher's high expectations and very good support from the learning support assistant. In some lessons teachers promote literacy well. Some Year 7 pupils in mixed ability classes are not making as much progress as they could, however, because lesson planning does not take full account of the wide spread of ability within the group. There is some valuable use of ICT to support learning, though evidence for this was limited.
166. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Although a wide range of issues, including staffing difficulties, have contributed to the drop in standards in modern foreign languages, underlying them is the fact that schemes of work have not been properly adapted since before the last inspection. They have not kept pace with the changing demands of pupils and have not provided sufficient guidance for teachers. They contain no reference to the differing needs of pupils and as a result teachers have had inadequate support with lesson planning. Furthermore, the department did not implement the changes in National Curriculum assessment, which came into force in September 2000.
167. Improvement since the last inspection is also unsatisfactory. Several issues identified in the last report, such as including pupils more actively in lessons, are only just being addressed. There is still not enough consistency in teachers' use of French and there is no policy to guide

teachers in this area. There are now signs of improvement and the teachers are beginning to move forward and work well as a team.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching
- The provision for creative work.
- Extra-curricular and instrumental lesson provision.

Areas for improvement

- Further develop standards in performing, appraising and listening to music.
- Increase the provision for ICT within the department

168. Since the previous inspection there have been staff changes and a time when lessons were covered by non-specialist teachers. This led to the decline in the standard of pupils' work and in their attitude towards the subject. However a new head of department, who has been in post for a year, has made a positive impact on the previously unsatisfactory provision. The subject is now developing well, and standards are rising.
169. Teachers' Assessments are not available for Year 9 pupils in 2000, owing to staffing difficulties. Teachers' Assessments for 2001 show attainment to be below that expected from pupils of a similar age nationally. In the 2000 GCSE results the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades was below the national average and also below when compared to similar schools. The results for 2001 show a slight rise in the number of pupils achieving the higher grades, although they are still below those normally expected.
170. In work seen during the inspection attainment is below average in performing, appraising and listening. It is in line with the national average in composing. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. There has been a decline in the standard of pupils' work at the end since the previous inspection. In Year 9 pupils have some knowledge of basic chord structures and use their aural skills satisfactorily in listening tasks. By the end of Year 9, many pupils show a good ability in creating their own compositions. They write in different styles and understand simple musical structures. They use a range of appropriate keyboard sounds and contrast dynamics and rhythmic patterns effectively. A few pupils lack confidence when performing at the keyboard. They take time in locating the notes and cannot always play a simple passage accurately. There are better examples of performance however, when pupils show confidence in their playing. Pupils use and understanding of musical vocabulary is occasionally limited. By the end of Year 11 pupils show more confidence as performers, although the standard is still below that expected for their age. Pupils understand the way a composition can be structured and they use ICT satisfactorily to develop and refine their ideas.
171. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in acquiring composing skills. In Years 7 to 9 they listen to music and learn to appreciate the way that composers use different techniques in their writing. Pupils in Year 7 think about the questions "What is the effect of the music and how is that effect achieved?" They develop their skills in identifying and comparing different styles of music. Pupils in Year 8 listen to the way three notes are used in a fanfare by Copland, learning to follow the notation and to identify the repeated patterns in the music. Pupils with special educational needs and the more musically talented pupils make good progress in lessons. The achievement of the pupils who play in the steel bands is high. In Years 10 and 11 they practise well and achieve success in playing simple melodies and in adding a chordal accompaniment. They show an increased understanding of appropriate musical vocabulary, although they do not always readily refer to this.
172. Teaching and learning in both key stages are good, with some examples of very good teaching. This has already had some impact on achievement and attainment. Secure class

management, good subject knowledge and skilled use of questioning are strengths of the teaching. For example, in a very good Year 11 lesson, use of detailed questioning enabled pupils to identify the key features in a short extract of music by Weber. Learning was good as pupils gained in their understanding of the way the composer had used different orchestral sounds and textures to create an atmosphere. The use of ICT in teaching is good and there is satisfactory provision for developing pupils' literacy skills. However, marking of pupils' written work is not always systematically done. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities. These activities include steel bands, a jazz group, a saxophone group, and a flute trio. Opportunity is given for pupils to perform in concerts both in and out of school. The local community appreciates the excellent playing of the steel band. Pupils in both key stages have good attitudes towards the subject. They enjoy their lessons and concentrate well on tasks. They handle the instruments with care. The members of the steel bands are enthusiastic in their response to rehearsals.

173. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has identified key areas for improvement, in order to increase pupils' achievement and raise their standards of attainment. Assessment procedures are now in place and are being further developed to monitor pupils' progress more closely. Over 50 pupils receive instrumental lessons provided by peripatetic teachers from the Hampshire Music Service. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The resources for the subject are satisfactory overall, but there is only one computer in use in the department.
174. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Although the attainment of pupils has declined, there are now signs of good progress being made in all years and in all areas of the music curriculum. Teaching is consistently good, or better, and the number of pupils receiving instrumental lessons has increased.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The overall quality of teaching,
- The provision of after-school clubs and inter-house and inter-school competitions,
- Good outdoor facilities,
- Good resources which enhance the quality of learning.

Areas for improvement

- Provision for teaching physical education indoors
- Activities within lessons could be better targeted to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- The planning that ensures there is a coherent delivery of the curriculum

175. Teacher assessments for Year 9 pupils in 2000 were in line with the national average. Assessments in 2001 based on the new eight-level scale were slightly above the national average for the majority of pupils. At the end of Year 11 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C in GCSE in 2000 were above the national average. Results in 2001 are lower than the previous year, particularly for girls.
176. In work seen during the inspection, Year 9 levels of attainment are in line with or above expectations for the majority of pupils in games activities. Pupils have acquired and developed skills in a variety of invasion games and most pupils are able to select and apply these skills and tactics in pairs and small groups. They are beginning to develop good evaluative skills of their own and their peers' performance as well as demonstrating a good knowledge and understanding of health and fitness. Most Year 11 pupils attain levels that are in line with national expectations in games activities, trampolines and swimming.
177. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9. Attainment on entry to the school from partner primary schools is in line with national expectations in respect of basic ball skills. Most pupils make good progress in selecting and developing these skills in increasingly competitive situations.

Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils from ethnic minorities make good progress. In Years 10 and 11 achievement is satisfactory and pupils experience a wider range of sporting activities, including trampoline and swimming. GCSE is a popular choice and pupils make good progress in both theory and practical lessons, which include the use of off-site facilities. Because of the many additional opportunities to participate in after-school clubs as well as inter-house and inter-school competitions, many pupils extend their levels of performance. Several pupils progress to gain representative honours at district, county and national level.

178. Teaching is good. All teachers demonstrate good knowledge of the activities that they teach and their intervention leads to improvement with individual pupils. Lessons maintain a good pace and a variety of methods are used to motivate pupils to sustain their participation. Additional strategies are used to challenge higher attaining pupils; for example, in basketball with the introduction of more than one ball into drills and in football where a range of practices enables pupils to consolidate and refine their skills. However, not enough attention is given to identifying individual pupils who need differing levels of challenge within lessons. The use of ICT within GCSE lessons is under-developed. However, the department has recently acquired a computer with Internet access, which should enhance the overall provision of teaching and learning. All PE staff lead by example; they are enthusiastic and have high expectations that motivate the pupils.
179. Learning is good. Pupils display very positive attitudes towards physical education. They have high standards of appearance and participation. They collaborate well when working in pairs and small groups, often independent of the teacher, as observed in netball, basketball and football lessons. Most pupils have good awareness of health and safety issues, can take responsibility for their own warm-up and show respect when using and carrying equipment. The subject makes a good contribution to the social and moral development of most pupils and there are good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility as captains of teams or leaders in group activities.
180. Leadership and management are good. A good departmental handbook provides guidance to teachers and new members of staff are provided with a good induction. Regular departmental meetings take place and there are helpful links into the senior management team. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not sharp enough to ensure that teaching can meet the needs of all pupils. There is a need to audit curriculum provision from the primary schools through to Year 11, including extra-curricular provision, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision. The lack of adequate indoor facilities detracts from the overall provision and success of the department.
181. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. A reduction in the number of activities being offered at Key Stage 3 and the provision of alternative indoor spaces at Key Stage 4 have made a difference. Although additional provision has been made for dance, table tennis and trampoline, games activities dominate the timetable to the detriment of gymnastics and dance, because of the inadequate indoor facilities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their own beliefs and values.
- The department offers several levels of certification to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Lessons are well planned in order to involve pupils in their learning.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to develop assessment across the years in order to monitor progress in the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus
- Raise the level of response from pupils including expectations that they should develop their answers further if they fall short.

- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils are clearer about how to improve their work.
- Make more use of homework in Years 10 and 11 to encourage more research and reflection.

182. Results of the short course GCSE examination in 2000 were above the national average. Results for 2001 were slightly lower but national comparisons were not available at the time of the inspection. Boys and girls are achieving similar success. No A* or A grades were achieved in 2001. No pupils followed the full course GCSE at that time. A further 57 pupils gained certification on completion of the Record of Achievement in Religious Education project.
183. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards for pupils at the end of Year 9 are average, and in line with the standards expected by the Agreed Syllabus. Most pupils have a good grasp of the key features of Judaism, its history and traditions and they make links with their work in history on the Holocaust. Pupils have a good understanding of the place of the Gurdwara in the Sikh community, enhanced by the visit by pupils in Year 8. The displays they create demonstrate the enthusiasm and interest of the pupils resulting from the visit. The work of lower attaining pupils reflects a grasp of the traditions of the community, but little understanding of the reasons that gave rise to them. Most pupils write short clear responses to questions that reflect close use of the textbooks. Higher attaining pupils write with sensitivity when questions are not closely linked to texts and they are asked to consider the feelings and conditions of others, for example in response to a talk by survivors of the Holocaust. In particular during the topic 'Sense of Vision' pupils display sensitivity and reflection when considering not only the vision of such people as Gandhi, but also their own vision of the future.
184. Standards in Year 11 are average overall. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow the course designed for entry to the short GCSE examination. A significant number of pupils choose to supplement this course with additional lessons after school, which enable them to enter for the full GCSE course. The standard of these pupils is above average. Their motivation is strong and supports well thought out responses. The standard of pupils following the regular course is below average. They are affected by the negative attitudes of some pupils who do not wish to consider the religious reasons behind the moral values that people hold, preferring to consider only their own views. As a result other pupils are reluctant to contribute to the oral work of the group and religious debate is limited. Where pupils do reflect upon differing opinions, particularly during assessment tasks, the work of higher attaining pupils demonstrates thought and understanding of the links between belief and values. Pupils discuss contemporary moral issues such as euthanasia and divorce and recognise that people may hold different views. Most pupils can explain their views in writing, the higher attaining pupils supporting their views with reasons. The study of Islam demonstrates a grasp of the main traditions, however consideration of the beliefs behind these traditions is limited. For example, pupils follow the actions that make up the Hajj, but explanation of these actions is limited. Written responses are generally brief. The inclusion of questions that provide little challenge for the higher attaining pupils limits their progress, although they do support the learning of lower attaining pupils whose literacy skills are weaker. Pupils can write at length and the work of higher attaining pupils is often fluent and thoughtful. However, poor handwriting, particularly boys', and spelling errors mar the work of many pupils
185. Achievement in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory. Pupils develop a sound understanding of elements of Christianity supported by their contact with the local church. Through the eyes of great painters they consider the concepts of incarnation and symbolism. Despite the use of questions designed to stimulate consideration of the effects of belief, the majority of pupils do not develop their understanding in this area. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory for pupils following the short course. Because of the poor attitudes of some pupils they do not develop their ability to discuss moral issues such as the question of co-habitation before marriage. The majority of pupils have not learnt to consider both sides of an issue. The achievement of pupils following the full GCSE course is good. They display interest in the issues raised and openness to consideration of the justification of differing views, for example in their discussions regarding crime and punishment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress where they are supported by additional help. Where this is not present work may be left unfinished and lacking real thought. There is no significant difference

between the progress of boys and girls; however boys are more ready to respond to oral questions. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve well.

186. The quality of teaching is good Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Lessons are well planned and the emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on their feelings and to develop their own values is good. Teachers make good use of paired and group work to enable pupils to learn from each other and to exchange ideas. Teachers are generally enthusiastic in their delivery and communicate their interest to their pupils, encouraging their active involvement and development of understanding. Imaginative strategies, including the use of ICT to make virtual visits to a mosque, encourage the interest and involvement of the pupils, and enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress in understanding, in particular in Key Stage 3. Where there is an opportunity to use ICT pupils respond well and teachers use it to promote independent learning. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour and treat the opinions and beliefs of the pupils with respect.
187. Teaching is less successful when the enthusiasm of pupils to respond is not controlled and a few pupils are allowed to dominate the oral work of the class. This reduces the progress of pupils who do not feel involved and concentration is lost. Where the behaviour of a minority of pupils is unsatisfactory teachers make their expectations clear and pupils generally respond positively. Teachers make good use of open questions that encourage pupils to consider the effects of religious belief, although the level of response accepted is too low at times, particularly for higher attaining pupils. The quality of the marking of assessment work is good and includes constructive comments and encouragement. Day to day marking, however, does not provide enough information to enable a pupil to improve their responses and there is no expectation that pupils should amend their work. There is not enough use of homework in Years 10 and 11 in order to maximise the time for study and ensure that pupils consider the beliefs that underpin values, as well as their own views. Most teaching takes place within the humanities faculty, which enables teachers to build up their expertise and share good practice. Where this is not the case the focus on the key questions can be lost, and delivery of the lesson plan dominates, rather than learning of the pupils.
188. Leadership and management are good. The school meets its statutory requirements in the subject. The department is well established and schemes of work have recently been revised. Assessments that allow for measurement of progress in the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus are being developed and should allow for the monitoring of pupils' progress over the years. The inclusion of the religious education department within the humanities department should provide greater opportunities for the sharing of good practice, and for the monitoring and development of teaching. At present this is at an early stage of development. The contribution of the subject to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good, in particular the newly developed module, 'Sense of Vision' in Year 9 and the module on the Creation in Year 7. As a result of the quality of these topics pupils produce work that is thoughtful, perceptive and moving.
189. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The short course GCSE in religious studies has been introduced for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and the full course GCSE has been re-introduced. A regular team of teachers now teaches the subject, which supports the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils have increased opportunities to explore their own ideas and the introduction of the use of ICT has provided greater scope for research and presentation.