

INSPECTION REPORT

Moseley School
College Road
Moseley, Birmingham
B13 9LR

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique Reference Number: 103519

Headteacher: Mrs M
Miles

Reporting inspector: Mr David Potter
T 11261

Dates of inspection: 25/01/99 – 29/01/99

Under OFSTED contract number: 704486

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate Authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Christine Wall
Date of previous inspection:	27 th – 31 st March 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Saleem Hussain (Lay Inspector)	Urdu	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Support, guidance and welfare; Partnership with parents and the community.
Phil Waite	Mathematics	
Sue Ellis	English	
David Berrisford	Science	
Boyd Gunnell	Design and Technology	
Margaret Chilvers	Information Technology	
Sheila Brown	Modern Foreign Languages	
Tony McAleavy	History	
Hazel Saunders	Geography	Equality of opportunity; Staffing, accommodation and resources; Assessment.
Peter Kendall	Art	
Celia Holland	Music	
Peter Johnson	Physical Education; Key Stage 4.	
Di Valentine	Physical Education	
Christopher Vidler	Business Education	
Anthony Fiddian-Green	Religious Education	
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

Pupils' standards of achievement and the progress they make:

Most pupils make good progress, especially in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

The school's examination results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) compare very well with those of similar schools.

The quality of education provided by the school

Almost 95 per cent of teaching is sound or better, and over half is at least good. Teachers know their subjects well, and have very good relationships with their pupils.

The school provides a broad curriculum, well matched to the needs of the pupils, and a rich programme of extra-curricular activities.

Assessment of pupils' work is good and helps them improve.

Careers education and guidance are good.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall; provision for their cultural development is excellent.

The support, guidance and welfare provided for pupils is very good, with aspects which are excellent.

The school's ethos

Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and generally behave well.

The relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well together.

The procedures to promote good attendance and behaviour and the pastoral support given to pupils are excellent.

Parents hold the school in high esteem.

Management and efficiency:

The leadership, strategic management and sense of direction provided by senior managers are excellent. Governors give the school very good support, and are developing effective ways of acting as the school's critical friend and of holding it to account.

Financial planning and control and school administration are excellent.

Professional development for staff is very good.

Resources - staff, rooms and equipment - are generally used well.

Where the school has weaknesses

Pupils' standards of achievement and the progress they make:

The school considerably under-performs similar schools in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3.

The quality of education provided by the school

The progress of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those with very low levels of competence in English is sometimes limited by teaching which does not focus sufficiently clearly on those pupils' targets for improvement.

Teaching does not promote pupils' skills as independent learners sufficiently.

The provision for religious education (RE) in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is inadequate to meet the terms of the local Agreed Syllabus, and collective worship does not comply with statutory requirements.

The school's ethos

Unauthorised absence is above average, despite the school's considerable efforts to reduce it.

Punctuality to school and to lessons is unsatisfactory.

The school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses

The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled.

The plan will be sent to all parents and guardians of the pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good improvements since its last inspection. This is a very good and improving school with outstanding leadership. The clarity of vision from senior managers and the commitment of the whole staff to a systematic programme of improvement are also outstanding. The hard work of staff, the quality of support given to pupils, and the school's commitment to working in partnership with its multi-cultural community are very good.

Since the last inspection:

teaching quality has risen to above national average levels, with a high proportion of good teaching;

most pupils make good progress in their work;

although pupils still achieve standards in examinations which are well below national averages, their performance, especially in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), now compares favourably with those of pupils in similar schools.

Of the weaknesses identified in the inspection of 1995, good progress has been made with:

the grouping of pupils in Key Stage 3, which is now carefully managed and evaluated;

the consistency of marking and how it is used to help pupils improve;

provision for spiritual development, which is now good.

Satisfactory progress has been made with challenging more able pupils. Some progress has been made with liaison between those who support pupils with SEN and those who support pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), and with raising teachers' expectations of pupils; there is more to be done in these respects.

The school still does not comply with the requirements for collective worship, nor those for RE in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

Governors and staff are committed to the continuous improvement of quality and the raising of standards. The school monitors the quality of its work very well, and its improvement planning is exemplary. It is therefore very well placed to make further improvement.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
Key Stage 3 tests		
English	E*	E
Mathematics	E*	E
Science	E*	D
All core subjects	E*	E
GCSE examinations		
5 or more grades A* - C	E	B
5 or more grades A* - G	D	A
1 or more grades A* - G	C	B
GCSE points score	E	C
A/AS levels		
Average points score of those taking 2 or more A levels	E	n/a

In the left hand column of the table above, the school's results are compared with those of all secondary schools in England. Moseley serves an area of considerable economic disadvantage, and one with a very high proportion of pupils

for whom English is an additional language; the school's results do not compare well with the national average at most levels. However, pupils at Moseley School achieve results in the lower grades of GCSE which are close to the national average.

In the right hand column, Moseley’s results are compared with those of schools which have a similar intake and serve a similar area. Moseley actually serves a more disadvantaged area, and one with a higher proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), than many of the so-called “similar” schools. Nevertheless, the school does very well in comparison with these schools at GCSE, especially in the lower grades. Results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage are however well below the average of both all, and similar schools.

The value added by the school in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is high.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Satisfactory to good	Teaching in all subjects is sound or better, with a high proportion which is good, at all levels.	
Years 10-11	Good	Teaching in PE, IT (both as a subject and across the curriculum) and history is very good across the complete age range.	There is no subject in which teaching is ineffective
Sixth Form	Good		
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

A very high percentage (about 95 per cent) of the teaching at the school is satisfactory or better, and well over half is good.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent, very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. ‘Satisfactory’ means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Pupils work well together and keep to the rules of the school. The school is an orderly community, although a small number of pupils can be immature at times.
Attendance	Sound. Unauthorised absence is slightly high. Punctuality to school and to lessons is unsatisfactory.
Ethos*	A very positive atmosphere, with good relationships, and very strong links with a multi-cultural and multi-lingual community. A culture which values individuals. (A very good pastoral system).
Leadership and management	Very good, with excellent vision and educational direction. Planning for improvement is exemplary.
Curriculum	Generally broad and balanced. There is not enough time for RE in Years 10 to 13. Extra-curricular provision is good. Assessment of pupils' work is good and helps them improve.
Pupils with special educational needs	A well-managed department. Provision for pupils with SEN is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in the other key stages. In some lessons, pupils' progress is limited by teaching which does not focus sufficiently on targets set for pupils to improve the standard of their work.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good overall. The school promotes the moral and social development of its pupils very well. Provision for spiritual development is good, and that for cultural development is excellent.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Accommodation and learning resources, and the number and qualifications of teachers and support staff, are all adequate for the curriculum to be taught effectively.
Efficiency	Financial planning, control and school administration are excellent. The use of learning resources and accommodation is good. The deployment of staff is satisfactory.
Value for money	Taking into account the value added by the school, the quality of teaching and curriculum, the quality of strategic management and the unit costs, the school provides good value for money.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- Parents' comments at their meeting with the Registered Inspector, in letters and in the questionnaires, were overwhelmingly positive about the standard of education and care given to pupils. No single strong criticism came through in parents' comments.
- Parents praised the school's efforts to encourage responsibility, respect and tolerance; pride in work and in belonging to the school and the community; and anti-sexist and anti-racist attitudes. The respect and value given to the variety of cultural and religious groups present in the school was described with great warmth.
- Parents value greatly the excellent work done by the home-school liaison tutor, and by others who liaise between school and community, to ease communication and bring parents into school, especially to support (linguistically, socially and culturally) those who might otherwise find visiting the school difficult.
- Parents think that the approachability of the school, and the help and guidance it gives pupils, are particular strengths.
- Parents believe that the school encourages attendance, punctuality and behaviour well, and they value the various awards given for good work, effort and attendance.
- Homework is generally thought to be well organised, and parents like the pupils' planners - as means of helping pupils organise themselves and their work, and as a way for parents to communicate with the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and the standards of their work are generally thought to be good.

What some parents are not happy about

the most able pupils.

Inspectors agree with parents that the school provides high quality education and care for their children, and that it welcomes parents' views and involvement. Inspectors also agree that standards of behaviour are generally high.

Inspectors found some evidence of low expectation of younger and less-able pupils.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve standards and quality still further, governors, senior managers and staff should:

1. Continue to raise the standard of pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 3, by:

- improving the quality and range of writing across the curriculum;
- helping pupils develop their skills as independent learners.

(paras. 15, 22, 33)

2. Improve the progress made by pupils with SEN and those with very low levels of competence in English by:

- writing precise targets for the improvement of their knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- deploying support staff to help such pupils achieve these targets;
- ensuring that close liaison between SEN staff and EAL staff, and the English and mathematics departments, results in teaching methods which will help such pupils achieve their targets.

(para 14, English, mathematics)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- *Meet the terms of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.* (para. 35, Religious Education)
- *Comply with the law in respect of collective worship.* (Para 49, Religious Education)
- Improve pupils' punctuality to school and to lessons. (Para 26)
- Monitor pupils' achievements by ethnicity. (para 13)
- Attend to the few issues of Health and Safety raised in the report (para 63)

Items in *italics* were key issues at the time of the last OFSTED inspection in 1995.

Items underlined have been recognised as priorities by the school, and feature in the current School Development Plan.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Moseley School is a large comprehensive school serving an inner-urban area to the south of Birmingham City centre. The school has over 1200 pupils, with roughly twice as many boys as girls. Year groups in the main school have between 190 and 240 pupils, and there are 161 in the sixth form. Both the main school and the sixth form are growing.

2. The school serves an area of rich ethnic diversity. The overwhelming majority of the pupils are of South Asian heritage, and for nearly ninety per cent of them English is an additional language, a proportion greatly above the national average. Many of the pupils have had fragmented careers in primary education, changing housing and schools with changes in family circumstances, or as a result of significant periods of time spent in South Asia.

3. The school takes in pupils of all abilities, with a preponderance of those of below average ability as measured by their literacy. Pupils' reading ages in English are well below their chronological age, and results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are considerably below the national average. The proportion of pupils with some form of special need is over twice the average for comprehensive schools nationally, although the proportion with statements of special need is well below the average.

4. The school serves a settled but economically very disadvantaged area in which unemployment, much of it long-term, is very high. This is an area of high housing density and large families; few parents have had the opportunity to attend higher education. Parents are, however, very supportive of education and what it can achieve for their children. In recent years, over fifty per cent of the pupils have been eligible for free school meals, a figure greatly above the national average.

5. The school has clear and well-publicised aims, values and expectations, and has set challenging yet realistic targets for achievement. Academic achievement, personal and social development of the pupils, and equality of opportunity are given due weight in the aims, targets and plans. The school's main current priorities are:

- to continue to raise achievement by focusing on those pupils who under-achieve, especially in Key Stage 3;
- to improve further the way data is used to track pupils' performance through their time at the school and across the subjects;
- to develop further the courses on offer in the sixth form in order to match those courses still more closely to the needs of individual pupils, and thereby to increase recruitment to the sixth form;
- to monitor the effectiveness of changes made to the curriculum in Key Stage 4.

6. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
For latest reporting year:	1998	145	65	210

National Curriculum Test		English	Mathematics	Science
Results				
Number of pupils At NC Level 5 or above	Boys	39	40	36
	Girls	29	14	12
	Total	68	54	48
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	33	26	23
	National	65	60	56
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	6	10	9
	National	35	36	27

Teacher Assessment		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils At NC Level 4 or above	Boys	17	41	43
	Girls	11	14	19
	Total	28	55	62
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	13.3	26.2	29.5
	National	60	63	61
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	4.2	8.6	12.4
	National	28	29	29

Attainment at Key Stage 4

Number of 15 years olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	127	56	183

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils Achieving standard specified	Boys	28	108	121
	Girls	17	48	51
	Total	45	156	172
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	25	85	94
	National	44.4	89.6	95.1

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications and the percentage of such pupils who achieved all those they studied:	Number	% Success rate
	51	96

Attainment in the Sixth Form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:	Year	Male	Female	Total
	1998	14	13	27

Average A/AS points score Per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Female	All	Male	Female	All	
School	9.0	12.9	10.6	0.3	4.8	3
National		17.5			2.8	

· Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of such students who achieved these qualifications

	Number	% Success rate
·	51	59

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Attendance

Percentage of half day (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised Absence	School	7.9
	Unauthorised Absence	National comparative data	7.9
		School	1.3
		National	1.1

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	19
	Permanent	8

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	14
	Satisfactory or better	94
	Less than satisfactory	6

· **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

· **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

· **Attainment and progress**

7. Although Moseley is an all-ability school, the great majority of its intake is of below average attainment. Pupils achieve results in the national tests at 14 which are well below the national average and those of similar schools. In GCSE examinations their results are generally much better than those of similar schools, and in some subjects they are in line with the national average. Since pupils are generally making sound to good progress, the school is adding value.

8. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is well below the national average and the performance of similar schools, although results in science are a little closer to the average than those in English and mathematics. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in the other subjects of the curriculum show levels of performance below the national average. Of the work observed in Key Stage 3, about half was at or above the level expected for pupils of that age. Attainment in English is low, understandably in the light of the very high proportion of pupils who enter the school with reading ages below their chronological age. Otherwise there is little difference in attainment between the subjects.

9. The school enters a high proportion of its pupils for GCSE examinations. The number who gain five or more higher (A* - C) grades is above that for similar schools, but is well below the national average. The proportions of pupils achieving five or more, and one or more, graded results (A* - G) are closer to the national average, and well above the results of similar schools. The trend since the last inspection has been for GCSE results to improve slowly. There have been sharp improvements in some subjects, such as Information Technology (IT), and steady progress in others, such as mathematics. The gap in achievement between girls and boys is much less than that nationally. Pupils with special educational needs do well: almost all achieve one or more graded results.

10. At GCSE, results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are well below the national average for the higher grades, but are closer to the national average for all graded results, and compare well with the results of similar schools. Results at GCSE in other subjects tend to be below the national average for higher grades, but close to it for all graded results. Some good results have been achieved in geography and history, in which pass rates at higher grades are above the national average, albeit from a small cohort.

11. In the sixth form, results in vocational courses are good, with a high proportion of pupils achieving full or part qualification. Results at A level, both pass rates and the quality of grades achieved, are well below the national average. The numbers taking A level in most subjects are small, so subject-on-subject and year-on-year comparisons are not helpful; however, there have been good recent performances in English and Urdu, and by individual pupils. The standards of pupils' work in lessons and in their folders was judged to be in line

with or above the expectations of the course in only two-thirds of lessons.

12. Most pupils are making at least sound progress, and often it is good. Progress was judged to be sound or better in nearly ninety-five per cent of lessons, and good or very good in a third. Progress is at its most rapid in sixth form, where it is at least satisfactory in almost all lessons, and good in half. Progress, as measured both in lessons and across the key stage in pupils' work, is slower in Key Stage 3, confirmed by the lower added value from Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, pupils' progress is more rapid, and the value added by the school is very good in comparison with that in similar schools. Pupils with EAL make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in lessons. Their progress is sometimes limited by teaching which is not sufficiently focused on language development.

13. Progress is sound or better in all subjects, at both key stages and in the sixth form. In the core subjects, progress is sound and often good, and is improving in Key Stages 3 and 4 in mathematics and science. Progress is sound in all foundation subjects, and is rapid in PE and modern languages. Monitoring does not yet take place to ensure that pupils from all ethnic groups make appropriate progress.

14. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory and sometimes better progress in English, mathematics and science. Progress is faster in English and mathematics in Key Stage 4. In lessons when they are withdrawn to receive teaching in basic literacy skills, they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. In some lessons, the progress of pupils with SEN is limited by teaching which is insufficiently focused on specific targets for their improvement, either within each subject or in Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

15. Standards in the key skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, numeracy and IT vary across the curriculum. Pupils' reading standards on entry are low but hard work across the school, particularly by the English, SEN and EAL departments, results in substantial gains in Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 4, the reading standards of most pupils are sound. Pupils' writing is weak in many areas; although there is some good extended writing in English, not enough is expected of pupils' writing elsewhere in the curriculum. In science, for example, writing is limited by the over-use of worksheets which require pupils to complete missing words or phrases. Pupils speak with confidence, aided by the strong oral work in modern languages and drama. They also listen to each other courteously and effectively, and work well collaboratively.

16. Standards of numeracy are at best sound, and are below in Key Stage 3. Given the low mathematical attainment of the intake, numeracy has too low a profile across the curriculum, especially in Key Stage 3. Standards in IT are sound throughout, including in sixth form courses, and are improving. Many subjects, including mathematics, geography, music, science and English, make extensive use of IT to help raise standards.

17. There has been some improvement in standards since the time of the last inspection. The focus has been mainly on Key Stage 4, where progress is quite rapid, and the school now compares well with similar schools at GCSE. Standards in literacy have improved, and the good work in IT has been extended into more subjects. Key Stage 3 writing and numeracy need further attention.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

18. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and make a considerable contribution to their progress.

19. Pupils' relationships with teachers and with each other are respectful and courteous. Pupils welcome visitors to the school with warmth and take pride in showing them round their school. They generally move around the school with a high level of self-discipline, behaving well in the school canteen at lunchtimes and in the corridors. However, some pupils do not move as quickly to lessons as they should.

20. Behaviour in the majority of lessons is good. Pupils settle quickly to work and sustain high levels of concentration. In many subjects such as science and mathematics they are motivated and respond to challenge with enthusiasm. Their work in groups and pairs is effective and they support each other well. A good example of supporting each other learning is found in all year groups as pupils warm up for physical education and sports. Pupils are randomly selected to lead the warm up periods, for example in hockey, and it is notable that pupils in this situation respect each other and work together without fuss. Pupils are careful in the use of equipment and resources, such as in art and science. They listen to and respect each other's views when asked to share their feelings and opinions, for example in discussions on drug abuse in personal and social education lessons. They are keen to participate in question and answer sessions in most lessons, and discuss sensitive and delicate matters with considerable maturity. They value and respect each other's ideas and contributions. Overall, pupils' response was judged to be satisfactory or better in ninety per cent of lessons, and as at least good in over half.

21. The level of permanent exclusions is low and the number of pupils excluded for a fixed term does not exceed the national average for similar schools. The school uses exclusion as an last resort.

22. Pupils' personal development is good. The school offers many opportunities for pupils' personal development. However, some lessons are over-directed and do not encourage pupils sufficiently to take increasing responsibility for their learning or to develop their capacity for independent study as they get older. In A level subjects such as Urdu, pupils prepare and deliver their homework assignments very well and are developing very good critical skills, for example when discussing a variety of texts in modern foreign language.

23. Personal and social skills are focused through a wide range of opportunities where pupils take responsibility and show their initiative. Some of these benefit the school, others the wider community. Fund raising for charities is a feature at all levels of the school, and helps pupils to appreciate that there are others in society less fortunate than themselves. Responsibilities given to pupils include heads of school, librarians and monitors. The School Council and School Nutrition Action Group are good vehicles for pupils' personal development. Through them, pupils from all years are learning how to present and make proposals to senior management and outside agencies. Pupils are good ambassadors for the school when outsiders attend such meetings. A particularly valuable feature of School Council meetings is that pupils are able to take the chair

after a period of training. The large number of extra-curricular activities also affords opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills. The school is fortunate to have its own cottage in Wales which enables pupils to develop a high degree of independence and self-sufficiency.

24. The school works hard to promote the personal and social development and independence of pupils with special educational needs and is successful in this endeavour. These pupils are well integrated into the life of the school.

Attendance

25. Attendance is satisfactory. In recent years it has been around the national average, and has improved slightly year by year. Attendance is above 90 per cent in all year groups, an improvement on the position at the time of the 1995 inspection. Pupils in all year groups enjoy coming to school and most attend well; large numbers achieve the school's awards for good attendance. Unauthorised absence is slightly above the national average and has risen; the school monitors and follows up absence well. Attendance and unauthorised absence rates compare favourably with those of local schools.

26. Through its tutors and year heads, the school monitors punctuality to school carefully. Many pupils are late each day, sometimes caused by traffic problems and sometimes by the need to care for younger relatives. Lessons often start late; this is mainly the result of movement about the large site, although there are a few pupils who do not move as briskly between lessons as they should - as was the case at the time of the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

27. Teaching is of good quality. Around ninety five per cent of all lessons observed were judged sound or better, and over half were good, very good or excellent. These high proportions represent a significant improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection.

28. Teaching is good throughout the age range, and is particularly good in Key Stage 4 where almost all is sound or better and sixty per cent good to excellent. The school has a high proportion of the very best teaching.

29. Teaching is of at least sound standard in all departments, although there are weaknesses in art and music. Teaching in PE, IT and history is consistently of a high standard. In withdrawal groups and where support teachers and assistants have planned with the class teacher, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is always at least sound, and is very often good. The improvement of teaching across the school for pupils with SEN is limited by low expectations and by imprecise targets for improvement in teachers' planning and specifically in IEPs. Teaching of EAL pupils is generally sound, but varies in quality between departments; it is very effective in the humanities, where joint planning between the subject teachers

and the EAL team is very effective. This high quality practice is not the case in other subjects especially the core subjects, and should be disseminated. Throughout the school, teaching helps EAL pupils to feel confident and valued.

30. Across the age range and the subjects, teachers have good subject knowledge, and provide pupils with secure, confident subject leadership. The relatively small amount of non-specialist teaching is generally of sound quality. Teachers prepare lessons well, use a sound range of resources and have very good relationships with pupils of all ages and ethnic origins and of both genders. Pupils are well managed. Homework is used in all subjects to reinforce learning and is of sufficient quality and quantity; some teachers set homework early in the lesson, and thereby make sure all pupils understand what they have to do at home and how it fits with their classwork. Marking is consistent within and between subjects, and provides a secure basis for individual target-setting and for teachers' further lesson planning. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

31. The best teaching seen was characterised by brisk pace and by excitement, such as a history lesson in which there was "a real urgency about the work", and a mathematics lesson which was described as being "ambitious" in the amount of work it attempted and its academic difficulty. These lessons used the time available well, beginning on time, moving through a variety of activities at pace, and giving positive feedback and praise to pupils. Excellent lesson structure, with objectives set out clearly to pupils at the outset, good use of questioning and good revision of what has been learned at the end, characterise the best lessons in all subjects, particularly those in modern languages. The very best lessons also plan to develop pupils' independent learning skills; a PE lesson was described as having "high expectations of pupils' application and their ability to learn and improve", and a history lesson as "deliberately setting out to encourage initiative".

32. The small amount of weak teaching was mainly characterised by the late and noisy arrival of pupils and by over-long introductions by the teachers. Such lessons sometimes became prolonged attempts to control the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils rather than the fulfilment of a teaching plan. A music lesson was described as “continued explanation and demonstration over background talking.” The quality and consistency of teaching have both improved significantly since the last inspection, but its strengths and weaknesses are similar to those of 1995.

33. Teaching which is otherwise of a sound or good standard is often not planned to help pupils develop their skills as independent learners progressively over the five or seven years they are in the school. Teachers are understandably concerned to build the self-esteem and self-confidence of their pupils, many of whom lack these qualities when they arrive in the school; this concern sometimes results in over-cautious teaching, doing things for pupils which they could do for themselves, and asking too little of them.

The curriculum

34. The school provides a broad and generally balanced curriculum, well matched to the needs of the pupils. The inspection of 1995 judged the curriculum to be sound overall with many strengths, especially in its planning, in meeting the needs of pupils, in careers education and extra-curricular activity. All of these aspects have been improved still further. Of the weaknesses identified in the curriculum in 1995, provision to improve pupils’ literacy has improved; weaknesses in the allocation of time for the arts and RE remain.

35. The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE are met in full in Key Stage 3. Time allocations to subjects in this key stage are satisfactory except in the case of music and art, for both of which the time allocated is low, as is the subsequent take-up of these subjects as options. In Key Stage 4, National Curriculum requirements are met but those for RE are not. Despite some improvement since the inspection of 1995, the amount of time provided for RE is inadequate to teach the full Agreed Syllabus. This is also the case in the sixth form, but in this case there are plans to bring the school into compliance next year. The school provides an appropriate curriculum for pupils with EAL.

36. The sixth form curriculum provides a sound range of academic and vocational courses. The relatively small size of the sixth form limits the number of courses available, and there are some gaps; there is very little modern language provision, for example. The school is a market leader in the use of records of achievement and the accreditation of key skills; this very good work, supported by the Compact Scheme, has helped pupils with modest academic qualifications progress into higher education.

37. Statutory and recommended policies for sex and drug education are in place, and the schemes of work for personal, social, moral and health education are good. The acknowledgement that pupils learn better when relationships are secure, and the consequent inclusion of a residential experience for pupils with

their tutors in Year 8 is very good. The scheme of work for IT, involving both free-standing courses and the planned use of IT across the curriculum, is good.

38. The curriculum is well managed. It is overseen effectively by a committee of the governing body. This committee receives reports on areas of the curriculum and on school performance, comments on draft curriculum policies, and helps set and evaluate priorities for curriculum development. The committee works closely with the members of the SMT responsible for the curriculum; it reports to the full governing body, and enables effective oversight of curriculum development. Members of the senior management team work together to manage the curriculum and plan its development, led by one deputy head with overall responsibility. This is an effective arrangement.

39. The programme of enhancements to the curriculum, to adjust it to the needs of pupils of different abilities and competence in English, is good. It includes whole-curriculum enhancements such as the use of the computer system "Successmaker" to help with the literacy and numeracy of younger pupils, the Compact and mentoring systems to help improve the motivation, attendance and attainment of pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, and the extensive work of the Building the Achievement of Bilingual Pupils (BABP) team, which supports pupils for whom English is an additional language. Individual subjects also offer good enhancements: examples include the different combinations of foreign languages, including Urdu, available at various levels; the CASE ("Thinking Science") programme; an accelerated GCSE economics course; a statistics course in mathematics; and homework and revision clubs in a number of subjects. Pupils are entered for a range of examinations well matched to their abilities and interest.

40. The programme of extra-curricular activities is good. The varied offering of academic, sporting, cultural and leisure activities makes a real contribution to lifelong learning in an area in which many of these opportunities would otherwise be difficult for young people to find. The school provides a very good range of sporting opportunities, individual and team, competitive and non-competitive. The PE department works effectively with local sports clubs.

41. Careers education and the preparation of pupils for adult life are good. The programme of careers education and guidance, work experience and Compact activities is rich and well-co-ordinated. The careers library is good. The careers service works very effectively with the school, providing support for the programme of careers education as well as advice to individual pupils. The labour market information and destination statistics provided by the careers service are valuable for planning.

42. Planning for continuity and progression in the curriculum is good, based on well-written schemes of work. There is inadequate planning for progression in art in Key Stage 3. The school has made good progress with planning IT into departmental schemes of work. Continuity and progression are enhanced by the very good collaborative planning in many departments, modern languages and history for example.

43. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have access to the full curriculum, supported by the good work of the learning support teachers and

assistants, and by the BABP service and the home-school liaison tutor. The school offers a curriculum which provides positive images of both genders and of people of all ethnic origins, and which tries to engage with the cultural heritage of its pupils. Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into the life of the school. Extraction of pupils from mainstream lessons occurs when pupils require additional assistance to ensure continued improvement; such withdrawal is well managed, so that pupils do not consistently miss the same lesson. The arrangements to place pupils on the school's SEN register, and then to assess and record their progress, are very good. IEPs are sound, but the targets in them define the provision more often than the intended learning gains. The requirements of statements of special educational needs are met. The arrangements for annual reviews comply with requirements of the Code of Practice; parents are appropriately informed and involved. The cycle of stage 2 and 3 reviews is not yet firmly established, but improvements are in process.

Assessment

44. Assessment of pupils' work complies with statutory requirements. Subjects generally have good internal assessment systems, and assessment, marking and rewards for achievement are mostly consistent within subjects and conform with the school's policies. Since the last inspection, the marking policy has been updated and provides clear specific guidance to departments which is generally consistently followed. While the marking of work is regular and consistent, teachers comments do not always help pupils understand what they should do to improve. Good practice was, however, found in English, geography and history. The arrangements to assess and record the progress of pupils with SEN and EAL are good. Portfolios of their linguistic development are kept and their progress monitored against standard levels.

45. The school provides annual reports to parents of pupils in all year groups. Year 11 reports contain reviews of the year in all areas of the curriculum with predicted grades and targets for improvement. These are put to good use at meetings between staff and parents to discuss pupils' progress in more detail. Annual reviews of pupils with special educational needs are good and are carried out according to statutory requirements.

46. The extent to which the assessment of pupils' work is used to raise standards and inform teachers' planning is variable and is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Since 1998, whole school systems have been in place in using assessment to raise attainment. There are examples of good practice in geography, PE and modern languages. Senior managers began formal annual reviews of the work of departments in 1997, with a view to establishing challenging targets, using cross – subject statistical comparisons, baseline attainment and benchmarking. While all departments monitor patterns in their results very well, not all heads of departments use the analysis to identify implications for teaching and learning, to help pupils improve the quality of their work.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

47. Through its policies and practices, the school has ensured that learning takes place in an atmosphere of respect and care. Relationships are consistently good. A well-considered personal, social and moral education policy, programme of assemblies and opportunities in lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

48. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school has made good progress in reviewing opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum since the last inspection. Religious education, history and art make significant contributions to pupils' understanding and ability to explore the fundamental questions of human beliefs and experiences.

49. There has also been considerable progress in the development of the school's programme of assemblies since the previous inspection and a more detailed and effective programme of themes and activities has been established. Assemblies are well-organised events with outside speakers used very well. At the last inspection the school failed to provide a daily act of collective worship for pupils. The school still does not provide a daily act but, nevertheless, gives pupils relevant and interesting opportunities to reflect on aspects of religious spirituality, human achievement, frailty and suffering.

50. A great deal of emphasis is placed throughout the school on pupils' moral and social development. The provision for moral development is very good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and a code of conduct encourages self-discipline, care and consideration for others. The well-planned personal and social development programme provides very good opportunities for pupils to explore their own and others' attitudes and values. Pupils learn through role-playing moral dilemmas, debating the consequences of their actions and establishing shared responsibilities. Theatre groups make an excellent contribution and allow pupils to develop their views and social values. In history pupils explore the ethical issues of human conflict, and in sex education they consider the morality of birth control and contraception.

51. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Teaching methods across the curriculum ensure that pupils have considerable opportunities to learn how to work collaboratively, to be sensitive to each other's needs and to respect reasoned argument and disagreement. Pupils in the sixth form show very good social awareness and criticise positively. The personal development programme enables pupils to develop an understanding of rights and responsibilities and helps develop their understanding of citizenship. In Year 12, pupils have valuable opportunities to take responsibility through the heads of schools and prefect roles. Pupils in all year groups represent their form groups at the School Council. There are also valuable opportunities for all pupils to develop team work and leadership skills through the wide range of extra-curricular activities. As the school has its own residential site in Wales, it can plan and deliver programmes to suit pupils' needs. Pupils are able to develop self-confidence and inter-personal skills through meeting and interacting with many members of the community frequently. For example, at a recent School Council meeting, the Council showed that it could discuss important issues with senior management of the school, and representatives from local industry, in a mature and effective way.

52. Support for pupils' cultural development is excellent and a great strength of the school. Within and beyond the curriculum, pupils gain significant knowledge and experience of other cultures. The strong cultural setting of the school, particularly the recently restored Springfield Centre ('West Wing') creates a rich ethos. The magnificent Centre, with such an inspirational history of educational achievement, comes together very well with the new sports complex and main buildings, bringing about a truly varied multi-cultural environment. The extensive programme of visits to museums, places of worship, art galleries, theatres and parks increases pupils' experience well. School events such as concerts and music workshops enhance pupils' understanding of their own culture in relation to other cultures. The school library provides an important resource for pupils' development.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

53. The school provides a caring, secure and pleasant learning environment for pupils. The pastoral system is a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to educational standards. A well co-ordinated structure involving the senior management team, heads of year and form tutors ensures that pupils receive effective support and guidance on a day-to-day basis. Pupils feel that teachers are responsive to their needs and value the care and concern shown by them. They approach teachers with confidence and there are very good relationships.

54. There are very good systems and procedures to monitor pupils' academic and personal development. National Curriculum assessments are carried out regularly, and the school also monitors and records pupils' personal and academic progress through the homework diary and pupils' planners. A structured programme of monitoring, requiring pupils and teachers to agree targets for improvement, is effective in raising achievement.

55. Every effort is made to ensure that new pupils settle well into the school. During their last year at primary school, they take part in a well-structured programme of information and visits so that they are confident in their choice of attending this school. The information sessions and induction days are sensitively organised to respond to the needs and anxieties of new pupils. In Year 7 the personal development programme ensures that pupils are well informed about school procedures and expectations.

56. The pastoral support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they are able to take part in all aspects of school life. They are well integrated into lessons and given appropriate support by teachers. Informal counselling is provided for pupils by teaching and support staff. The monitoring of these pupils' academic progress is very good. IEPs are generally of good quality and they provide a firm basis for progress. The targets in some plans are imprecise.

57. The school has excellent procedures in place to monitor and promote high standards of behaviour. There is a very strong ethos of respect, courtesy and consideration which results from the very high expectations of behaviour. The school has developed a very good quality behaviour policy. The code of conduct was developed some time ago, through a consultation process which involved pupils and parents. The Code has resulted in a sense of 'ownership' from pupils such that they take considerable responsibility for the codes and

their own behaviour. The school rules are displayed throughout the school. Pupils value the system of merits and letters sent home. Staff work extremely hard to maintain high standards of behaviour. Sanctions are applied firmly, but are sensitive to pupils' need to learn and to make amends. An anti-bullying policy is in place. The school makes excellent use of outside speakers and visiting theatre groups to develop pupil's views on bullying. The school has engaged an agency to run a 'social harmony' programme and much valuable work is done with pupils who have challenging or aggressive behaviour. The school is moving towards developing a system of peer mediation.

58. The arrangements for monitoring and promoting behaviour and attendance are excellent: they are proving successful in changing negative attitudes. The '100 per cent Club' is a major incentive for pupils to maintain high standards. Rewards within this system are attractive and much sought after by pupils, culminating in a school-supported day out. Certificates and items of stationery are also used effectively as rewards. Measures to follow up absence are good. There is an effective partnership with the education welfare service.

59. The school has sound arrangements for sex education with effective involvement of agencies such as the school nurse and theatre in education groups. Pupils approach the school counsellor confidently about a very wide range of anxieties and problems. The counsellor liaises effectively with school staff and outside agencies as necessary, always maintaining confidentiality. The school works well with staff from the Compact and Trident initiatives. These agencies and the Careers Service combine well with school staff to deliver a well-integrated programme of advice and information about careers.

60. The school complies with the statutory requirements for child protection. The two nominated teachers are appropriately trained. All staff have access to the school's policy and procedures. There are effective links with Social Services.

61. The school has very good arrangements for promoting the health, safety, hygiene and welfare of pupils. Appropriate systems are in place to enable the governing body to monitor the provision of safe and healthy working conditions for pupils and staff. There are two appropriately trained members of staff who carry out risk assessments. The school has a comprehensive and effective health and safety policy. Arrangements for emergencies and first aid are good and there are five appropriately trained staff to administer first aid. Fire drills are carried out regularly.

62. The school places considerable emphasis on health and safety matters in everyday teaching, for example in science. Pupils in Year 11 about to embark on their period of work experience at employers' premises are given a good grounding in vigilance. Personal and social education lessons include topic work on drug and alcohol abuse. Again external agencies are well involved by the school, for example the school nurse, emergency services and visiting theatre groups. These agencies have a strong input to Health Week and occasional days organised by the school, for example about HIV and AIDS.

63. During the period of inspection, inspectors noted some potential hazards. The main corridor in the PE department has a slippery surface, and windows in art rooms are potentially hazardous. Also, the newly created Information Technology areas in the West Wing have some trailing wires and connections. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the safety issues raised at the last inspection.

Partnership with parents and the community

64. Partnership with parents and the community is very good overall. Parental involvement in the life of the school and in pupils' learning is satisfactory. The parents' meeting with inspectors indicated a very warm relationship between parents and staff, based on mutual trust and respect. A large number of parents attend parents' meetings concerning their children's progress.

65. The school encourages and welcomes parents to become involved in the life of the school, and works very hard in this endeavour. Staff show very strong commitment in their efforts to increase the number of parents who are regularly involved with the school. Pupils' diaries show that there is sound involvement overall by parents in their children's learning at home. The home-school liaison staff make an excellent contribution to involving parents in their children's education. They work closely with parents and help staff and parents where there are considerable language difficulties. The Family Learning Project is a very good vehicle for pupils, staff and parents to cement their very good relationships further. This project includes various curriculum workshops, for example in science and mathematics. A considerable number of parents attend English as a Second Language courses, which are very well organised and delivered by the school. The Parents' Group supports the school well by organising a large number of social and fundraising events. Any funds raised by the group are given to the school for additional learning resources such as books and equipment. A small number of parents make good contributions to pupils' learning by giving talks to classes. For example, an artist was involved in work surrounding 'the tree of life'. Several parents have attended the school to give talks to pupils about their faith or particular festivals such as Divali and Eid.

66. Information to parents is of excellent quality. A wide range of information booklets is produced by the school. The prospectus is supplemented by a handbook for parents and both provide well written and presented information about school routines. Governors' annual reports to parents are presented in an imaginative and handy format. Parents are provided with appropriately detailed information booklets about

the curriculum and forthcoming topic work in each year group. Information meetings and workshops are used well to keep parents updated. Information about particular policies such as behaviour is very well written. The Moseley School Times is an excellent quality magazine which is well used to celebrate pupils' achievements. Regular newsletters inform parents about events in the school. Newsletters and key booklets are translated by staff into Urdu for the benefit of parents; home-school liaison staff play a major role in this. These staff are valued by the school community and are always at hand throughout the school year, for example at parents' meetings.

67. Links with the community are excellent. The school has recently had phenomenal success in working with various sections of the community to secure a number of grants and subsidies from different sources. Awarding bodies include national lotteries and European sources. Pupils benefit well from the expertise, careers advice and work experience afforded them through the school's partnership with the Careers Service, Compact and Trident. There is a wide variety of links with art galleries, museums, theatres and parks, and with the clergy of different faiths, who work closely with teachers to provide talks for pupils. These links make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development, since contemporary dilemmas are discussed. For example, the moral aspects of behaviour were discussed by one guest speaker recently at a year group assembly. Pupils visit several places of worship as part of their religious education. The school has developed relationships with a number of theatre groups such that they make a very valuable contribution to pupils' personal and social development - for example, they help to raise pupils' awareness of drug abuse issues and they are also used effectively to support sex education. There are effective partnerships with outside agencies to support pupils with special educational needs. The emergency services regularly provide talks and presentations, helping to promote pupils' health and safety.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

68. This is an extremely well-led school.

69. The vision of the headteacher and her senior colleagues is inspiring and sets a clear educational direction resulting in a school committed to self-improvement, with first-class procedures for quality assurance and improvement planning. Staff work very hard; they plan in detail and routinely review their work, enabling change to be measured and further improvement planned for. The school has improved, such as in the quality of teaching and standards of literacy, and has the capacity to go on doing so. At the time of the last inspection, leadership and management were seen as very effective but there were parts of the school which were not yet fully involved in the planning and improvement culture. This is no longer the case, and the strengths have been improved still further; overall, leadership and management are very good, with some excellent features.

70. With the support of very capable and helpful teams of office and site staff, this large and complex school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Management procedures such as briefings, cover for absent teachers and meetings of all kinds operate efficiently. Working groups are well run and produce good

recommendations, which are then implemented. Progress in implementing the action plan from the 1995 OFSTED inspection is good.

71. Not only is the school efficient and effective, it is also characterised by a very positive ethos: an upbeat, “can do” style; mutual respect and courtesy among all members of the community; good behaviour; and an atmosphere which is welcoming to parents, pupils and visitors. As a result, the school is well regarded by parents and its multi-cultural and multi-lingual community. The work of the home-school liaison tutor, and of all those who work with the community, is of high quality and is highly valued by parents.

72. Governors play their strategic role well and support the school effectively. They are committed, well-informed, and balance the roles of support and monitoring well. They evaluate options for curriculum development and for spending thoroughly, and are beginning to follow through to see whether their decisions result in appropriate educational gain. The work of the committees and of attached governors enables governors to work closely with staff and understand the work of the school in detail. The support given to the school by the governing body has increased considerably since the time of the last inspection.

73. Leadership at departmental level is very good. Departments and year teams are efficiently managed and well documented. Most departments maintain a professional discourse about teaching their subject, through the very good programme of departmental meetings and weekly in-service training sessions. The routines of monitoring the quality of teaching and curriculum development, and then planning for its improvement based on an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, are very well developed. Teachers’ plans are regularly checked and commented on by heads of departments and deputy heads. All curriculum development and school improvement initiatives have success criteria built into them, most of them couched in terms of increased standards; changes are thus systematically evaluated for the impact they make on pupils’ learning. The programme of reviews, by which the work of each department is evaluated on a two-year cycle, is very thorough.

74. The results of the monitoring systems have been brought together into a whole-school improvement programme which builds on best practice and which enables teachers to learn from each other. The school improvement plan (SIP) is an excellent document which places raising achievement at the centre of its priorities. It was compiled through an exemplary process of whole-school review involving all staff and governors, and making systematic and sophisticated use of performance data. The school gathers an impressive range of data about the performance of its pupils and departments, and uses these data well to set priorities and targets for improvement. These targets are clearly published, are realistic but challenging.

75. Further analysis of the data to ensure that ethnic groups in the school are making appropriate progress would be a valuable development. Liaison between the EAL and SEN departments is underdeveloped and this restricts the learning of EAL pupils in classes supported by members of the SEN team.

76. Year heads are highly regarded by parents and pupils for the support and guidance they provide, and the various policies relating to pupils’ welfare have been developed and implemented well through the pastoral

team. The pastoral system makes a contribution to raising academic standards through its work on recording achievement and academic tutoring.

77. Statutory requirements are generally met. The governing body meets and minutes its procedures properly, and presents the work of the school in a prospectus and annually to parents as required by law. Its committees are very effective in both monitoring and supporting the school. Statutory and recommended policies are in place and operational. Health and safety procedures, such as fire practices and risk assessments, are generally good. Teachers' work is carefully and regularly assessed by senior staff, and targeted programmes of staff development made available. Assemblies, though they celebrate achievement, make significant contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and help build the school's ethos and values, do not meet the requirement for a daily act of corporate worship, as they did not at the time of the previous inspection.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

78. There is a sufficient number of teaching staff, most of whom are well qualified in the subjects they teach. Staffing for pupils with special educational needs and for those for whom English is an additional language is sufficient, and those teachers are also well qualified. There are, however, some difficulties in recruitment for mathematics and music. In history and art several teachers have responsibilities in other departments as well and this makes resource management and subject co-ordination difficult. At present there are a number of staff from minority ethnic groups and the SMT are aware of the need to retain and increase the numbers of such staff to reflect the ethnic diversity of the school.

79. Arrangements for the induction and professional development of staff are very good and linked to the whole-school plan for raising standards. They are carefully matched to individual teachers' needs and to team and whole-school targets. The practice of departments and teams engaging in professional development each week mentioned in the last inspection report continues and provides considerable benefits. Appraisal arrangements do not comply fully with statutory requirements but the work of staff is regularly reviewed and professional development needs identified and met. All staff are continuing to develop their expertise in the use of IT to support their professional role.

80. Teaching is well supported by a range of staff but there is insufficient technician support in some departments. This lack has a negative effect on the curriculum. Since the last inspection there has been a review of the deployment of language support staff with beneficial effects in many areas of the curriculum. This expertise and support needs to spread further, particularly to key subjects like mathematics and science. For pupils with SEN, integration and reading assistants provide support of variable quality, though current training is addressing this problem.

81. Since the last inspection a splendid renovation of the Victorian west wing has been completed, and an excellent health and fitness centre built, substantially improving the accommodation provided. Overall, accommodation including specialist facilities is good. For example the main computer rooms in the IT department provide good learning areas for whole-class teaching. There are however cramped conditions in a few rooms, for example in the English department, which limit pupils' ability to participate. Good displays throughout the school enhance the quality of the accommodation.

82. Health and safety are carefully monitored by governors and staff, and pupils are involved in these issues.

83. In all subjects the level of resources is adequate for the school's curriculum and range of pupils. The resources for pupils with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language are good. The library is widely used but its stock requires updating and extending.

The efficiency of the school

84. The quality of financial planning and the deployment of the budget to meet the priorities expressed in the school improvement plan are excellent. School improvement planning is extensive and very well developed. Plans, including those at department level, are required to demonstrate the effect of initiatives on the attainment of pupils and there is a clear focus on raising attainment across the school. School improvement plans at all levels are costed in terms of finance and time and most have clear indications of the measures that will be applied to judge the success of the initiatives. The school has clear and effective systems to budget systematically for new expenditure and to ensure that this focuses carefully on school improvement and raising attainment. The school is well placed to plan ahead in relation to both actual and predicted expenditure. The newly-appointed school bursar is developing a three-year financial plan that will support the process of medium-term school improvement planning.

85. The school has responded very well to the issues raised by the previous inspection. It has established a middle managers' finance committee that is responsible for the allocation of funds to departments using a formula and school improvement bids. Each member of this committee is responsible for negotiation and liaison with a number of departments, and so members of the committee have acquired a

good understanding of budget procedures. The finance committee of the governing body meets regularly and has terms of reference which clearly lists its duties and functions. These include the provision of guidance and assistance to the headteacher and governing body; consideration of the annual development plan; responding to audit reports and monitoring income and expenditure.

86. Management of the budget and systems to monitor value for money are very good. For example, the purchase of a computerised registration system was based on the need to reduce internal truancy; evaluation of this technology has already demonstrated that it has had a positive effect on attendance at lessons.

87. The use of teaching and support staff is satisfactory. There is a small amount of non-specialist teaching in some subjects but, in the main, this teaching is satisfactory and does not have a detrimental effect on pupils' progress. In music, however, the non-specialist teaching is unsatisfactory and consequently pupils' progress is inhibited. In art and history, some teachers teach other subjects and therefore do not have sufficient time to plan for each subject or to liaise with other teachers of these subjects. The deployment of support staff is sometimes inefficient. Occasionally there are up to four support staff and teachers in one room with the subject teacher, while in other lessons where there is an equally wide range of ability, there are no support staff. This situation is complicated by the need to meet the requirements of statements of special educational need and to support those pupils for whom English is an additional language. The funds allocated to the school for special educational needs are used appropriately. The school makes effective and efficient use of resources and accommodation.

88. Financial control and administration are excellent. All necessary checks and balances are in place. There are good procedures to administer the school's private funds, which are audited externally. Money contributed by families for educational visits is managed effectively through the general school budget. The recommendations of the auditor's last report have been met. The bursar provides high quality information for consideration by the senior management team and governing body. This information enables them to make well-informed decisions about the management and control of the budget. Overview of the budget is very good at all levels. The senior management team monitors spending by the departments and is able to evaluate the value for money achieved. Day-to-day administration is very good. Office procedures are very effective and enable teachers to concentrate on teaching.

89. Despite pupils' below-average attainment in relation to all schools nationally, they make good progress in all subjects and, by the end of Key Stage 4, they attain standards in line with or above those achieved in similar schools. Staff, resources and the accommodation are deployed well to provide a high quality education and, in particular, the quality of teaching is good. Therefore the school provides good value for money. The BABP (EAL service) also provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

90. The English department has capably addressed the areas for improvement identified by the last inspection. A level results have improved, with all candidates achieving a pass in 1998 and with grades up to A in coursework and B in the examination. A strategy to encourage independent wider reading has been established using pupil reading records as well as boxes of Library Service texts and group readers. Schemes of work and extension activities have been developed to support the more able. Further use of differentiated material should now build on this.

91. Standards of attainment are below the national average at Key Stage 3 and at GCSE. However, most of the intake have reading ages significantly below their chronological age and many do not have good knowledge of English at that stage. Progress is steady and consistent throughout the school, including for pupils with SEN. The GCSE results, although below national averages, reflect this progress: nearly a third of boys and half of the girls obtained grades A* - C in English Language GCSE in 1998. The English Literature GCSE results dipped in 1998, perhaps owing to a change of examination board, to 14 per cent of boys and 34 per cent of girls obtaining grades A* - C compared with 50 per cent and 65 per cent nationally. The disparity between oral and written work becomes marked at Key Stage 4. Many pupils are orally confident, use a fairly wide vocabulary, read accurately and show fair recall. This apparent facility often masks difficulties in actually understanding the complexities of a text. Written work throughout both key stages contains many inaccuracies in spellings, punctuation and syntax and some of these weaknesses persist in the sixth form.

92. Drama is taught separately in Year 7 and at GCSE. It is frequently used throughout the English department, since it offers the pupils an excellent outlet for self-expression and the development of their speaking and listening skills.

93. Pupils' response is at least satisfactory in almost all lessons; response is good in Key Stage 4. Immature behaviour at Key Stage 3 shows itself in fidgeting, chatter and some silliness, especially among boys. However, most pupils respond quickly to teacher intervention and settle to attentive behaviour. Pupils are keen to participate, volunteer ideas and read aloud. The best lessons were characterised by a business-like atmosphere enhanced by the pupils' evident enthusiasm and commitment, and by the good relationships both between pupils and between them and their teacher. Many find sustained concentration difficult, but

are aided by the teachers' judicious choice of structured tasks. Many good examples of collaborative work were seen, including sixth form lessons in which pupils shared ideas and thereby moved to a deeper analysis of texts. The materials used by the drama and English departments promote understanding of other people and of the stresses individuals suffer. This makes an impressive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

94. The quality of teaching is sound throughout the school. Overall, 93 per cent of lessons were sound or better and 80 per cent of those at Key Stage 4 were good or very good. All teachers showed a firm grasp of their subject and worked hard to provide well-structured lessons with clear expectations and sensible use of homework. The few weaker lessons seen moved too slowly and needed to bring in a different activity for the last section to sustain concentration and effort.

95. Pupils' work is regularly marked according to the department policy, generally with constructive comments to aid progress. One very good Key Stage 4 lesson exemplified good practice by moving from the assessment of pupils' work to group and individual feedback, and through such analysis to enable further improvement.

96. Work is carefully planned to meet National Curriculum and examination board requirements. There is a good range of activity and culturally appropriate materials, and a breadth of traditional and contemporary texts.

97. The collaborative work of the department is a strength. Responsibilities are clearly allocated, and there is a precise departmental development plan with identified priorities for spending. Accommodation is usefully grouped together, but is somewhat shabby and too cramped for the larger groups. Classes are set to enable more focused work, with SEN and EAL support targeted at particular needs. However, there were clearly pupils in large unsupported English classes who would benefit considerably from such support, as would the class teachers.

· **Mathematics**

98. Standards in mathematics have improved gradually since the last inspection. Results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 show improved proportions of pupils achieving the nationally expected level. However, these results remain very low in comparison with national averages and are well below those of similar schools. GCSE results show steady improvement over the last three years, but very few pupils achieve the highest grades. In 1998 the proportion of pupils achieving graded results were still well below the national average. A level groups have been small in recent years but the popularity of the subject has increased sharply in the present Year 12. The small groups have produced a range of grades but overall success rates are below national averages.

99. In lessons in the main school, pupils are attaining standards below those expected in a full range comprehensive school but are rather better than previous examination results indicates. This suggests further

improvement in examination performance is likely. Pupils are performing more strongly in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3, where expectations are a little low. Attainment in A level courses, where there is a generous entry policy, is weak. Work sampling shows pupils of all abilities are achieving good personal standards in their class work. Pupils taking an early GCSE in Year 10 are performing well.

100. Pupils' performance in the formal computational skills of number are sound and calculator use is generally accurate and appropriate. Mental mathematical skills are developing but remain weak. Weaker pupils struggle with generalisations and simple algebra. Standards in shape and data handling are stronger. Measurement skills are variable, but pupils' use of computers is stronger. Pupils use computers reasonably confidently and display good skills in using spreadsheets and creating geometrical shapes. The skills of investigation are under-developed. In many lessons there is insufficient emphasis given to mathematical language development, which is inhibiting standards of precise thinking, talking and writing. Insufficient speaking and listening opportunities are created between pupils to promote consistent language enrichment and refinement. Some good presentational standards are being achieved by individual pupils.

101. There are isolated examples of numeracy being well reinforced in design and technology, science, information technology and music. The intended whole-school policy on numeracy has yet to become a reality.

102. Pupils are making much better progress with their learning of mathematics than in 1995. In this inspection, progress in lessons was almost invariably at least satisfactory, and often it was good or very good. Progress within Key Stage 3 is slower than at Key Stage 4. Middle-ability pupils progress least rapidly. Progress at A level is sound.

103. Pupils learn most effectively where teachers plan carefully and pay explicit attention to learning outcomes, where clear links to previous and future work are explained and illustrated and where revision sessions are carefully designed to lead into new learning or more complex problem solving. Less good progress is made when lesson planning is simplistic and where revision sessions are tackled unimaginatively. Occasionally expectations are too low and the work too easy. Pupils with SEN benefit from smaller groups and extra support staffing. They make sound progress but would benefit from greater diagnostic precision about their mathematical difficulties in their IEPs.

104. Most pupils' responses to mathematics lessons are good or very good. This is significantly better than the situation reported in the last inspection. Responses are best when pupils are fully engaged in their

work. This sometimes involves pupils asking questions as well as answering them, or teachers using predominantly “open” questions. Practical activities and group work both improve pupils’ use of mathematical language and systematically build up their confidence. Responses were unsatisfactory when pupils are not kept busy enough, sometimes because the teacher talked at the class for too long.

105. The quality of teaching seen was almost always satisfactory or better. About half was good, with a sprinkling of very good and excellent lessons. This represents a much improved situation from that in 1995. The few lessons seen in Year 7 were, however, rather mundane and slow paced, indicating a problem in getting the new intake enthused and challenged as quickly as possible in their new environment. The best teaching is delivered by well-organised teachers whose subject insights are acute. They anticipate standard learning difficulties accurately and are flexible enough to spot and act efficiently on pupils’ misconceptions. Some risks are taken to make the lesson memorable or to make the key learning points clearly. Activities are thoughtfully presented in a way that optimises the involvement of all pupils. In the less effective lessons, teachers use their voices poorly and place too little attention on the language needs of their pupils.

106. The mathematics curriculum meets statutory requirements in terms of breadth. An increase in opportunities for investigation and for practising mental skills will improve balance. Curriculum improvements have included statistics enrichment courses for able Year 11 pupils and a new Certificate of Achievement for low attainers in Years 10 and 11. Extra work on information technology and mental mathematics has been incorporated into a revised scheme of work. These schemes, together with some revised ability grouping across the school, have improved continuity and progression. Co-operative departmental work to disseminate good practice and to discuss language development would enhance the effectiveness of the scheme further. If it were possible to limit the wide mathematical ability range present in some early Key Stage 3 groups this would help the matching of work to the pupils. Departmental practice in using test data, both to target pupils for extra attention and to develop the curriculum is good. As yet, assessment is not being used precisely enough to diagnose pupils’ mathematical weaknesses and help overcome them.

107. The leadership of the department is proving successful in promoting steady improvement in many aspects of its performance. There is effective collaboration among teachers in the department. Improvement planning is sound and implementation and evaluation are conscientiously handled. A little extra imagination and drive is now required to capitalise fully on achievements to date. The department is well staffed and the interests and talents of the team are fully used. Professional development needs are well served by off-site courses and by learning developments in school. Accommodation is adequate, well presented, and enhanced by displays. Resources for learning are adequate and reasonably utilised. The number and quality of recent improvements, which are gradually impacting on the standards of pupils’ work, indicate good value for money is being achieved by this department.

Science

108. Attainment in external tests and examinations at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 remains well below national figures for pupils of similar ages but, since the last inspection, standards have improved year by year. Attainment is now in line with that in similar schools. At Key Stage 4, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* to C has risen significantly since 1997. The percentage of A* to G grades is now more comparable with national figures and compares well with those of similar schools. Attainment levels at the end of Key Stage 3 have risen only marginally and still remain around one level below those expected for pupils of similar age, but are close to those in similar schools. The attainment of students in the sixth form is more variable, fluctuating from year to year, reflecting the relatively small numbers of students entered for external examinations. Numbers are too small to make valid comparisons with national data.

109. Throughout the school the majority of pupils are making good progress in science; they are responding well to the challenges and are sufficiently motivated to enjoy the subject. Written work is generally well presented, but opportunities for extended pieces of writing to demonstrate understanding and application are limited by the nature and scope of the worksheets in use. These frequently require only simple word insertion or sentence completion. The creation of revision clubs, together with a more structured approach towards target setting, are helping pupils to progress, particularly at Key Stage 4. The progress made in Key Stage 4 is at least satisfactory and, for many pupils, is very good. Pupils are responding well to the challenges of improving on their previous best, and in many cases are showing real determination to succeed. Practical skills are satisfactory, but many pupils lack the confidence to question and evaluate their own data. In classes where girls are in a significant minority, they are more reluctant to participate and their progress is therefore less secure. At Key Stage 3, pupil progress is again at least satisfactory and, for a significant number of pupils, good or very good. Pupils are making very good progress in the Year 7 'CASE - Thinking Science' course and are acquiring the skills required for successful science investigative work. Year 9 pupils are responding well to the requirements of attainment tests, and are beginning to ask for help to enable them to improve on their previous best. Progress is less secure for pupils who need support, whether for EAL or for SEN, but who do not receive it. Pupils following A level and GNVQ science courses in the sixth form are making good progress and are acquiring the essential key skills for study at a higher level.

110. Across all year groups the attitude and behaviour of pupils towards their work in science are at least satisfactory and are frequently good or very good. Pupils respond well to their teachers and to the demands of the subject. Whilst practical work is often conducted noisily, pupils remain mainly on task, working sensibly and safely. Minor instances of disruptive behaviour are often as a result of a breakdown in communication or of a lack of understanding of the requirements of the task. At Key Stage 3, pupils frequently have a positive attitude, particularly in the Year 7 classes following the CASE course. In these classes the pupils are responding very well to the challenges and are starting to formulate hypotheses and

devise 'fair tests' for investigational work. Similarly, pupils in Years 8 and 9 are keen to participate and, in many cases, are able to work collaboratively. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are aware of the requirements of the external tests and examinations and have a very positive attitude to their work. Some girls, however, make little contribution in practical lessons and are content to watch others do the work. The growing number of sixth form pupils studying science courses reflects the improved performance at Key Stage 4. These pupils have a very positive approach to their studies and are developing the skills required for a more independent approach to their learning.

111. Teaching at all stages is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. There is some very good and excellent teaching. Teachers use a range of strategies to maintain interest and to motivate the pupils, for example: the use of a range of questioning techniques to challenge pupils' thinking and understanding; reinforcement of learning points at regular intervals; having appropriately high expectation of the pupils and moving the lessons along at a brisk pace. In some lessons, however, there are instances of teaching for control rather than for learning, of over-direction in teaching, thereby reducing the opportunities for pupils to think and plan for themselves, and of over-reliance on the use of worksheets. In all lessons, better use should be made of the 'Raising Achievement Data', required as school policy, to set more specific learning objectives for individuals and groups of pupils as part of the lesson planning process.

112. The science department has strong leadership, a positive ethos, and a clear sense of direction by which to achieve its aim of raising the standards of all pupils. A number of good strategies and policies have been established. For example, the department has developed strategies for using assessment data to set targets for individual pupils; this is proving to be successful and has led to the creation of revision clubs and to an 'improving on previous best' culture, particularly at Key Stage 4. Similar strategies for pupils within Key Stage 3 are not yet embedded. The introduction of the CASE - Thinking Science course into the Year 7 curriculum is successful: pupils are better prepared for and more able to cope with the requirements of investigative science. The development of these skills within other year groups is, however, weak. Strategies for the implementation of information and communication technology within the science curriculum are in place, and appropriate use is made throughout the department of the excellent provision for ICT. Display work is generally good, reflecting a range of pupils' work. Opportunities, however, to use display to reflect the cultural diversity of science have not been taken in many of the laboratories or departmental areas and should be considered.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

· Design and technology

113. During the last two years there has been good improvement in the proportion of pupils who achieve GCSE A*- C grades. Although GCSE performance at A*- C is below the national average for all schools, it

is now in line with the performance of similar schools. The proportion of pupils who gain GCSE A*- G grades is in line with the national average for all schools. The department is taking appropriate actions to reduce the high number of pupils who study design and technology but are not entered for an examination or certificate of achievement. Pupils begin Year 7 with standards in design and technology that range from below to well below national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 3 their standards have risen and, while still below national expectations, they are closer to them than in Year 7. Progress in both key stages and in the GNVQ Manufacturing Course in the sixth form is satisfactory and sometimes good. It is strongest at Key Stage 4 and accelerates once pupils begin GCSE or GNVQ studies in specialist areas. Pupils with SEN and EAL make similar progress to that of their peers. A small proportion of pupils make slower progress, especially those with behaviour improvement targets and extreme language difficulties. While there is no overall difference in the progress of boys and girls, the fluctuating concentration of boys affects their progress in lessons far more often than girls.

114. Pupils' progress is strongest in developing their making skills, such as using patterns for cutting fabrics and templates for marking out where to drill holes. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of, for example, the use of tools, food packaging and labelling, and of different types of fabric fixings and fastenings. Pupils make good progress in developing research skills, such as seeking ideas and evaluating products using questionnaires; some can plan the sequence of work and many can use colour and different letter shapes to make their work more attractive. The development of technical graphic skills, such as orthographic drawing, is largely confined to Year 9 and GCSE graphics courses. At Key Stage 4 pupils make good use of fashion sketches to illustrate their design ideas. In GNVQ some pupils make good progress in developing their research and reporting skills, for example in reporting manufacturing processes. Progress is weak in a range of areas. Pupils are not making sufficient progress in developing the skills required to plan and manage extended design-and-make projects independently. They do not produce sufficiently detailed product specifications and evaluate their product's performance against them and, with the exception of those studying GNVQ, pupils rarely apply industrial processes to their work, such as planning how to control quality in manufacture.

115. Pupils generally make satisfactory use of their literacy skills. For example, some pupils at Key Stage 4 present well-organised and detailed research into a range of food products. However, weak handwriting and spelling makes it difficult for some to present work satisfactorily. Most pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory, but a significant minority is reluctant to talk about design and technology because they have only a narrow range of technical vocabulary. Many pupils make effective use of their numeracy skills, for example, to measure quantities and to analyse numerical data and present it in the form of bar and pie charts. When given the opportunity, pupils successfully use IT to combine text with images, produce charts, create simple orthographic drawings and extract nutritional information from a data base.

116. Pupils make safe and sensible use of equipment and machinery and their behaviour is satisfactory and often good. While boys are more eager than girls to contribute to whole-class discussions, both usually work well on individual designing and making activities. Pupils co-operate well in work areas and are sensitive when evaluating each other's ideas and products.

117. The quality of teaching is good and satisfactory in equal measure; in only one lesson seen was it unsatisfactory. Teaching is strongest at Key Stage 3 and in textiles, food and graphics. All teachers produce helpful displays in their work areas, for example of words and drawings to help pupils develop a technical vocabulary. In the better lessons observed, teachers set high expectation for designing, making and for work rate, homework was collected and valued, pupils' progress was carefully evaluated and feedback given. These lessons also displayed effective behaviour management, probing questioning, good attention to pupils with learning difficulties, varied teaching approaches that stimulated discussion and engaged pupils in group work, and well-presented, teacher-produced resources, some of which were well matched to the needs of pupils who have difficulty using English. Parts of some lessons lack pace, especially near the lesson's end, and do not challenge the more able sufficiently. Some lessons suffered from loosely defined teaching objectives, insufficient variety in teaching approaches and targeting of questions to individuals, for example, to encourage the involvement of girls, and a narrow range of material resources that constrained unreasonably pupils' design options.

118. Design and technology continues to be a well-led and well managed department that has made good progress since the last inspection. The staff's commitment to raising standards is evident, for example, in the good range of extra-curricular provision and the successful introduction of textiles and GNVQ courses. While the curriculum and assessment meet statutory requirements, insufficient time is allocated to food at Key Stage 3 to provide an adequate foundation for GCSE and for the Certificate of Achievement at Key Stage 4. The department recognises that the Key Stage 3 course lacks sufficient continuity because pupils are taught by too many teachers. The scheme of work provides clear guidance on what should be taught and when. However, many of the learning objectives are insufficiently explicit to support differentiation, and much of the work is too tightly structured to enable a wide range of design solutions to be achieved. The scheme of work does not make sufficiently clear how designing skills, graphic skills, information technology and support for pupils with English as an additional language are to be developed as pupils move through the school. Good progress has been made in improving assessment procedures. An effective system is now in place but, as the department has recognised, it requires further development to make it easier for teachers to extract useful information and less onerous to implement. Teaching and technician staff are well qualified but the quantity of technician support is insufficient, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. While the overall quantity and quality of equipment and machinery are satisfactory, there are insufficient consumable resources both in quantity and range, such as materials and components for textiles. These shortfalls in resources and in the use of technician support are inhibiting the introduction and implementation of a sufficiently wide range of design ideas.

Information technology

119. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below the national average. The population of pupils achieving the nationally expected level has improved dramatically from a quarter in 1997 to over half in 1998, results which are in line with those of similar schools. In the 1998 GCSE examinations a third of pupils gained grades A*-C, in line with similar schools and again a marked improvement on the 1997 results. Attainment in grades A*-G is in line with national averages. Although results for the GCSE short course were below the national average at the higher grades, all pupils attained graded results. In IT Key Skills half of pupils achieved Level 2. In lessons observed, students attained satisfactory standards in their work at GCE A and AS levels, and A level results are above the national average.

120. Progress in lessons and over time is satisfactory or better in all key stages. Good progress was seen, both learning about IT and using IT, in a Year 9 science lesson. Pupils used spreadsheets to record results and to produce and interpret graphs of their experiments, and took pride in their finished work.

121. Pupils of all ages work well together and are generally enthusiastic users of IT. Many are independent users of word-processing. Less able pupils are often motivated to achieve higher standards when using IT. Pupils in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are gaining confidence in researching and extracting information from the Internet and CD-ROMs for coursework and homework. There are many opportunities to build on these experiences in other subjects, at lunchtimes, and after school. The school has its own attractive web site which is popular with staff and pupils.

122. The quality of teaching was good in lessons observed. It was very good when the pace of the lesson was brisk, pupils motivated and tasks challenging. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. Lessons, supported by well-prepared schemes of work, are planned with clear objectives which are understood by the pupils. Time and resources are used effectively.

123. A major strength of the department is the support it provides to both teachers and pupils. The department is well led and efficiently organised and the management style promotes good teamwork. IT is taught through discrete lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4, except in Year 9 when specialists use IT to support delivery of subjects across the curriculum.

124. Since the last inspection there has been considerable investment in IT and the school is now extremely well equipped with some 250 networked Pentium workstations. The school has a wide range of equipment including scanners, digital cameras and networked CD-ROMs, powerful but easy to use software packages, and Internet access. All Key Stage 4 pupils now complete an IT key skills course. GCSE full and short courses and GNVQ examinations have been introduced. These improvements have led to greater use of IT by pupils and staff throughout the school, enhancing both learning and teaching.

History

125. GCSE results in history were good in 1998. The percentage of students reaching higher grades and value-added data indicates that GCSE candidates performed particularly well in relation to their ability and their performance in other subjects. A level results in 1998 were disappointing; while all candidates achieved a pass grade, none of them achieved the higher grades. In observed lessons attainment was close to national expectations at both key stages and at A level. Attainment in history is largely secure in terms of the acquisition of factual knowledge and the development of skills of source analysis and enquiry.

126. History makes a very useful contribution to the development of literacy skills. Given the strengths of the subject, it is disappointing that so few pupils continue with history after the age of 14. Boys and girls both do well in history lessons and the progress of pupils with special educational needs is generally sound.

127. The response of pupils is generally good. In observed lessons pupils worked well, whether engaged in individual or collaborative tasks. The history curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to show respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. During class discussions, pupils were keen to contribute. Written work is usually well presented. Coursework at GCSE is undertaken with care.

128. The teaching of history is good, with some very good features. Lessons are usually well planned, with varied, challenging activities. Teachers are aware of the importance of historical language and use structured approaches to encourage good quality writing. Lessons are usually characterised by good pace and time management. The resources provided for the least able pupils are occasionally inappropriate.

129. The curriculum is well planned and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Arrangements for assessment are systematic. Marking is typically thorough, although at times it is not made clear to students how they can improve their work. There is scope for further use of assessment data to identify patterns of performance for groups of students. There are well planned opportunities for the development of IT capability. History enhances pupils' wider personal development; topics such as the study of Native Americans help students to make sense of different cultures.

130. The subject is well managed. Issues arising from the last inspection have been methodically addressed. There is a good sharing of ideas within the history team. The staff responsible for English as an additional language contribute good quality teaching resources and team teach effectively with members of the history department. At Key Stage 3 history is taught by an unusually large number of teachers, many of whom have other responsibilities. Although the quality of their teaching is usually good, this situation makes subject management and co-ordination difficult.

Geography

131. Attainment at GCSE is good. The population of pupils achieving A*-C grades is well above that of similar schools and shows a significant improvement since 1997. At A level, pass rates are good and recruitment to the A level course has increased. In lessons and work samples, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of physical and human processes, and use appropriate vocabulary and a range of map skills.

132. The majority of pupils of all abilities make sound to good progress at all key stages, in their geographical knowledge and understanding of places through a range of case studies, in the study of themes like natural hazards, and in map skills. Decision-making exercises are well established and pupils are confident in presenting arguments to their peers. Standards of written work vary but the majority of pupils undertake geographical enquiries satisfactorily. IT skills are developing well throughout the key stages. Most pupils with SEN make sound progress.

133. The great majority of pupils show interest in the subject, listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and concentrate on their work. They generally behave well in class but a minority, particularly in Key Stage 3, finds it difficult to concentrate and causes some disruption. The quality of relationships is good and pupils are very willing to work collaboratively. The classroom atmosphere is relaxed but industrious. There was, however, less evidence, particularly at Key Stage 3, of pupils taking responsibility for their own learning.

134. The quality of teaching is almost always at least sound, and some is very good. Across the department, lessons are very well prepared and the objectives of lessons are made clear. Pupils are mostly well managed and are encouraged to articulate their own views. Where the quality of teaching was notably good, the pace was brisk, pupil's thinking was challenged and they were required to develop a range of geographical and general learning skills. There is effective team teaching as a result of collaboration between the EAL service and mainstream staff. In a small minority of lessons the disruptive behaviour of some pupils is not effectively managed.

135. The geography curriculum provides breadth and balance, meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and is enhanced by a range of fieldwork across all stages. Good use is made of the school and local areas as well as visits further afield such as to Wales. Comprehensive schemes of work are now in place, and are well planned to ensure continuity and progression. The use of IT is now built into schemes of work across the key stages - a great improvement since the last inspection. The department also makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy. Equality of access and opportunity is however diminished by

the lack of EAL and SEN support in some lessons. Arrangements for the assessment of pupils' work are very good and include self-assessment and target setting. Work is regularly marked with much formative comment across the department. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

136. The head of department leads an effective teaching team contributing strongly to the raising of standards and the creation of an effective learning environment. The analysis of YELLIS data demonstrates the value added to pupils' learning by the department. Significant improvements have taken place in areas identified by the last inspection.

Modern foreign languages

137. In Year 7 all pupils study either French or German. In Year 8 they choose to continue with French or German, or they begin to learn Urdu. The more able pupils in Year 8 can study two languages, choosing to take up a second European language or Urdu. At Key Stage 4 all pupils take a full or short course in a modern language and almost all pupils are entered for GCSE. Pupils study Urdu at A level and for GNVQ. There are no pupils currently studying A level in French or German.

138. Teacher assessment in 1998 at the end of Key Stage 3 indicates that just over a third of pupils are achieving standards at or above national expectations. Girls achieve slightly better than boys.

139. Since the last inspection there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils entered for GCSE. In 1998 almost every pupil in the cohort gained an graded result in a modern language. Pupils' achievement in Urdu is higher than that in French or German or that in the other school subjects they study. Just over half of pupils taking Urdu in 1998 gained an A*- C grade. Pupils' performance in French at GCSE is well below national expectations but in line with their achievement in other subjects in the school. The number of pupils who achieved an A*- C grade in a GCSE short course in French or German is slightly above the national average.

140. In 1998 a number of Year 11 pupils who had gained a GCSE in Urdu in Year 10 were successful in AS level Urdu. Just over a third of these pupils achieved a higher grade. In 1998 the small number of pupils entered for A level all gained higher grades in Urdu.

141. In lessons at Key Stage 3, standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection. In the large majority of lessons, most pupils, including those with EAL, achieve standards in line with or above the national expectation. In these lessons, pupils understand classroom instructions and comments in the target language. They develop simple exchanges and use questions without support. In whole-class repetition they speak clearly and with a good degree of accuracy. Pupils recall well what they have previously learned, such

as in a German lesson where they produced a list of adverbs to describe the quality of a meal in a restaurant. In French lessons they are confident enough to correct each other's pronunciation. Pupils make good use of a

dictionary to check their spelling and identify key words in taped or written material. They present written work such as graphs, “wanted” posters, surveys and menus using a computer. In Urdu lessons, they know the vocabulary for a range of food and drinks and are able to list these in related groups. In the small number of lessons at Key Stage 3 where standards are below national expectations, pupils of lower ability have difficulty in understanding simple classroom instructions in French. In the same lessons some of the pupils for whom English is an additional language are not able to pronounce basic vocabulary with clarity.

142. At Key Stage 4 in three-quarters of lessons pupils achieve standards in line with or above national expectations. Their pronunciation is sound and they respond to questions at a reasonable speed. Pupils deliver prepared work well and use a dictionary effectively to support independent study. In French they identify key details in a passage and adapt the language to describe their own future plans. Where pupils achieve standards above national expectations, they recall vocabulary well and, without prompting, produce complex sentences, such as in a German lesson when describing teenage problems. In written work pupils write extensively for different purposes, producing CVs, letters and lengthy descriptive texts on a range of topics. Where standards are below national expectations, pupils of lower ability studying French on a short course do not recall basic vocabulary and are unable to develop their own version of a postcard from a model.

143. In all languages at both key stages the ability of pupils to ask questions has improved since the last inspection. However, the number of pupils, even those of higher ability, who volunteer greetings and general comments in the target language is still limited.

144. At A level pupils’ level of knowledge and language skills in Urdu is at least of the standard required by the course. They summarise accurately aspects of a text and present logical arguments in literary criticism. Pupils write with accuracy and imagination.

145. All pupils make satisfactory or better progress. At Key Stage 3 the progress of pupils of higher ability has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Where pupils’ progress is at least satisfactory, they are motivated by the range of challenging opportunities to learn new phrases and use what they have learned in role-play and written work. They develop their understanding of how to research into the language. Pupils become more accurate when copying and are able to correct their work. At Key Stage 4, where progress is satisfactory, pupils increase their awareness of the nature of language used in different contexts. They improve their written work through drafting. In full course French lessons, pupils of average and high ability make good progress. They develop flexibility and confidence in their use of the language. A level pupils make good progress and develop their skills in conversation and in presenting ideas. Pupils gain confidence in expressing opinion when discussing literature. Where pupils make less than

satisfactory progress, they are unclear about what to do, such as in using the computer, and do not complete the tasks set. At times pupils are unsure about new material and are not challenged sufficiently to use it in consolidation activities. In a very small number of lessons, pupils become distracted by inappropriate behaviour.

146. In the large majority of lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are at least satisfactory and are often good. Pupils' response in lessons at Key Stage 4 is more consistently good than at Key Stage 3. Overall pupils enjoy their language lessons. Relationships are good and pupils work well together, providing each other with support and encouragement. The level of energy and commitment to tasks is high. Pupils respond quickly to changes of pace and activity. At Key Stage 4 pupils express a good understanding of their targets for improvement and work well independently. Where pupils' response is particularly good, they volunteer greetings and conduct brief exchanges in the target language. In the lessons where pupils' response is less than satisfactory, they are easily distracted and are unable to stay on task when working near others.

147. The quality of teaching in almost all lessons is at least satisfactory and is good or very good in two-thirds. Teachers are confident linguists who use the target language well to motivate pupils. Lesson planning is effective in targeting all four language skills and in meeting the needs of pupils of all abilities. Teachers exploit a range of well-prepared strategies to challenge pupils and raise their achievement. Lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are presented with a variety of activities and contexts in which to use the language, such as passwords, surveys, word games, matching exercises and role-play. Teachers provide pupils with regular and structured feedback on their progress and ensure that they understand how to improve. In most lessons teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Where teaching is less satisfactory, pupils are allowed to call out and distract others. In some lessons, insufficient time is given for pupils to consolidate their learning and to complete tasks.

148. The curriculum in modern languages meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides full access for all pupils to the study of European and community languages. Well-considered curriculum changes at Key Stages 3 and 4 effectively promote achievement for all pupils, particularly those less able pupils who also have English as an additional language. Since the last inspection, changes to teaching styles and the provision of a more appropriate Key Stage 3 course have provided more challenge for the more able pupils.

149. The modern languages department is well led and places a strong emphasis on measures to raise achievement. Procedures for assessment are well structured. Analysis of examination results is used very constructively to inform target-setting and to identify teaching strategies to raise standards. The involvement of pupils in target-setting for improvement, such as a wall chart showing their contribution in lessons, are valued by them and encourage a review of their progress.

• **Art**

150. In the 1998 GCSE art examination, 14 per cent of pupils gained A* - C grades, compared with nearly 60 per cent in similar schools nationally. Compared with other schools, a very small percentage of Year 11

pupils took art. Pupils' art grades were below their average grades in other subjects. None achieved above grade C. There was little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The low 1998 GCSE art results continue a trend of declining results since the 1995 inspection report.

151. Attainment seen during the inspection is in line with or slightly below expectations in Key Stage 3, and mainly in line with expectations or slightly better in Key Stage 4.

152. In both key stages there is evidence of practical skills in a range of processes, and pupils' knowledge and understanding about art are developing, with appropriate grasp of specialist vocabulary. A good feature is the work done using information technology to generate and manipulate imagery. Understanding of some of the visual elements of art, such as colour, is weak. For example, pupils handle brushes and paint quite well but do not use colour in well developed ways. Much of the sculptural work is below expectations. Three-dimensional constructional skills range from very basic to satisfactory, with a few examples of more sophisticated handling, but pupils' ability to explore form is often weak. An exception to this is the work produced during the Year 11 masks project. There are some examples of observational drawing used to inform imaginative work, for example Year 8 plant drawings used to develop designs for prints in the style of William Morris. Sketchbooks have some way to go to become valuable visual resources that will enrich the quality of the work. The quality of Key Stage 3 attainment has declined since the inspection in 1995.

153. Overall progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, with examples of better progress, especially among pupils in higher ability sets; there is however, some unsatisfactory progress. Those pupils who have opted for art in Key Stage 4 have made mostly good progress. Progress is closely linked to behaviour in lessons. Where the class is well behaved progress is mainly satisfactory, but in other classes the poor behaviour of some pupils makes it hard for anyone to make appropriate progress. For many pupils, some of the work set fails to provide them with sufficient challenge to raise their levels of attainment. Many pupils so lack earlier experience in any sustained art activity that almost anything they do can be considered as progress. Pupils with SEN make progress similar to that of their peers.

154. There is wide variation in pupils' responses to art lessons, from good to very poor, with the majority of responses slightly below satisfactory. Behaviour is a major factor. Some of the classroom behaviour is well below acceptable levels, making it difficult for pupils to work properly. In other lessons pupils' response is better. They like the subject and strive to do well, with good levels of enthusiasm and motivation. Key Stage 4 lessons are mainly in this latter category. The 1995 inspection found pupils' response satisfactory in Key Stage 3, so the decline in the quality of response to Key Stage 3 art lessons is a

concern. Three-quarters of the teaching seen in Key Stage 3 was satisfactory or good, and a quarter was unsatisfactory or poor. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is good. Some of the unsatisfactory teaching is because some teachers have insufficient time to prepare properly. The poor teaching seen was limited by low expectations and by using inappropriate teaching methods, resulting in lack of interest in the work set and poor behaviour. The insecure discipline prevented the teacher from being able to generate interaction and pupil response. A better aspect of teaching is the good individual attention given to pupils during the practical part of lessons. During these exchanges a lot of good, evaluative, supportive teaching takes place. As more of the Key Stage 4 teaching is one to one this is a contributory factor in the better teaching in Key Stage 4, but another significant factor is the generally higher expectations generated by examination requirements.

155. All aspects of the National Curriculum in art are covered. Good attention is paid to the integration of critical studies into the programme of practical work, with some especially good thought given to providing a variety of cultural insights into art. The inclusion of IT in the scheme of work represents progress since the previous inspection. Although it contains some good features, overall the Key Stage 3 scheme of work does not provide sufficient challenge or progression. This is a key factor in low attainment, pupils' response to art and the low recruitment into art in Key Stage 4. The amount of timetable time allocated to art in Key Stage 3 is low.

Music

156. Pupils' experience of music when they join the school is slight. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations in several areas of the curriculum, but below in others. When performing, pupils' ability to play major and minor chords and to internalise pulse when performing rhythmic patterns is in line with the expectation, as are their ensemble skills when performing graphic scores. A few pupils demonstrate skills above the expectation in their keyboard technique and co-ordination skills. In composition, some pupils use patterns and imitation well but, for the most part, in the present Year 9, control of harmony and structure is weaker. Skills in listening and appraising are below the national expectation for most pupils although they are in line with those in similar schools. Some pupils show understanding of the musical elements and related terminology in line with expectations and can apply their knowledge in appraisal of work by their peers. Knowledge and understanding of musical styles and traditions from both Europe and the rest of the World are below the national expectation for most. Development of music technology skills is limited at this key stage. Overall Key Stage 3 standards have improved since the last inspection. There are still areas of weakness for those pupils in Year 9 who have not always had their full curriculum entitlement and, for those few classes that do not have specialist teachers or appropriate accommodation, standards are below the national expectation.

157. At Key Stage 4 performance skills are mostly in line with national standards as demonstrated in the technical control and interpretation of vocal and guitar performances. A saxophonist was performing above the standard and most pupils demonstrate ensemble skills in line with the national standard. Their compositions demonstrate control of melody, harmony and rhythm in line with national standards but control of structure, timbre and texture is more limited. A few pupils use music technology to realise their compositions. Improvisations make appropriate use of the blues scale but lack some sense of direction. Pupils are developing skills in listening and appraising but standards are below the national average in knowledge and understanding of both western European and world music.

158. Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards in line with their abilities; pupils with English as an additional language quickly attain standards in line with their abilities.

159. Progress is satisfactory or better in those classes that have specialist teaching and appropriate accommodation. Pupils develop keyboard performance skills and apply numeracy skills appropriately to make progress in understanding musical theory. They make good progress in developing accuracy and ensemble skills when performing rhythmic patterns. At Key Stage 4, progress in developing performing and composing skills is good, while at both key stages progress in acquiring and applying listening and appraising skills is slower. Progress in the peripatetic instrumental lessons is good and pupils with English as an additional language, who are well supported by specialist teachers in music lessons, make good progress. Pupils of all levels of ability make appropriate progress. Progress in musical skills for those pupils without appropriate accommodation and specialist teaching for their music is unsatisfactory.

160. Pupils' response in lessons varies from very good to poor and, again, reflects accommodation and staffing issues. In the music room, pupils' response and behaviour is always satisfactory and often very good. They enjoy their music lessons and most work hard. They co-operate well with each other in paired or group work and respond well to questions. They are keen to demonstrate performances and listen well to peer performances. Music is a popular subject at Key Stage 4 and pupils behave well and work hard. Most pupils at both key stages demonstrate willingness to take responsibility for their own learning which represents an improvement on the previous report when few showed initiative to extend work and explore ideas.

161. Teaching is satisfactory, good or very good in eight out of ten lessons, which is an improvement since the previous report. Where teaching is sound or better, the teachers establish good relationships with the pupils and humour and patience are used well. Classroom and behaviour management strategies are effective and good subject knowledge and personal musical skills used well. Teachers make very good use of questioning to establish prior knowledge; tasks are clearly explained and learning targets are summarised at the end. Lessons are well prepared with supporting materials, and tasks are varied and appropriate. In those lessons where specialist teachers support pupils with EAL, the very good liaison between the teachers

enhances the value of the support. In those lessons without specialist music teachers or where accommodation is inappropriate there is some confusion in the learning objectives and a slow pace to the lessons.

162. The previous report commented that the inability to find a second specialist was affecting the quality provided in the subject. Whilst it is recognised that the school has made efforts to overcome this difficulty, one in seven lessons is still taught by non-specialist music teachers or in non-specialist accommodation, including one Year 9 class that does not have access to the music National Curriculum at present. It should be noted, however, that the situation will be fully resolved at the start of the next academic year when two specialist music teachers will deliver all the curriculum music lessons and an additional music room will be provided equipped to deliver music technology. With these developments the department is well poised to move ahead.

Physical education

163. Pupils' performance in GCSE examinations has improved significantly since the previous inspection. In 1998, the proportion of candidates gaining A*- C and A*- G grades were very close to the national averages. Pupils' standards in practical activities are better than their understanding of theoretical aspects such as the structure and function of the circulatory system. In core lessons, the majority of Year 10 pupils achieve standards which are expected of pupils of similar ages in games and health related fitness. Pupils know why it is important to warm up and can demonstrate safely, a range of appropriate exercises for different parts of the body. Good skills and effective use of tactics are demonstrated in netball and football and players display good teamwork.

164. At the end of Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils achieve standards in games which are in line with those expected of pupils of similar ages. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 demonstrate satisfactory and often good mastery of skills in hockey, basketball, tennis and volleyball as they practise different ways of receiving, controlling and passing a ball. Pupils' ability to apply their skills in small-sided games and their understanding of simple tactics is weaker than their technical skills.

165. On entry to school, standards in swimming and gymnastics are below those expected of pupils of similar ages. In Year 7 a high proportion of boys and girls lack confidence in the water and are unable to swim twenty-five metres. A minority are confident in deep water and show efficient strokes. The school communicates effectively with parents and pupils to ensure that almost all pupils swim. However, whilst some progress is evident, the amount of time available for this activity restricts the progress pupils are able to make. In gymnastics a significant number of pupils in Years 7 and 8 lack control and body tension. Within the time allocated to gymnastics pupils make satisfactory progress as they perform simple travelling actions and rolls but only a few demonstrate good technique. In Year 9 pupils gain appropriate knowledge about the importance of exercise for good health as they measure and record their own levels of fitness.

166. In lessons and across Key Stages 3 and 4 the great majority of pupils across the ability range make good progress in games and in their knowledge and understanding of health-related exercise. Pupils are

challenged physically and intellectually through good teaching which successfully motivates them and ensures that they remain on task. In Year 10, higher-attaining pupils maintain a good skill level in more challenging situations in volleyball and football. Pupils with special educational need are fully involved in all activities and also make good progress because all staff are well informed and provide good quality support to individuals at appropriate times. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress because teachers help them to feel confident and valued. Demonstration is used effectively and teachers are mindful of the support needed for some pupils in their literacy skills and effective strategies are used to support pupils taking GCSE. Pupils make better progress in planning and performing than they do in evaluating their own and others' work in order to improve the quality of actions.

167. Valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to progress and improve standards in sport through the internal competitions organised for year groups, matches against other school and sport at district level. Links with local cricket and hockey clubs have been strengthened recently and have resulted in increased participation.

168. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good and are often very good. Their positive response in lessons is marked by high levels of participation. Good relationships between pupils and staff contribute to a productive learning environment in which almost all pupils work hard and sustain concentration as they work independently of their teachers. Pupils co-operate well as they practise in groups and work as teams. Teaching is good or better in over three quarters of lessons. In over a quarter of lessons teaching is very good and occasionally outstanding. This high quality across the department has a positive effect on the progress pupils make. All teachers have good knowledge of their subject which enables them to approach a more challenging skill through practices which progress through degrees of difficulty. Control and discipline are generally excellent. Good use is made of pupil demonstration and teachers re-visit the key points for learning throughout the lesson. On rare occasions activities are not matched closely enough to pupils' age, ability and previous experience. The department is well placed to sharpen pupils' skills of evaluation so that observation focuses on the quality and precision of movement, and to continue to match tasks to the different abilities within the teaching groups. Regular feedback and encouragement are effective features of many lessons; pupils make most progress when feedback is focused on key points and when specific targets are identified to meet the range of needs within the teaching group.

169. Strong leadership and a committed, hard-working team of staff are strengths of the department, which demonstrates a clear focus on raising standards. Documentation is thorough and staff plan well for priorities such as improving GCSE results. Careful analysis of pupils' written work has identified strengths and weaknesses and teachers use a range of approaches to enable pupils to meet individual targets for improvement.

170. Assessment is thorough at Key Stage 3 but the department is not using the information available to consider strengths and relative weaknesses in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in order to set targets for improvement. Assessment and reporting procedures for Year 9 pupils do not meet requirements.

171. The curriculum is broad for Years 7 and 8; activities are relevant but there is an imbalance of time

allocated to teaching gymnastics and dance in relation to games. Dance is timetabled only for girls. A successful Lottery bid has enhanced facilities for physical education. These are maintained and used well and have begun to make a significant impact on the quality of the curriculum and pupils' learning.

Religious education

172. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils overall attain in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of the topics they have studied such as the five pillars of Islam and more especially the Hajj. They have studied symbols of religions, commitment such as in baptism, healing and reconciliation, and various places of pilgrimage. For example, they know that Benares, Walsingham and Amritsar are special places for the religions concerned. Understanding of the deeper issues underlying these facts is satisfactory and is improving. Pupils are able to compare various aspects of religions across all the six world faiths that they have studied.

173. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are offered the chance to study RE for GCSE. Last year, the results ranged from A to G. Considering that it was the first time that this short course had been offered, the results were satisfactory. Overall, the attainment of pupils taking GCSE examinations shows an improving trend, although the number entered are too small to make national comparisons valid.

174. In GCSE classes, pupils attain as expected nationally. They are working through the factual knowledge and adding the deeper understanding behind it. For example, they have worked on a plan of a church, and understand the symbolic significance of some of the items found inside. They know, for example, that the lectern carries the Bible, and that it is often in the shape of an eagle. In classes not working towards GCSE, pupils have studied some of life's deeper, moral questions from a religious viewpoint. For example, they have studied abortion and discovered what Muslims and then what various groups of Christians might feel about it. These studies are contained within the personal, social and moral education course.

175. Progress over both key stages is satisfactory. Pupils continually add to their store of knowledge and are successfully making progress in the understanding of topics arising from these studies. In most classes, the written work enables pupils to consolidate what they have learned previously. Some pupils are able to extend their knowledge and understanding of well-known and practised aspects of faith, and to compare them across several world religions. Pupils with SEN make good progress.

176. In general, pupils show interest and work satisfactorily, although a very few do not concentrate. These pupils sometimes talk over the teacher or other pupils. Most however, behave in a satisfactory manner and show respect for teachers and for other pupils' views. They are able to produce extended pieces of work such as those on Muslim birth rites.

177. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with about a third of the lessons being good. Teachers show a good grasp of the subject and are able to give extra details, especially in their work on Islam. Planning is good and well founded on the locally Agreed Syllabus. There is a sufficient range of activities and methods, such as the use of video clips, worksheets and class discussions. Teachers manage pupils satisfactorily and use the available time appropriately. Homework is set regularly, and checked in pupils' diaries. Marking and assessment are carried out conscientiously and there are test papers at the end of each topic.

178. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 meets statutory requirements, but in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, insufficient time is allowed. In Key Stage 3 all pupils are able to have access to the appropriate curriculum recommended by the local authority. Assessment is thorough and pupils are involved in marking their own work. Assessment results are used at department meetings to review the curriculum and the schemes of work.

179. The department and its results have improved since the last report. It is managed satisfactorily and the documentation is good. The strengths of the department are the good grasp that both teachers have about Islam, and their commitment to the study of all six major religions.

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Business Studies

180. GCSE Business Studies results are well below national averages and are also below the averages for other GCSE subjects in the school. In 1998 5 per cent of entrants gained a C grade or better compared to an overall school rate of 25 per cent. Pupils studying Business and Information Studies performed better, with over a quarter of the group gaining A* to C grades – slightly better than the school average but well below national standards. In the sixth form all pupils passed both intermediate and advanced level GNVQ Business, with a higher proportion of merit grades than the national average. Results in economics at GCSE in 1998 were below the national average, but A level results were above it.

181. Attainment in observed classes was below national standards in most cases. Pupils showed some recall of basic business concepts but needed considerable help in applying them to current issues and topics. Progress, however, is satisfactory or better in 70 per cent of lessons and is good or very good in 40 per cent – a clear indication of added value.

182. Pupils in the majority of classes are well behaved. Although subdued, pupils are in most cases willing to contribute and respond to teacher requests and expectations. They are, however, slower to take the initiative and less willing to take responsibility for their own learning. A minority of pupils, especially in Year 11, behave badly, calling out answers, paying little attention, and showing insufficient respect to their teacher.

183. Almost all teaching observed was sound or better, fifty per cent was good, and a further 10 per cent judged to be very good. In these classes teachers demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of their subject and of the likely effectiveness of various teaching strategies. All lessons were well planned, and samples of recent pupil work showed detailed, constructive and supportive assessments. In these and those

classes in which teaching was judged to be satisfactory, teachers were very sympathetic to the needs of pupils. They were patient and showed an excellent knowledge of the learning needs of individual pupils, who were continually encouraged to develop new skills and competencies, especially in undertaking research tasks in their local community.

184. Exercise books of those in Years 10 and 11 Business Studies classes contain work which is dull and excessively concerned with knowledge and understanding in a much more traditional setting than would normally be expected in such a dynamic and accessible subject as Business Studies. Assignment design for GNVQ students also lacks variety and interest. The assignment burden is excessive, precluding opportunities for more imaginative assessments and the development both of key skills and those of independent learning. In economics classes and in pupils' work there are many examples of more varied and imaginative approaches to the promotion of pupils' learning. Greater variety correlates with better response and higher levels of attainment.

185. This department has been poorly managed. The long-term absence of the head of department has had an adverse effect on pupils' attainment on business courses. Excessive reliance has had to be placed on the employment of supply staff. Syllabus coverage has been patchy and some pupils have been inadequately prepared for examinations. Learning tasks lack interest and challenge and some pupils have become demotivated. This has resulted in poor behaviour which has been very challenging to supply teachers. Staff absence has placed an unfair burden on young and relatively inexperienced staff. All those observed are to be commended upon their commitment and professionalism in attempting to compensate for these shortcomings.

186. Accommodation, especially in the newly refurbished block, is good. Rooms are well equipped to support a variety of teaching strategies. Pupils have easy access to computers. This excellent provision is helping to raise standards in the sixth form. Accommodation at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory but at both stages little pupil work for business courses was on display. On the other hand, pupil work in economics was displayed to good effect, and was used in lessons to raise standards and exemplify good practice.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

187. The school was inspected over a period of five days by a team of seventeen inspectors, who together spent fifty eight days collecting evidence in the school. The evidence leading to the team's judgements comprised:

the observation of

- Two hundred and fifty lessons/part lessons; almost all members of staff present during the inspection were seen teaching at least once, and most on several occasions
- twelve registrations
- four assemblies
- a range of lunchtime and after-school activities
- nine meetings of staff
- a meeting of the school council
- a meeting of the governing body;

interviews/structured discussions with

- thirty six pupils, in addition to a large number of brief discussions with others during lessons and around the site
- twenty six members of the teaching staff
- four members of the non-teaching staff
- seven members of the governing body
- seven visiting specialists
- ninety seven parents at a meeting held by the registered inspector in advance of the inspection.

the scrutiny of

- the work of a large sample of pupils of all ages and abilities, in addition to the large amount of work of all year groups seen during lessons
- one hundred and twenty seven questionnaires returned by parents, an analysis of which appears at the back of this report
- a small number of letters from parents to the registered inspector
- extensive and very well-organised documentation provided by the school about every aspect of its life and work.

188. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1229	13	478	619

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	79.6
Number of pupil per qualified teacher	15.44

Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked each week	322

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69.9
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Average teaching group size:

KS3	21
KS4	22

Financial data

Financial year:	1997/98
	£
Total Income	3177409
Total Expenditure	2181715
Expenditure per pupil	2589
Balance brought forward from previous year	27869
Balance carried forward to next year	25111

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out	1229
Number of questionnaires returned	129

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	30	55	9	4	7
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	37	55	4	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	25	47	21	5	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	30	45	15	9	1
The school keeps me well informed about my children's progress	41	48	5	2	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	40	49	8	2	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	39	46	12	4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	37	47	9	7	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25	58	10	5	2
The school achieves high standards of good effect on my child(ren)	30	45	19	3	3
My child(ren) like(s) school	36	52	10	2	1

Other issues raised by parents

Parents' comments in their meeting with the Registered Inspector, in letters and on the questionnaire, were overwhelmingly positive about the standard of education and care given to pupils. No single strong criticism came through in parents' comments.