

INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 9 OF
THE EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) ACT 1992

MOSELEY SCHOOL
COLLEGE ROAD
MOSELEY
BIRMINGHAM
B13 9LR

SCHOOL NUMBER 330/4245

DATES OF INSPECTION
27-31 March 1995

BY

Mr D Roberts
Registered Inspector T12259

Date: 5 May 1995

Under OFSTED contract number
330/S4/0001358E

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 9 of the Education (Schools) Act 1992. Its purpose was to report on:

- the educational standards achieved in the school;
- the quality of education provided by the school;
- whether the financial resources available to the school are managed efficiently; and
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school.

The findings of the inspection will contribute to the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools to the Secretary of State for Education.

Basic information about the school

1	Name of school:	Moseley School
	Type of school:	Comprehensive
	Status:	County
	Age range of pupils:	11-18
	Headteacher:	Mrs M Miles
	Address of school:	College Road Moseley Birmingham B13 9LR
	Telephone:	0121 778 1141
	Name and address of appropriate authority:	The Governing Body address as above
	Local authority area:	Birmingham
	Department for Education School Number:	330/4245
	Name of Registered Inspector:	Mr D Roberts
	Dates of inspection:	27-31 March 1995

2 Intake of pupils and the area served by the school

Moseley school is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive school with 1275 pupils on roll, including 212 in the sixth form. Seventy per cent of pupils are boys. The school lies in the heart of a lively community to the south of Birmingham city centre. During the past decade, the catchment area of the school has become increasingly multi-cultural, with a proportionately high number of Asian families, mainly originating from Pakistan and India. The area served has a complex mix of ethnic groups, where racial tension is reported to be low. There are indicators of significant social and economic disadvantage in the area with 49.5% of pupils being eligible for free school meals, which is high compared to local (31.6%) and national (17.6%) figures. Statements of Special Educational Needs are maintained in respect of three pupils (0.2%) which is well below the average for maintained schools in Birmingham (0.8%). The intake of pupils covers a wide range of ability. For 70% of pupils, English is the second language and reading ages on intake are several years below chronological age for the majority of pupils. In 1994 87% of pupils continued into full-time education after the age of 16, which is significantly higher than the average for Birmingham Local Education Authority schools (66%).

3 School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group

YEAR	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Year 7	142	75	217
Year 8	142	54	196
Year 9	156	57	213
Year 10	153	59	212
Year 11	158	67	225
Year 12	78	23	101
Post-16	85	26	111
Total	914	361	1,275

Special educational needs

Number of pupils having Statements of Special Educational Needs: 3

Free school meals

Number of pupils eligible for free school meals: 631

Teachers and classes

Full-time equivalent teachers: 80.1

Pupil to teacher ratio: 15.9:1

Percentage class contact ratio: 76.3%

Average teaching group size: 21.9

Teaching time per week

	HOURS	MINUTES	
Key Stage 3	24	40	
Key Stage 4	24	40	
Sixth Form	16	00	(minimum for A-level pupils)
	19	00	(minimum for vocational course pupils)

Pupil attendance

Actual attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
89.4%		0%

92.4%		0.4%
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90.0%		0.5%
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91.5%		1.9%
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94.9%		0.1%
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87.0%		8.0%
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84.0%

6.0%

91.6%

0.6%

Number of Exclusions in the Last 12 months

	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Year 7	2			
Year 8	6		1	
Year 9	6	1	6	
Year 10	16	2	7	
Year 11	3	1	18	
Year 12			4	
Year 13				
Overall totals	33	4		

National Curriculum Assessments - Key Stage 3

National Curriculum assessments for Key Stage 3 were not undertaken in 1994.

Key Stage 4

Public Examination Results: GCSE

**School Results
1993**

**School Results
1994**

Number of Pupils
in Year 11: _

**Percentage of
Pupils**

Entered for 5+
GCSEs

Achieving 5+
grades A*-C

Achieving 5+
grades A*-G

Entered for 1+
GCSEs

Achieving 1+
grades A*-G

Entered for all
three subjects:
English,
mathematics and
science
Achieving grades
A*-C in all 3

Achieving grades
A*-G in all 3

GCSE Examination Results	LEA Area 1994	England 1994		
	All	Boys	Girls	All
Percentage of pupils				
Entered for 5+ GCSEs	83.0	90.4	92.4	91.4
Achieving 5+ grades A*-C	30.4	36.5	45.7	41.0
Achieving 5+ grades A*-G	76.4	86.0	89.3	87.6
Entered for 1+ GCSEs	90.9	95.7	96.4	96.1
Achieving 1+ grades A*-G	86.9	93.6	94.6	94.1

Note 1 Number of pupils in Year 11 in January of each examination year.

Note 2 These national statistics apply to all maintained schools in the LEA area or England.

Other qualifications taken by Year 11 pupils

Vocational Area

Self & Environment
 Providing Health &
 Social Care

Post-16 examination results

Number of pupils
entered for fewer than
2 A-levels (*)

Average points score
of pupils entered for
fewer than 2 A-levels
(*)

Number of pupils
entered
for 2 or more A-levels
(*)

Average points score
of
pupils for 2 or more
A-levels (*)

Number of pupils who
were on
the final year of a
vocational course(**)

Percentage of entry
achieving
qualifications(**)_

(*) Or their AS equivalent

(**) BTEC National Diploma or Certificate or City and Guilds
Diploma at
National Level. Excludes GNVQ results where applicable.

Scoring is 10,8,6,4,2 for A-level grades A-E and 5,4,3,2,1 for AS grades A-E.

Note _: These statistics apply to all maintained schools in the LEA and England.

Other 17+ and 18+ examinations or accreditation

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What pupils do on leaving school

Figures show the percentage of the year group

TOTAL

2,875,589

Expenditure (£)

**Budget
allocation
for 1994/95**

£

TOTAL

2,875,589

Expenditure per pupil £2,073

**Expenditure per pupil on
educational resources** £97

Record of the evidence base of the inspection

Key Stage	Time Spent	
	Total hours	Lessons seen
Key Stage 3	101.67	166
Key Stage 4	61.13	97
Post-16	23.75	38
Total	186.55	301

4 The team consisted of 18 inspectors. During the week, 301 lessons were observed, including pastoral periods, 40 registration periods and four assemblies. All full-time teachers of National Curriculum and vocational subjects and religious education were seen teaching at least once and most several times. Planned discussions were held with members of the teaching staff, including most in middle management and all in senior management positions, non-teaching staff, members of the governing body, representatives of the community, outside agencies, partner primary schools, local further and higher education establishments, local businesses and personnel supporting education/business partnership and home/school liaison. In addition, a report evening and a party for parents to celebrate Eid were observed, as well as meetings of the senior management team, middle management groups, subject departments and year teams. Inspectors looked at the written work and other achievements of many pupils during lessons and the complete work from September 1994 of a sample of pupils in all year groups was scrutinised. Planned discussions were held with these pupils and informal discussions took place with many more. Documentation provided by the school was examined both before and during the inspection. The Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 35 parents three weeks before the inspection and considered 155 responses from parents to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school.

Main Findings

5 Moseley School is a good school with clear aims which it constantly, and in the main effectively, strives to meet. It adds considerable value to the achievements of its pupils.

6 The proportion (particularly of boys) gaining 5 or more grades A* to C at GCSE is low in comparison with local and national figures. Similarly, in A-level examinations, the proportion achieving higher grades is low while results in vocational courses post-16 are generally sound and sometimes good. There has been a steady trend of improvement in public examinations over the past two years and, from the evidence of lesson observation, this trend is set to continue. In three-quarters of the lessons observed the majority of pupils were achieving the national expectation for their age but, in the remaining quarter, many were not. Standards were not as sound at Key Stages 3 as for older pupils. In a clear majority of lessons, almost all pupils are achieving levels at least appropriate for their abilities. Standards of reading and writing are variable.

7 The quality of pupils' learning is generally sound or better at

both Key Stages 3 and 4 and it has many good features post-16 for pupils on both academic and vocational courses. Pupils generally are keen to learn.

8 There is a similar pattern to the quality of teaching. There has been considerable progress towards a better matching of pupils' tasks and the resources they use, to their individual ability levels. All aspects of the National Curriculum are covered and there is a successful focus on vocational education post-16. There is inadequate coverage of religious education at Key Stage 4 and none at post-16.

9 The school is well resourced and it uses these resources efficiently and effectively. It provides good value for money. Staff are appropriately qualified and well deployed with some exceptions in mathematics. The accommodation, which is variable both in character and condition, is well managed although the potential for providing a rich cultural and aesthetic environment is not fully realised. There is good provision of computers to support both learning and management.

10 The school provides a caring, orderly, good-natured and harmonious learning environment, with a wide range of links with the local community. Its pupils are given the confidence to face the challenges in their learning. The behaviour of pupils is generally good and relationships respectful. There is a sensitive and effective system of rewards and sanctions. The school places considerable emphasis on attendance, which at 92% is satisfactory, and punctuality. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good but the spiritual dimension of the curriculum is less well developed. There is no provision for the statutory daily act of collective worship. The school works hard, but not always effectively, to address the wide range of individual needs of its pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are largely well supported although liaison between the various staff involved is incomplete.

11 There is open and broadly effective management at all levels which motivates staff well. It is an effectively self-evaluating school which makes careful plans to deliver its key objectives. The quality of monitoring of progress on the full range of the school's initiatives is inconsistent.

Key issues for action

12 In order to continue to move forward and raise standards and quality further, the governors and senior management should:

- continue to extend the range of teaching strategies used in order to raise the level of challenge and expectations in the minority of lessons where it is too low, especially at Key Stage 3;
- improve the consistency in the teachers' marking strategies in order to give clear messages to pupils about how they can improve;
- ensure adequate space for religious education at Key Stage 4 and post-16, to provide a more balanced curriculum;

- improve the liaison between all those staff providing support for pupils with learning difficulties, including their subject teachers, and provide more challenge for the more able pupils;
- further review pupil grouping strategies at Key Stage 3 to ensure that pupils' academic and personal development is maximised;
- review the programme of assemblies and other opportunities to enhance the spiritual dimension of the curriculum and make provision for the daily act of collective worship.

Standards and quality

Standards of achievement

13 At Key Stages 3 and 4, the substantial majority of pupils achieve the age-related national expectation in about half the lessons. At Key Stage 3, many pupils achieve beyond this in a further 12% of lessons, while many achieve below it in 38% of lessons. At Key Stage 4, these figures are 20% and 27% respectively. Post-16 pupils achieve the national course expectation in 60% of lessons, with many achieving beyond this level in a further 34% of lessons. One in eight pupils post-16 achieves well above the national expectation. Standards at Key Stages 3 and 4 are best in relation to the national expectation in modern languages, Urdu and geography. At Key Stage 3 a higher proportion achieve below the national expectation in history, music, physical education and religious education. In mathematics standards vary from class to class.

14 Almost all pupils are achieving appropriate levels for their abilities. In over 80% of lessons in both Key Stages 3 and 4, some pupils are achieving levels which are high for their abilities. Post-16 pupils are achieving levels at least appropriate for their abilities in all lessons and in over half the lessons they are achieving levels which are high for their abilities. Standards are best in relation to pupil ability in geography at both Key Stages 3 and 4 but, in mathematics, information technology, music and religious education, a higher proportion are under-achieving than in other subjects.

15 While there have been significant improvements in a number of subjects, standards achieved in public examinations in 1993 and 1994 were a little below the averages for Birmingham Local Education Authority schools which in turn are below the average for England. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to G was 77% compared with 76% for the Birmingham area and 88% nationally. The proportion achieving grades A* to C was 21% compared with 30% for the Birmingham area and 41% nationally. These results continued a general trend of improvement over the past two years. Ninety nine per cent of pupils in Year 11 are entered for one or more subjects at GCSE. GCSE results for 1994 were significantly better in science than in English and mathematics. For girls, the proportion gaining grades A* to C in science was higher than the national average. Girls performed very significantly better than boys in English with 53% achieving grades A*

to C compared with boys (17%), a difference much greater than the national comparison.

16 In post-16 examinations, the average points score for pupils entered for two or more A-levels (10.0) was below the average for Birmingham Local Education Authority (16.6) and for England (15.1). However, the vast majority of post-16 pupils at the school follow vocational rather than A-level courses. Standards achieved in BTEC First Diploma and National Diploma courses were good in most cases, especially in Business and Finance (at both levels) and Caring (at First Diploma level).

17 Taking into account the pupils' reading standards in English on entry, the pupils' attainments in public examinations indicate that significant value is added by the school to the standards achieved by many pupils. The school is continuing to develop its procedures for measuring the value added and all examination data is analysed with a view to raising standards. There needs to be increased reference to the reasons for gender differences in performance.

18 Standards of reading are variable, although there is a clear improvement as pupils move up through the school. Independent reading for pleasure is under-developed. All pupils in Year 7 have a weekly one hour reading period which has the dual aims of promoting reading for pleasure and of developing pupils' reading skills. There is some lack of coherence to the management, teaching and resourcing of this provision and the effectiveness of these arrangements needs to be reviewed.

19 Standards of writing are also variable. In English and geography there were good examples of sustained independent writing. In some other subjects, especially at Key Stage 3, standards are depressed by the limited range of writing tasks given to pupils and there is too much use of copying and filling in worksheets. There is insufficient encouragement for pupils to redraft and proof-read their writing. The school is developing a policy on language across the curriculum.

20 Standards of speaking and listening are generally sound. Where pupils are given the opportunity to use oral skills they respond well and good examples were observed in English, geography, modern languages, physical education and vocational education. In some other lessons, too much of the talk is dominated by the teacher.

21 Number and graphical skills are not widely developed in subjects other than mathematics. When they are used, they are generally sound with evidence of good competence in number. In geography and science there are many opportunities to use mathematical skills in a range of situations. Data handling skills are also well developed and graphs are used with confidence and effectiveness. In vocational courses, pupils are not adequately extending their skills in the use of graphs, data handling and general number competence in line with course requirements.

22 There is widespread use by pupils of information technology, with skills at Key Stages 3 and 4 being developed mainly through timetabled information technology courses but also within aspects of all subjects except art, music and religious education. Girls and boys display competence and confidence in their use of information technology resources. Text processing and desk top publishing are the most

common applications. In design and technology, information technology aids the design process and in science it supports measurement and control. Post-16, the range of software applications is wider and includes programming languages. Pupils use Internet and multi-media applications such as CD ROM in the library resources centre. Vocational students use information technology regularly and effectively to present their work, for example, through text processing and the use of spreadsheets and databases.

23 Pupils' aesthetic skills are under-developed. They have few opportunities across the curriculum to reflect upon and appraise their own creative work and that of other people.

Quality of learning

24 The quality of learning was sound or better in 81% of the lessons observed. Of these, 30% had good features and no major shortcomings. In 7% of lessons many good features were noted, some of them outstanding. The pupils maintain good progress in their learning at all key stages; learning skills are soundly developed at Key Stages 3 and 4 with some improvement at post-16. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good throughout the school.

25 Given appropriate opportunities pupils are able to draw on prior knowledge and apply it to new situations. Pupils are generally good humoured, attentive and responsive and are willing to volunteer ideas to develop discussion. They sustain interest and take a pride in their work when appropriate questioning is used to extend understanding and stimulate problem-solving. Pupils are developing good skills of observation and evaluation. Where there is a good working atmosphere pupils are able to collaborate and support each other and this leads to sustained effort, motivation, commitment and a high level of enjoyment.

26 In those lessons where shortcomings were observed, pupils failed to sustain their concentration and were poorly motivated. In science few opportunities were given to evaluate or to extend work and in English, science and music there were occasions when over-dependence on the teacher inhibited independent learning. A lack of challenging extension tasks was noted in mathematics where the undemanding pace of some lessons prevented pupils from making progress. Poor attitudes to learning were observed in some history and Urdu lessons.

Efficiency of the school

27 There are clear plans for the strategic management and development of the school's staffing, resources for learning and accommodation, which take account of budget predictions and trends in pupil numbers, the requirements of the National Curriculum and other courses and the particular characteristics of the accommodation. These plans are expressed operationally through detailed targets in the annual development plan which are related to the school's aims and objectives and which genuinely inform progress. The development plan also contains a very thorough review of the progress made in the previous year. There are instances where this review would benefit from closer monitoring of the available data. The planning objectives for the next four years are published in outline although there is little consideration of the longer term at subject and year team level.

28 The involvement of governors in these processes is developing well. Budget-setting generally relates well to the development plan.

There is scope to tie the development plan and the budget more closely together by considering bids to the development fund earlier in the cycle, thus ensuring that targets published in the plan can be resourced. Although subject and year team targets are, in general, not costed with great accuracy, the bid system is managed very effectively and is broadly successful in terms of its benefits for learning.

29 In general, the school uses its resources efficiently. The middle management finance group and the governors' sub-committee play complementary roles in this respect. The school's carry-forward balances are relatively low and governors are keen to reduce them further.

30 Capitation funds are allocated to subject and year teams according to a complex formula which is published although not all staff are convinced that it is appropriate. Financial control is of a high quality and is supported by a computerised management information system. Governors have recently adopted a clear set of financial procedures and the other requirements of the recent auditors' report have been met.

31 There are good procedures for achieving cost-effectiveness for money spent and procedures are being developed for the review of the educational benefits of initiatives taken. For example, an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the decision to lease information technology equipment is under way, as is that of a significant staffing decision. The decision not to appoint a bursar should be reviewed since some potential functions of such a post are currently being carried out by senior teaching staff. There are other duties which could be transferred from teaching to support staff.

32 Taking into account the relatively disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances of its pupils, their depressed reading ages on entry, the standards which pupils achieve at the school and the quality of the education provided, the general efficiency in the use of resources, the generally sound quality of pupils' personal development and the broadly average costs involved in educating pupils at the school, the school provides good value for money.

Pupils' personal development and behaviour

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

33 The legal requirements for collective worship are not met. There was no act of collective worship during the week of the inspection. Although there is recognition on the part of staff that the spiritual dimension is an important aspect of the lives of pupils, the school has not considered closely how the broader aspects of spirituality may be addressed throughout the school and across the curriculum. Occasionally pupils do have opportunities to reflect on the human experience, particularly in English, drama, art and religious education but the range of teaching strategies available to staff to contribute to the spiritual aspect of pupils' development needs to be extended. The programme of assemblies needs to be reviewed.

34 Moral issues and dilemmas are considered in some assemblies and in some geography, science, English, religious education and history lessons. Pupils' social and moral development is further enhanced by their involvement in the development of school policies, for instance those on behaviour and on equal opportunities, and this has increased their level of responsibility. The school has a clear statement of values and the agreed behaviour code, which is widely displayed around the school, is well adhered to. Relationships are respectful.

35 The importance of educating the whole child is stressed by many staff. Staff are sensitive and responsive to pupils' needs. The social education course at Key Stage 3 offers a good framework for developing pupils' personal and social skills and is a particular strength of the school provision. Where teachers are confident to use a variety of teaching strategies, opportunities for discussion and the exploration of feelings and values are handled successfully. As a result, pupils are sensitive, tolerant, mature and generally responsible.

36 The school takes a supportive stance towards pupil initiated activities, some of which demand high levels of responsibility and organisational skills. The School Council functions well: in many cases pupils have succeeded in making improvements to the school site. The regular celebration of community events enhances pupils' self-esteem and prepares pupils well for religious and cultural diversity.

37 Pupils are curious and keen to learn. Teachers in history, geography, science, mathematics, English and many of the vocational courses encourage the development of autonomy and independent learning skills. Group work skills are taught particularly effectively within social education. Work related courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form give pupils a sound preparation for adult life. The Language Development Base equips new arrivals (either early stage English learners or refugees) with the necessary social skills and basic linguistic competence to assimilate quickly into the life of the school. Consequently, pupils show increasing confidence in social situations and most adopt a mature approach to communal or public events. A significant proportion of pupils come as late entrants to the school. Many are helped to acquire quickly a repertoire of social and learning skills in order to access the curriculum.

38 In almost all cases, teachers are sensitive to the cultural and religious needs of the pupils. Through religious education lessons, pupils are introduced to a range of religious beliefs. The regular celebration of community festivals like Eid, Divali and Easter prepares pupils well for cultural diversity as well as helping to enhance their self-esteem. There is only limited provision for expressive and performing arts within the curriculum. However, there have been valuable cross-curricular projects on community heritage themes and environmental initiatives giving pupils many opportunities to work under the guidance of architects, designers, artists, sculptors and poets. There are extra-curricular activities in music, which reflect the high priority given to the diversity of cultural musical styles within the community.

39 A more coherent approach to the management of the contributory elements of the personal and social development programme would further strengthen the provision.

Behaviour and discipline

40 The school is a good-humoured and orderly community where incidents of disruptive behaviour are kept to a minimum. The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to maintain the agreed code of conduct to which the great majority of pupils respond positively. This contributes to the school being a safe and secure environment for learning. However a small minority of pupils do take advantage of ineffective teaching to misbehave in lessons.

41 The system of rewards and sanctions is effective with a number of subject departments using the system productively. Pupils of all ages and particularly those in Key Stage 3 respond well to the system of merits and other forms of recognition for individual and corporate achievement and personal responsibility. Pupils consider that sanctions are consistently applied and the great majority of parents report that the school sets good standards of behaviour.

42 There are very few incidents of bullying. Parents are satisfied with the action taken by the school to investigate and deal with those incidents brought to the attention of staff. A recent pupil survey has led to changes in the supervision by staff of those areas on the school site identified by pupils as being vulnerable to bullying. Excellent work on pupil self-esteem with a number of tutor groups is having a significant and positive impact. All staff are encouraged to combat racism and to adopt a consistent approach to any incidents brought to their attention.

43 A well managed system for the referral of pupil indiscipline has been established. Heads of department and heads of year are clear about their respective roles in the process. Clear records are maintained and the governing body fulfils its responsibilities with regard to the exclusion of pupils.

44 Liaison with external agencies is well established with valuable intervention work undertaken by the behavioural support service of the Local Education Authority.

Attendance

45 The overall level of attendance for the main school, at 91.6%, is slightly below national averages but slightly above that for the city of Birmingham. The figure fell marginally below 90% in Year 7 early in the school year due to a number of pupils who had been allocated places at the school by the Local Education Authority not taking them up. The school places considerable value on attendance and punctuality and there is a rewards system for both. Parents are given regular feedback on pupils' attendance and this helps to reinforce school requirements.

46 Lesson attendance records are invariably maintained and lesson attendance is subject to spot checks. Statutory requirements are fully met. Punctuality at classes is sometimes adversely affected by the need to move from one building to another.

47 The school's home/school liaison staff play an important role following-up absences where mother tongue is required.

Subjects of the curriculum and other curricular provision

English

48 About half the pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are achieving the levels expected for their ages. However, almost all pupils are achieving levels which are appropriate for their abilities and, at Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils achieve even higher standards. At post-16 standards are sound. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C in the GCSE examination in 1994 was 26.9% in English Language and 39.4% in English Literature, both figures being somewhat below the national norm. However, girls perform considerably better than boys; the gender imbalance is much wider than the national comparison. Results at A-level were poor.

49 Standards of speaking and listening are good. Pupils are eager to talk, generally listen to each other and express their ideas with enthusiasm. Standards of writing are good. Pupils write in a range of styles and forms. They are familiar with drafting techniques and many, including those of lower ability, write at length.

50 Pupils are generally keen to read and many who are not yet fully fluent in English show great perseverance. There is an appropriate range of fiction and non-fiction and pupils are encouraged to practise research skills. However, there is a need to provide an effective structure for supporting pupils' independent wider reading and to widen the range of literature used in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils are not offered sufficient opportunities to talk about their reading and few keep records of books they have read.

51 The quality of learning is sound at both key stages and post-16. The pupils are enthusiastic learners and have positive attitudes towards the subject. Generally they listen well to the teacher and each other. Many can work independently and select their own methods, although this is more often a feature of upper ability groups.

52 The quality of teaching at both key stages and post-16 is good. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly, are knowledgeable about their subject and generally have effective relationships with their classes. They use language very clearly in the classroom and have high expectations of the pupils.

53 The management of the subject is good and the staff in the department has begun to work together very effectively. There are thorough schemes of work. Some good examples of the use of information technology were seen but there is a need for more staff training in this area. The quality and management of the department's resources are good.

54 Pupils with special educational needs are largely well supported and make good progress, although the most able are less well supported. Careful records are kept of pupils' progress and comments on the annual reports are thorough. However, there is not yet sufficient consistency in assessment practice and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to be involved in their own assessment.

55 At present drama is taught as a separate subject in Year 7 and as a GCSE course in Year 10 and Year 11. It was only possible to see three lessons during the inspection, two in Year 7 and one in Year 11.

In all, standards were good. Pupils were interested and responsive and the Year 7 work in particular offered a spiritual dimension. There is an excellent department handbook. Examination results at GCSE are very good.

Mathematics

56 At Key Stages 3 and 4, some pupils achieve at least the national expectation but a significant minority do not in 35% of lessons at Key Stage 3 and in 50% of lessons at Key Stage 4. Some achieve levels appropriate or high for their abilities but almost half of pupils at Key Stage 4 are under-achieving. In the sixth form, levels of achievement match abilities.

57 In the 1994 GCSE examination, 21.9% of pupils gained an A*-C grade representing a significant improvement on the previous two years, being average for the Local Education Authority but below national norms. In the sixth form, 50% passed A-level although none achieved grades A or B.

58 In Key Stages 3 and 4, the quality of learning is good for many pupils but has many shortcomings for a significant minority. Where it is good, pupils apply knowledge to new situations, demonstrate investigative skills, recognise patterns and make generalisations. They have competent number skills and are proud of their work. Where it is poor, pupils avoid work, require constant support and disturb others. More differentiated materials and practical tasks should be developed to aid motivation and understanding. In the sixth form, the quality of learning is sound.

59 In both key stages the quality of teaching in half the lessons is sound with many good features; in the other half, there are many shortcomings. Where it is good, teachers demonstrate quiet control, lessons have clear aims, programmes are differentiated and tasks clearly explained. Teaching strategies are varied. Where they are sound, intervention encourages discussion and challenges ideas. Support teachers, when they are available, are used collaboratively and effectively. Where the quality of teaching is unsound, relationships are not established, instructions and explanations are not clear, tasks are unsuitable, lessons lack challenge and pace and there are insufficient strategies to encourage reluctant learners. Departmental sharing of good practice could enable all pupils to have access to high quality teaching. In the sixth form, the quality of teaching is sound with some good features.

60 The many recent changes of teachers, the distribution of support teachers and the differing class sizes have created inequality of opportunity for, in particular, Year 7 pupils. This situation urgently needs to be assessed and redressed.

61 National Curriculum requirements are met but Key Stage 3 provision needs reviewing; sixth form schemes of work need writing. Policies exist for assessment, recording and reporting but practice needs monitoring.

62 The collaborative departmental management has led to effective developments which now need to be evaluated and consolidated. Resources have been well organised and much increased but are only adequate. Classrooms and corridors are attractive with very good

displays of pupils' work. Measures are needed to increase sound absorption in many classrooms.

Science

63 At Key Stages 3 and 4 a substantial majority of pupils are achieving standards that are in line with the national expectation for their ages and a few are achieving above that level. At Key Stage 4, a small minority are achieving standards that are below the national expectation for their ages. At Key Stages 3 and 4 most pupils are achieving levels that are appropriate for their abilities and a significant number are achieving levels that are high for their abilities. At Key Stage 4 a minority of pupils are under-achieving. At post-16 standards of achievement are in line with the national expectation and appropriate for the pupils' abilities. The standard of pupils' knowledge and understanding of work is generally sound. In 1994, the proportion gaining grades A*-C in the GCSE examination was slightly below the national average. Results at A-level were poor.

64 The quality of learning at all key stages is sound or better in the clear majority of lessons. At Key Stage 3 a significant minority of lessons have some good features, many outstanding. There are some shortcomings at both Key Stages 3 and 4, with a small minority of pupils lacking motivation and concentration. Pupils are generally well motivated, enjoy science and show confidence in communicating ideas. Progress in knowledge and understanding is evident in most lessons.

65 In a high proportion of lessons, across all key stages, the quality of teaching is sound and at Key Stage 3, over half the lessons observed demonstrated good features. In lessons where shortcomings were evident, they arose from inappropriate teaching styles and timing so that pupils had insufficient time to evaluate and consolidate the lesson objectives. The caring environment provides support for pupils with special educational needs. Tasks are not always differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. Most lessons have a suitable content and all health and safety requirements are fulfilled.

66 Resources are good and well organised by the technicians but owing to an increased workload in relation to post-16 courses and the problems caused by the department being split between two buildings, consideration could be given to an increase in support. The appropriate assessment and recording procedures are maintained but these do not always inform planning and development. The role and resourcing of information technology is being developed well. The department is effectively managed and the requirements of the National Curriculum are met but greater consideration should be given to the consistent implementation of the supportive marking policy. Out of school visits, to a variety of natural habitats and to view scientific processes in industry, would extend the range of the pupils' science experience.

Technology

Design and technology

67 In the majority of lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 most pupils achieve standards in line with the national expectation but very few achieve higher standards. Achievement in relation to the pupils'

ability in both key stages is appropriate and for 15% is high.

68 However, GCSE examination results in 1994 were poor in relation to national figures and those for other subjects within the school and there is a need to analyse the reasons for this. There were good results at A-level.

69 Pupils' oral skills are sound. The majority of pupils have sound reading and writing skills and are competent in the use of number and information technology to support their work in design and technology.

70 The quality of learning in the majority of lessons is sound or better. Pupils apply their knowledge, understanding and skills in their designing and making activities. Their motivation is good. Pupils extend their knowledge to produce work of good quality. They can evaluate their work at each stage of the process against pre-determined criteria.

71 The quality of teaching is sound and satisfactory working relationships are developed. Lessons are well planned to cater for the needs of pupils from a diversity of cultural backgrounds and provide for individual and group work. Objectives are clear and content is appropriate. There is an emphasis on the need to design and make products of quality. The subject knowledge and use of specialist staff is good. Teachers create opportunities for pupils to apply their technical knowledge.

72 The department is well managed and the staff work effectively as a team. Documentation is comprehensive although procedures for National Curriculum assessment are in need of review. Technician support does not adequately serve the needs of the department. Specialist rooms and equipment are suitable for current requirements but need to be upgraded for future curriculum demands. The department should fully utilise the links established through vocational education to enhance the provision in Key Stages 3 and 4.

Information technology

73 At Key Stages 3 and 4 the majority of pupils achieve standards which are in line with the national expectation and are appropriate for their abilities. Both GCSE and A-level results for 1994 show improvement. While A-level results are particularly encouraging, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C in GCSE was well below the national norm.

74 The quality of learning is sound with some good features, particularly at Key Stage 4 and post-16. Pupils are motivated, listen well and display independent learning skills. They work collaboratively and co-operatively with increasing confidence and success. The majority cope well with set tasks, with a minimum of teacher assistance.

75 The quality of teaching is generally good. Clear objectives are set and instructions given at strategic points. Intervention is sensitive, with teachers challenging or supporting pupils where appropriate. Relationships are good between teachers and pupils. The use of information technology supports pupils' understanding of the topic, although in some tasks pupils would benefit from a wider range of support materials.

76 The curriculum is both broad and balanced. In Years 9 and 11, information technology specialists provide timetabled support across the curriculum for a range of subjects, including English, science, mathematics and modern foreign languages. The planned programme provides well structured opportunities for pupils to acquire information technology capability. The range of specialist information technology courses is very good. The department's guidelines on equal opportunities encourage staff to examine their expectations and teaching methods continually.

77 Assessment procedures are thorough and appropriate. Pupils keep an ongoing self-assessed record of their information technology experiences during Year 7. The maintenance of these records needs greater rigour across the curriculum so that pupils have a clear measure of the progress made.

78 Staff are well qualified and appropriately deployed. Technical staff provide invaluable support for the use of resources by pupils and staff. The department is effectively, conscientiously and energetically managed. Its strength lies in a team approach and shared responsibilities for skilled staff. The department handbook is extremely comprehensive containing detailed action plans and monitoring and review procedures.

History

79 At Key Stage 4, pupils achieve the national expectation in about half of the lessons but in the other half many achieve below this level. The clear majority of pupils are achieving levels appropriate for their abilities. Public examination results in 1994 showed a significant improvement over 1993. At GCSE, 59.6% achieved a grade A*-C, which is well above the national comparison although at A-level there were fewer grades A-B than the national norm. At Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils achieve below the national expectation although most pupils are achieving standards appropriate to their abilities and sometimes higher, especially in oral skills. A significant proportion of pupils demonstrate a sound grasp of the skills needed for the study of history.

80 The quality of learning is generally sound and in some cases better at each key stage and post-16 with pupils engaging positively in a wide variety of learning activities. Pupils are able to take responsibility for their learning from the later stages of Key Stage 3 and beyond. With few exceptions, teacher-pupil relations are good. These factors combine to promote good progression.

81 The quality of teaching is good. In particular, attempts are being made to overcome linguistic difficulties which make access to the subject difficult for some pupils of all abilities whose first language is not English. Positive features also include the diversity of activities presented to pupils which aid motivation and learning progression. Some further consideration needs to be given to the learning process in making objectives more explicit and sequencing developments appropriately at Key Stage 3.

82 The assessment system is simple and well understood by pupils but further consideration needs to be given to arrangements at Key Stage 4 and to using assessment to inform the learning process. Arrangements

for recording and reporting are sound.

83 Management of the department is effective. There are good communications and management tasks are appropriately allocated. Documentation is generally secure although there is a need to update the policy on provision for pupils with special educational needs, to provide a policy on staff development and a formalised scheme of work for the A-level course. Resources and accommodation are adequate, though attention needs to be given to the quantity and quality of class texts in some areas.

Geography

84 Most pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 achieve the national expectation; post-16 pupils achieve higher levels. In 1994 the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades at GCSE was much below the national average while results at A-level were above the national average. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils achieve appropriate levels for their abilities; post-16 pupils achieve higher levels.

85 Reading, speaking and listening skills are well developed across all key stages. Key Stage 4 pupils use number and information technology to analyse complex geographical relationships.

86 The quality of learning at all key stages is good. Pupils make progress in their knowledge of place and understanding of geographical patterns and processes through geographical enquiry. Mapping skills are applied with confidence. Pupils respond well to practical activities and work with commitment and enjoyment. Collaborative learning through role play enables pupils to empathise with real life situations.

87 The quality of teaching at all key stages is good. Lessons are effectively planned and objectives based on sound knowledge are clear. Teaching is fit for purpose and resources are matched to the needs of pupils. Appropriate pace and secure relationships ensure the highest expectations. Good links are forged across the attainment targets and with other subjects. There is a need to develop the use of information technology in Key Stage 3.

88 Assessment procedures and the scheme of work meet statutory requirements, although the lessons from assessment need to be used to inform teachers' planning. The departmental development plan has clearly prioritised targets designed to raise standards. There is a need to improve monitoring and evaluation of departmental procedures.

Modern foreign languages

French and German

89 GCSE results in French and German are broadly in line with the national expectation although the number of pupils entered for the examination is well below national and local averages. There are no pupils currently studying French or German at A-level. Most pupils at Key Stage 3 achieve the national expectation in two-thirds of the lessons but many achieve lower levels in one third. Almost all pupils achieve appropriate levels for their abilities at Key Stages 3 and 4 although there is some under-achievement by more able pupils at Key Stage 3.

90 Listening and reading skills are generally well developed. Many pupils are able to produce short spoken answers to questions and to recall vocabulary with acceptable pronunciation. The ability to ask questions is less well developed and overall few pupils take the initiative to use spoken French or German. Written work is mostly well presented although standards of accuracy vary considerably. Some good examples of creative writing including wordprocessing are in evidence at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 pupils write for a range of purposes, often supported by dictionaries and redrafting, as part of the GCSE coursework. There is, however, little evidence of independent speaking or writing at the highest level.

91 Most pupils work with commitment and respond well to the wide range of learning opportunities offered at both key stages. However, the progress made by the most able pupils at Key Stage 3 is often slow due to the undemanding nature of some of the work.

92 The quality of teaching is mostly sound or good and occasionally outstanding. The teachers are enthusiastic and use French or German well for most aspects of the lessons. In the best cases they insist that pupils also speak almost entirely in the target language. At Key Stage 4 pupils are prepared well for the GCSE examination. A range of teaching styles and resources is used in most lessons to meet the needs of all pupils and particularly to support the least able. Very good use is made of the French and German assistants.

93 Pupils' progress is regularly and effectively monitored, recorded and reported. The teachers make excellent use of the school's merit system to motivate the pupils, in particular to encourage their oral participation in class.

94 The department is ably led and makes effective use of its available accommodation and teaching resources. There is, however, a need to replace the French course at Key Stage 3 in order to challenge more able pupils. Planning should also address the requirement to teach a modern foreign language to all pupils at Key Stage 4 from September 1996.

Community Language

Urdu

95 Standards are well above the national expectation for many pupils and this is reflected in the GCSE results for 1994. Although there is a low time allocation in Key Stage 3 and most of the present Key Stage 4 pupils only started learning to read and write the language in Year 9, progress has been rapid.

96 The quality of learning is high. Most pupils use their time well and are aware of the social and career advantages of proficiency in this subject. This is particularly apparent for reading and writing tasks, which are supported by an up-to-date wordprocessing package. However, some pupils are not used to asking questions or taking the initiative in Urdu and revert to English, even for elementary communication.

97 The quality of teaching is mainly sound but has many shortcomings in a minority of lessons. Lessons are usually orderly, well planned

and well managed. They take place mainly in a room decorated to form an appropriate environment for learning about Pakistan and its language. National Curriculum levels are used in marking and reporting. The understandable desire to develop literacy in what, for most pupils, is a language with an unfamiliar script has led to insufficient emphasis on speaking, which is not developed to the level of which the pupils are capable. Some resources are unnecessarily presented in English and rely too much on translation. The hard-working teachers are fully integrated into the foreign and community language programme at Moseley and Urdu is valued in the curriculum.

Art

98 Standards of achievement are satisfactory at Key Stage 3, with the majority of pupils meeting the national expectation but with very few exceeding it. At Key Stage 4, pupils opting for GCSE courses are achieving satisfactory results and the proportion who gained grades A* to C in 1994 was in line with the national norm. Post-16, a small number of GNVQ students are making acceptable progress, although there is some difficulty in fully applying core skills. In relation to their abilities, most pupils are making appropriate progress at all key stages.

99 At Key Stage 3 pupils make progressive gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, although evaluation is sometimes descriptive rather than analytical. Most Key Stage 4 pupils respond well to investigative work. Post-16 students sometimes lack the urgency required by vocational courses. At all key stages pupils make interested, positive responses to the subject. Pupils discuss their work readily, though more attention should be given to using specialist art vocabulary. Provision for computer assisted work is currently poor.

100 At all key stages the quality of teaching is always sound and often good. Teachers have a good command of the subject and promote effective learning and achievements. Relationships with pupils are good and lessons are conducted at a good pace. Lesson planning is sound and flexible and teachers are concerned to adapt their support to the specific needs of individual pupils.

101 Effective procedures for assessment, recording and reporting are in place, though more attention should be given to supporting pupils in the development of criteria specific to the art content of their work. Schemes of work are well planned and allow pupils of all abilities to make progress. Consideration of a broader range of established artists would be a valuable development.

102 The effective co-ordination of environmental projects involving artists in residence makes a valuable contribution to the cultural development of pupils. Display of pupils' art work is good but isolated. More attention should be given to celebrating achievement in art throughout the school buildings.

Music

103 At Key Stage 3 standards achieved are mainly below the level expected for pupils of this age. Whilst many pupils work at a level which reflects their ability, one in five is under-achieving. Where standards are low, this reflects the pupils' limited musical

experience and basic levels of musical skills. Playing and composing are developed effectively but singing, appraising and information technology skills are under-developed. The current inability to recruit a second specialist teacher for the subject has significantly reduced the standards being achieved by pupils.

104 At Key Stage 4, pupils are achieving appropriate standards in composing and performing. GCSE results have been in line with the national average.

105 Pupils' attitudes to music are enthusiastic and behaviour is generally good. They work co-operatively and most achieve basic task requirements but few take the initiative to extend work or to explore alternative ideas.

106 The quality of teaching in both class and instrumental work is sound and has some good features in the majority of lessons but there are shortcomings in over 40% of lessons. Most lessons are well planned and well managed with respectful yet firm discipline. However learning objectives are not always made sufficiently clear to enable pupils to focus their work. Assessment is used to inform planning and procedures are being developed and refined.

107 The curriculum is complemented by a good range of extended curriculum opportunities including a choir, a small orchestra, tuition in six western and Asian instruments and a programme of performances, which reflect the high priority given to the diversity of cultural musical styles within the community, and a strong ethos of community liaison.

108 There is inadequate time for music in Years 8 and 9 for pupils to achieve appropriate standards and the school has plans to resolve this. Accommodation and equipment require further development to offer a good environment for musical learning. The second room is too small for effective practical work.

109 The department understands its needs and is developing well. Its development plan already identifies appropriate areas for priority attention.

Physical education

110 The standards of achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4 are good in relation to pupils' abilities but over a half of pupils fail to achieve the national expectation. The pupils demonstrate a good level of competence in the skills of speaking and listening. In games pupils show control and good examples of developing tactical skills are seen in hockey. A higher level of challenge for the more able and an increase in resourcing would further enhance the standards. Standards of achievement of Year 10 pupils studying GCSE is variable. A high proportion of those entered for the examination in 1994 achieved grades A* to C.

111 The quality of learning at Key Stages 3 and 4 is, in the main, good. The majority of pupils take part with enthusiasm and commitment. They generally work well individually and in groups and show good concentration in the learning of skills. The use and quality of gymnastic skills at Key Stage 3 is sound. At Key Stage 4 the development of advanced skills and tactics in team games is

generally good. A wide range of learning opportunities is used to good effect, in particular, observation and evaluation. Pupils make good use of the resources at their disposal. Further extension of tasks and activities would provide increased learning opportunities.

112 The quality of teaching is generally good, some being very good. The teachers establish good relationships with the pupils who respond positively and are generally eager to meet the demands made of them. The teaching is purposeful with clear objectives. Teachers have a good command of the subject and use a wide variety of teaching methods that encourage independence. Lessons are soundly prepared, well organised and delivered at a good pace. The high expectations of teachers is a strength. Differentiated work for the more able would add to the quality of teaching in the department.

113 The organisation and planning of the curriculum complies with statutory requirements. It is broad, balanced and meets the needs of pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. Timetabling restrictions in the sixth form prevent participation for some pupils. A review of the school timetable to ensure entitlement for all is necessary. The quality of management and co-ordination of the teaching is good. Self assessment is an integral part of the learning process and is used effectively to plan progression. The principle of equality of opportunity operates effectively through mixed groupings in Years 7, 10 and 11.

Religious education

114 At Key Stage 3, standards are below the national expectation in over half the lessons. However, over 70% of pupils do achieve levels which are appropriate for their abilities. Pupils recognise the religious diversity in Britain and have a good understanding of the distinctive features of Islam and have some understanding of Christianity. Some recognise that Christianity is the principal religion in Britain. Most pupils can identify, although some confuse, key features of both religions.

115 The quality of learning is sound with some good features. Many make good progress in lessons. A limited range of learning skills is developed. Pupils recognise that religious belief can give guidance in the life of the believer and that there is both a corporate and individual dimension to religion. Most pupils have a good attitude towards the subject. They concentrate well and generally work quietly. Not enough opportunity is given to pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their learning.

116 The quality of teaching is generally sound with some good features. Lessons are well structured providing progression at appropriate pace. Teachers are secure in their subject. Themes across the principal religions identified in the Agreed Syllabus are taught. Sometimes good support enables those with learning difficulties to make good progress. The more able are insufficiently challenged. Not enough opportunity is offered for exploring elements of human experience which raise questions about life's ultimate meaning and value.

117 The planning of religious education requires more rigour. The assessment of pupils' work does not sufficiently help with the next steps to be taken. Not enough variation in tasks and resources is used to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential.

118 There is not enough time at Key Stage 4 for religious education and none is provided at post-16. No pupils take public examinations in the subject.

Vocational education

119 A substantial programme of vocational education is being successfully introduced into the school. In relation to the national expectation, standards are mostly sound and sometimes good. Examination results from the BTEC courses have been sound and in business and finance they have been good. The majority of pupils are achieving well in relation to their abilities and all are achieving soundly. Standards of reading, writing and number are sound and those of speaking, listening and information technology are good. There is a small group of pupils at both Key Stage 4 and post-16 who are not achieving well enough in any of these areas because of learning difficulties.

120 The quality of learning is usually sound or good. Pupils are progressing well and showing good skills of communication, listening, questioning and working in teams. Most pupils have not developed planning or evaluation skills because insufficient opportunities for independent learning are available to them. The great majority of pupils are committed and enthusiastic about their work and show sound concentration.

121 The quality of teaching is at least sound and often good or very good. Teachers have a good command of their subject, set a good pace and have good relationships with the pupils. The planning of assignments is excellent, with clear objectives towards which pupils can progress at their own pace. Assessment in GNVQ informs teaching and learning well.

122 A good range of GNVQ Intermediate courses are offered post-16. The school's resources are insufficient to offer more advanced courses without specific links with more specialised providers. Extension courses provide a good broadening experience for all sixth formers and provision for A-level pupils to follow GNVQ units needs to be developed.

123 The Foundation GNVQ provision at Key Stage 4 is good, although it is not suitable for the lowest attainers.

124 The quality of leadership is excellent and is supported by high staff commitment. There is a good annual review system. Information technology resources are good and books are mostly adequate although in need of updating.

125 Pre-course guidance for the different subjects is generally good but more assessment of core skill abilities is needed. Work experience placements are highly effective and employers provide good support in vocational programmes. The compact arrangement with local employers has had a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and achievements.

Factors contributing to these findings

Quality of teaching

126 The quality of teaching was sound or better in 82% of the lessons observed. Of these, 35% had good features and no major shortcomings and 10% had many good features, some of them outstanding. Objectives for lessons were usually clear at Key Stages 3 and 4 and clear at post-16. The teachers' command of their subject is very good across both key stages and post-16. Lesson content and activities are usually suitable at both key stages and post-16. Challenge, pace and motivation in lessons are particularly effective post-16 but good at all key stages. Teachers' expectations of pupils are higher at Key Stage 4 and post-16 than at Key Stage 3.

127 Staff work hard throughout the curriculum. Particularly in geography, physical education and post-16 vocational education, teaching is enthusiastic and effectively planned, leading to challenging lessons where high expectations are made of pupils. Good use of praise and encouragement provides a good learning environment in social education where pupil discussions are skilfully led. Collaborative teaching in mathematics and modern languages allows pupils with special educational needs to be fully and productively involved in the lessons. Imaginative use of resources and a good mix of activities in modern foreign languages contribute to effective differentiation. Teaching which encourages pupils to take responsibility for their learning was observed in design and technology and in mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to support and collaborate with each other. Teacher demonstration is used to good effect in physical education.

128 In those lessons where shortcomings were observed, poorly organised and managed lessons gave rise to teaching which provided a low level of challenge and expectation for pupils. Teachers failed to intervene when pupils lost concentration and when individual support and advice was required by pupils. Inappropriate activities failed to encourage pupils to work collaboratively and to make progress. Some pupils are not well served when there is inadequate liaison between teachers, support teachers and classroom assistants.

Assessment, recording and reporting

129 There is a coherent whole-school policy for assessment, recording and reporting. It provides general guidance on the purposes of assessment, planning, teacher assessments, record keeping and marking pupils' work. However, the marking policy does not provide clear, specific guidance, resulting in inconsistency in the marking of work both within and across departments. The best examples of marking were found in English, science and geography where they promoted higher standards.

130 Statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting are met. The school provides annual reports to parents of pupils in all year groups and, in Year 11, pupils receive a national Record of Achievement. These are used to good effect at meetings between staff and parents to discuss progress of pupils in more detail. The annual reviews of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs are carried out according to requirements.

131 There is a clear management structure for assessment, recording and reporting. The monitoring of the assessment procedures and subsequent use of information within the classroom is effective, in

particular, in science and design and technology, but is under-developed in other subjects.

132 Schemes of work generally reflect a good range of assessment opportunities but the degree to which assessment is used to raise pupils' standards and inform future planning varies across departments. Examples of good practice are to be found in design and technology, art, physical education and GNVQ courses. Pupils' self assessment and target-setting are central features in a number of subjects but are under-exploited in others.

The curriculum

Quality and range of the curriculum

133 The school has a brief but appropriate statement of curricular aims. The curriculum offers a good range of opportunities to pupils and is soundly planned at departmental level in most subjects. Monitoring procedures which involve heads of department and the senior management team are well documented. The school has focused on developing approaches which cater for the different needs of pupils but further development is needed for the more able pupils.

134 The curriculum in Key Stage 3 meets statutory requirements and is broad but provides a relatively small arts element. The school plans to address this from September 1995. In Key Stage 4 the curriculum is broad and considerable care is taken to match option choices to the expressed needs of pupils, taking the wide range of social factors into account. However, relatively few pupils elect to study a creative arts subject leading to some imbalance in their curriculum experience. The school has a firm commitment to developing the vocational curriculum and a large proportion of pupils follow the GNVQ route although this is not suitable for the least able. The post-16 curriculum is enriched by the compact arrangements with local industry. The quality of provision in the sixth form is enhanced by the core skills programme for pupils on all types of course.

135 Time allocations are appropriate for most subjects but are low in music and art at Key Stage 3 and fall seriously short of the local Agreed Syllabus requirements for religious education in Key Stage 4 and post-16. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of good extra-curricular provision. This includes language, history and sporting clubs, and pupils have opportunities to contribute to the 'Tree of Life' environmental sculpture project. The school cottage in Gwent hosts an annual Year 8 curriculum trip as well as weekend visits by a number of pupils in Years 7 and 9.

136 There are clear whole-school policies on the development of schemes of work and on homework, which give helpful broad guidelines. In the majority of subjects, homework is set regularly as extension and reinforcement activities. At Key Stage 4 it is linked to individual learning targets.

137 Arrangements for continuity from pupils' Key Stage 2 curriculum experiences are under-developed, although good examples are found in design and technology and in science.

Equality of opportunity

138 The school has prioritised the creation of an environment where all pupils feel safe and valued. Systematic developments have raised awareness of equal opportunities issues and all subject departments have equal entitlement policy statements. Current arrangements for equality of opportunity generally maximise pupils' access to the curriculum. They support pupils in achieving appropriately, with many making progress that is high for their abilities. Arrangements for equal opportunities fully meet legal requirements.

139 The school provides a very good induction programme through the language development base. Care has been taken to improve the provision to ensure all pupils follow a programme of cross-curricular topics that draw on National Curriculum programmes of study in English, geography and history. The quality of teaching by the language development base staff is good (and in some cases very good) and pupils are enabled to access both the curriculum and the broader life of the school.

140 Liaison between the language development base and the special educational needs department has recently improved but more needs to be done to ensure that pupils for whom English is a second language are effectively screened on entry. Although subject teachers generally are sensitive to cultural needs, some do not have a clear understanding of how best to teach pupils with particular linguistic needs. Some teachers do not distinguish between pupils' inherent ability and their competence in English.

141 The quality of English as a Second Language Support offered in mainstream classes is variable and ranges between poor and good. Where it is effective, lessons have been jointly planned by support and subject staff, learning objectives are made explicit, the level of language accessibility in learning materials has been checked, pupils are offered tasks and materials at an appropriate level and expectations of individual progress are high. In the worst cases this support operates to impede learning.

142 The curriculum support teacher works in close collaboration with subject teachers to produce very high quality materials which significantly improve access for bi-lingual English learners.

143 The home/school liaison teachers provide an exemplary service. They work to improve attendance, performance and progress in the pupils who are supported. The recent development of a regular parents' meeting to improve communication with non-English speaking parents has resulted in increased curriculum input from a diverse group of parents and carers which is positively enhancing current provision. Consideration needs to be given to monitoring the impact of support teaching and the liaison service.

144 In a school where boys predominate, gender issues have been systematically addressed. Girls feel safe and valued in the school. Girls' progress and achievements are high for both ability and in some cases against the national expectation. Better systems to ensure the effective use of data to influence teaching and learning styles and monitor progress need to be created.

145 A complex system exists to allocate pupils to teaching groups on entry to the school. This takes into account pupils' level of attainment and ability, their gender, particular individual needs or

circumstances and, where deemed appropriate to promote greater security for those in a minority situation, their religious and cultural background. This creates some classes of Muslim boys only. The staff informally monitor the progress of boys in these groups and pupils have recently been involved in a pilot project aimed at raising expectations, achievement and self-esteem. Close formal monitoring of the impact of this grouping strategy needs to be done in order to identify any potential social consequences and/or successes so that the implications for teaching strategies elsewhere in the school can be considered and the best practice disseminated.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs

146 The school is making good provision for the 395 pupils it has identified for support. Three pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs. The statutory requirements for the review of their statements is being met.

147 Standards achieved are sound in relation to the abilities of the pupils. Of particular note are the achievement of pupils at GCSE who entered the school with reading ages one or more years behind their chronological age. There is some under-achievement by more able and gifted pupils noted in a number of subjects.

148 Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. The progress of all pupils with special educational needs across the curriculum is good. Improvements in literacy are impressive with some pupils improving by as much as three years in their reading ages during a period of six months. There is evidence that pupils are able to work independently following advice and guidance from those who teach and support them. Good practice was observed in modern languages, mathematics, design and technology and English where pupils are able to be active, productive and confident members of the group who take pride in their work. Pupils do not achieve so well when additional teaching support is not present or when teaching fails to give pupils the opportunity for full and effective participation. On these occasions pupils are either passive learners or allow themselves to be distracted.

149 The school is making good progress towards the implementation of the Code of Practice. There is a need to establish effective liaison with all areas of the curriculum in order to ensure proper delivery of the individual education plans. Collaboration between support staff and subject teachers needs to be more effective so that specific pupil needs are known and given due attention in the teaching and learning activities. Preparation is in hand for the administrative impact of the Code. The department will benefit from the use of information technology to maintain records and monitor the progress of pupils.

150 Good contact and use is made of external support services. Liaison and collaboration between the special educational needs department and the Section 11 language development base is as effective as it can be given that the latter are not employed by the school. Both providers are sensitive of the need to ensure that accurate assessment and placement of pupils with English as a second language is carried out.

151 The integration and reading assistants are valued members of the staff. They would benefit from further training carried out within

the department. Good expectations are set by the reading assistants. There is a difference of practice between and within departments as to how teaching support is used. Some teachers do not fully understand the role of the integration assistants.

152 There are plans for the greater involvement of the governing body in the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

153 The management of the department is sound but members of the department will need to develop individual strengths in order to work across the school to influence practice and to manage the effective and efficient implementation of the Code of Practice. There is a need for regular meetings between department and support staff.

Management and administration

154 The school has clear stated aims. In general these aims guide the school's activities. For instance, the heavy emphasis on vocational courses, particularly post-16, stems directly from them, as does the emphasis on providing a secure learning environment. However, the school is less successful in exploring with pupils the spiritual dimension to their lives which is one of 'the various influences which bear upon the student' (from the school's statement of its aims). The key objectives which are developed, somewhat tenuously, from the aims are the reference points for all targets in the development plan.

155 The governing body fulfils most of its legal responsibilities but has failed to secure the provision of religious education for pupils in Years 10 to 13 and to make arrangements for a daily act of collective worship.

156 The headteacher has a very well developed understanding of her role in leading the school. She transmits this very effectively to staff through her approach to management and through her personal statement in the annual development plan. She has high expectations of staff and they give a very high level of commitment to the school. Management is systematic as well as open, involving staff at all levels. There is a particularly effective machinery for the involvement of middle managers in decision-making and, in turn, these staff generally ensure that others are appropriately informed and involved. Some areas of the school are less well represented in the management structure.

157 The governing body is developing a higher profile in establishing the framework within which the school operates and, to this end, has adopted a number of targets for its own development. It now has clear terms of reference to support its sub-committee structure.

158 The school development plan has become a sophisticated tool in the key areas of improving pupil performance, enhancing teacher effectiveness and developing management and organisation. The school has an effective planning culture at all levels, involving pupils, staff and management.

159 Plans are, in general, successfully implemented although some teams are not yet adept at prioritising these. Reasons for unfulfilled targets are investigated by senior management.

160 Routine administration and internal communications are good. There is a weekly staff information sheet supported by a weekly briefing and a staff planner. There is widespread and expanding access to the ambitious computerised management information system, although the optimum use of data for review purposes is still being developed in some areas. External communications are effective and written communication is backed up where appropriate by home/school liaison staff.

161 Much has been invested in management and organisation; overall, it is very effective.

Resources and their management

Teaching and non-teaching staff

162 Teachers are well deployed, on the whole, with qualifications matching the subjects they are required to teach. However there are currently some difficulties in staffing the teaching of mathematics and music due to the inability to recruit. There have been some very strong appointments, to middle management positions in particular. There has been an attempt to provide continuity of teachers across a number of subject areas for some Year 7 groups to generate some stability for these pupils. Where the teaching is good, this arrangement is beneficial.

163 Teaching staff are generally well managed and very well motivated. The first cycle of teacher appraisal has been completed and arrangements are satisfactory. Provision for professional development, which is effectively and enthusiastically managed by a middle management committee, is carefully matched both to individual teachers' needs and to team and whole-school targets in the school development plan. For instance, all staff have spent two in-service training days on differentiation, which is a whole-school target. There is a forty minute period timetabled each week for department and year teams to engage in professional development. This provision has made a considerable contribution although it is not always managed so as to gain maximum benefit.

164 Teaching is supported by a range of non-teaching staff but there is insufficient technician support except in information technology. There is a need to review the deployment of language support staff. All staff are developing expertise in the use of information technology to support their professional role. The school is keen to recruit more staff from minority ethnic groups and is successful in retaining those already appointed.

Resources for learning

165 The majority of subjects are adequately resourced. Departmental allocations are determined through a decentralised procedure involving wide consultation. Priorities are required to be in line with the school's development aims.

166 There is good access to computers and software across the school with a pupil:computer ratio of 8:1. This makes a positive contribution to the quality of learning and pupils' presentation of their work. The range of generic and specific software available on the two whole-school networks is of appropriate quality. There are

localised resources in the library, in science, in humanities, in the business enterprise centre and in the computing department which encourage the integration of information technology activity in coursework.

167 The library has been developed over a long period and presents an open, pleasant environment. Recently there has been an extensive restocking of books. Help is available to pupils at all times and the library remains open after the end of the school day. Nonetheless the use made of the facilities for art, English, mathematics and foreign languages is disappointing. The CD ROM and audio-visual facilities are well utilised.

168 The school has benefited from many community and local business financed projects which have enhanced the quality of resources available.

Accommodation

169 The school is housed in a diverse collection of buildings mainly in two wings separated by recreational areas. There are plans to undertake a major renovation of the Victorian west wing, in addition to the refurbishment of the science and technology facilities located there, starting shortly. The condition of the east wing buildings is generally satisfactory although some of the corridors and stairways are narrow and carpets scuffed. There is a need to enhance the quality of the school environment with better decor and well presented artwork.

170 Overall, the accommodation, including specialist facilities, is sufficient for the school's needs. Staff and pupils cope well with the difficulties caused by the need to move between different buildings on a large site. Pupils would, however, welcome the provision of lockers. The day-to-day maintenance of the school and grounds is good.

171 Health and safety aspects are carefully monitored and there has been an associated training programme for both teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils' welfare and guidance

172 Pastoral arrangements have a positive impact on pupils' sense of safety. The governing body has identified a planned programme of measures to improve safety standards. There are concerns about the lack of security with respect to the ease of access into the school buildings from three main roads and governors should review the arrangements for the security of the site.

173 All staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils' needs; they are generally caring, hardworking and responsive. Staff with pastoral responsibilities have a thoughtful and sensitive approach to welfare issues. Procedures are clear and are implemented appropriately. Effective links are made with a range of specialist services. Care is taken to provide pupils with role-models from a range of ethnic, cultural and professional backgrounds. This has a positive influence on pupils' aspirations.

174 Translation and interpretation support for families where English

is not a first language is regularly made available and has a positive impact on pupils' well-being. The home/school liaison service is exemplary; early indications are that the increased contact with parents and carers is improving pupils' welfare and attendance. Pupils have a clear grasp of their achievements at school. The Compact scheme, supported by local employers, functions well and has a positive effect on preparing pupils realistically for working life.

175 The student counsellor provides a very good and highly valued open access service; post traumatic counselling sessions are provided to support refugees. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Tutorial provision is variable and in a minority of cases, tutors adopt too casual an approach. Registration cover arrangements do not always function effectively. Child protection procedures are adequate. The headteacher is the responsible person under the procedures established by the Local Education Authority.

176 The pastoral programme which consists of one 40-minute period each week for all pupils is of generally good quality but liaison between this programme and the social education course should be improved so that duplication is avoided and continuity and progression are more secure.

177 Careers education at Key Stage 4 is very well planned; delivery of the programme is variable ranging from poor to good. The programme is at an early stage of development in Key Stage 3. Vocational education is a strength of the school and enhances pupils' life choices. Current arrangements for careers education and guidance at post-16 are very good. Greater attention could be paid to monitoring delivery to promote consistency and effectiveness.

178 Policy and planning for health education is sound and delivery at Key Stage 3 is very good. Imaginative use is made of theatre in health education groups to augment the programme. This has a beneficial effect on the school's health provision. Some elements of drugs education are included in music and English to very good effect. Learning resources on the dangers of substance abuse are of a very high quality.

179 The sex education policy is currently being revised in line with legal requirements. Sex education sessions observed during the inspection ranged from very good to poor. Where subject teachers lack confidence and use an inappropriate range of teaching strategies for the subject matter, pupils' learning is impeded. A formal structure is needed to support better liaison between the various elements of sex education provision and to ensure the dissemination of good practice.

Links with parents, agencies and other institutions

180 Parents' links with and support for the school are good. The school copes well with any issues of communication which stem from the range of languages and cultures in its community. The home/ school liaison unit introduced two years ago has been effective in dealing with these as illustrated by the encouraging attendance at a recent parents' evening. The quality of information provided to parents is good.

181 There are extensive links with higher education which have had a

positive impact on professional development at the school. The school has established excellent links with the local business and cultural communities. It participates in many local project initiatives which have a favourable impact on, for example, the quality of work experience opportunities. Community linked projects have benefited the pupils' environmental understanding and enhanced the resources available for improving their social awareness. The partnership with the local cricket club is a venture which benefits both pupils and the local community. Links with the local faith communities are rather less well developed.

182 Liaison arrangements with the principal receiving institutions are satisfactory. Pastoral liaison with the 41 contributory primary schools are sound, although there is a need to develop better curriculum continuity.