

INSPECTION REPORT

WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL

Halesowen

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103874

Headteacher: Mr K W Sorrell

Reporting inspector: Mr S Powell
3653

Dates of inspection: 6th – 10th November 2000

Inspection number: 223834

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 – 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Richmond Street
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Bissell

Date of previous inspection: March 1998

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Mr J A Banks 11830	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	Teaching and learning
Mr D Bray 12008	Team inspector	Music	Pupils' social and cultural development
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Ms E B Hale 7202	Team inspector	History	Key Stage 4
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Mr I G Middleton 12969	Team inspector	Art and design	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Windsor High School is an 11 – 16 mixed comprehensive school of 1367 pupils with year groups which range in size from 260 to over 300, and with over 100 more boys than girls. The largest year groups will leave in 2001 so the total number of pupils in the school will decrease marginally next year. The school is oversubscribed and appreciably bigger than most 11 – 16 schools.

Windsor takes in pupils from the full range of ability, but a very high proportion are of average and just above average ability. There are few pupils of very high or very low ability. Ten pupils (0.73%) have statements of special educational needs.

The school recognises a further 182 (13.3%) as having some sort of special need (a figure below the national average). Just over 6% of the pupils are of minority ethnic origin and 27 (2%) of these have English as an additional language (a figure comparable with one in five schools in metropolitan authorities).

The school draws its catchment mainly from the urban area of Halesowen although there are a number of children who attend from the neighbouring areas of Sandwell and Birmingham. Although the town has areas of significant disadvantage, it is generally neither advantaged nor disadvantaged compared to other towns nationally, and pupils in the main come from families which enjoy a reasonable standard of living. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals is just below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school which offers effective education, enabling its pupils to attain high standards through good teaching and strong leadership. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain high standards
- Governors, the headteacher and senior staff provide very effective leadership and management; very good financial planning and control systems are now in place
- Procedures promote a culture of improvement: systematic monitoring and self-evaluation result in very good quality assurance procedures that are driving up standards
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- There is a good work ethic; pupils develop very good relationships and grow in confidence in a caring school community

What could be improved

- Consistency in the quality of planning for curriculum delivery
- Support for the most able

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1998, good attainment has been maintained in Key Stage 3 and attainment has risen markedly in GCSE examinations. Standards are now very good overall. There has been excellent progress in response to the issues identified in the previous report. The way in which the curriculum is delivered has been restructured and significant benefits have accrued.

In 1998 significant weaknesses resulted from the way the school was managed and its finances controlled; there was a large unplanned deficit and serious health and safety issues were identified. Inspectors judge that these weaknesses have now been eradicated and that the school now has strengths in many areas.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year old pupils based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	COMPARED WITH				Key well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE Examinations	C	C	B	A	

The attainment of pupils aged 14 years is well above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science compared with standards achieved by pupils in all schools. Results are also well above average in relation to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. However, there is a significant difference between the attainment of boys with girls performing better in all core subjects.

By age 16 pupils attain GCSE results which are well above the national average. There has been consistent improvement over time and the rate of improvement is above the national trend. This year 60 per cent of pupils at the school attained 5 or more GCSE's or equivalent at grades A*-C compared with 49 per cent nationally. The percentage of pupils attaining 5 or more GCSE's or equivalent at grades A*-G is above that of other schools for the first time this year.

Pupil progress is good in English language which has improved each year since 1998. The attainment of boys matches girls in this subject by age 16. In mathematics, progress is satisfactory overall, though in Year 9 progress is less satisfactory than in other years. In GCSE examinations this year the attainment of boys matched that of girls. Good progress is made by pupils in science but girls outperform boys yet attain lower results than in their other subjects.

In non-core subjects pupil progress is inadequate in information and communication technology (ICT) because of poor coverage of the programmes of study, and standards need to be improved in geography and music in the 11-14 age range. Pupils in dance make very good progress on the GCSE course. In all other subjects pupil progress is at least satisfactory and in many it is good.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against their targets because of effective support. Despite good efforts by the school, gifted and talented pupils are still not sufficiently challenged in all subject areas. Challenging targets for school improvement have been set and the school is making good progress towards them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

ASPECT	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show enthusiasm for their work and a will to succeed. They apply themselves conscientiously to tasks set by their teacher. A large number of pupils questioned during the week of the inspection spoke with pride about the work of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class is very good throughout the school. Instances of boisterous behaviour were observed in corridors at the change of lessons and the behaviour of a small minority of pupils at break and lunchtime periods is unacceptable.
Personal development and relationships	Most pupils in this school have a mature and responsible approach to their work. They show respect for one another and courtesy to adults. Very effective relationships between teachers and pupils were noted. Pupils are confident and have high self-esteem.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average. Rates of unauthorised absence are very low. Pupils arrive at the school on time and move quickly between lessons to ensure punctuality.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

During the inspection 222 lessons were observed and all teachers present were observed at least once. A substantial volume of teaching and learning material was reviewed. Only five per cent of lessons observed were judged to be unsatisfactory and more than one third of lessons were judged to be very good or excellent.

Teaching is quite directive, and clear instructions result in good standards of work from pupils who behave well and learn appropriate knowledge and skills. In order to stretch the most able a much broader repertoire of teaching styles is now required to enable pupils to develop independent learning and higher order thinking skills. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

ASPECT	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a wide-ranging curriculum overall which covers the subjects of the National Curriculum but does not meet fully the requirements in ICT and religious education (RE). Good extra-curricular opportunities are available.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made. Support provided by specialist staff meets the individual needs of pupils well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The targeted support is very effective in enabling pupils to cope with basic skills but the content of work needs to be developed to better match the intellectual capacity of pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons make a strong contribution to social development and in many areas pupils respond well to opportunities to work in pairs or larger groups. Cultural development is satisfactory but the contribution of subject areas is underdeveloped.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good support and promotes pupil welfare. Health and safety issues are pursued with rigour. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory overall and good in some aspects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

ASPECT	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The excellent leadership of the headteacher gives very clear direction and is very well supported by other senior staff. The leadership of middle managers is very good. Monitoring is a strong and effective feature of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and now monitor its standards very effectively. There are very good relationships between the governors, headteacher and other senior staff. The governors have provided strong leadership in a thrust to improve the fabric of the school and major capital projects have recently been completed. The governors have not ensured that the school complies with all statutory requirements particularly in the areas of ICT, RE and the need for a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school consistently uses the results of its monitoring to determine actions to effect improvement. It analyses data very effectively and is working hard to develop the consistent use of data in the target setting process.
The strategic use of resources	Teachers are well qualified to teach in their subject although some teachers contribute in areas beyond their first specialism. Support staff contribute significantly to the learning environment. There is a sufficient range of books. Accommodation is unsatisfactory in music and dance. Financial planning and control are now very good. Governors deploy resources well obtaining good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
• Their children like school • They are able to approach the school with questions or problems • The good standard of teaching • Pupils make good progress and are expected to achieve their best • Pupils are helped to become mature and responsible	• The amount of homework that is set • Some parents are concerned about poor behaviour from a minority of pupils at break and lunch periods • Consistency in the quality of teaching in science and mathematics

About a quarter of parents returned completed questionnaires; a small number, three per cent, attended the pre-inspection meeting. Sixty parents contributed detailed written comments. The inspection team did not find an overall weakness in the arrangements for homework, although they found weaknesses in some science and mathematics lessons in 11-14 age range where pupils were not sufficiently challenged because the pace of the lesson was too slow. Parents' views were divided on the use of the homework diary as a means of communicating with the school. Pupils are well behaved in lessons but some boisterous behaviour in narrow corridors is an issue, as is the behaviour of a small minority of pupils at break and lunch periods.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. This year results in national tests and teacher assessments show that by the age of 14 attainment is well above the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, the attainment of girls is better than boys. In the most recent tests for 14 year olds the difference was 16 per cent in English, 13 per cent in mathematics and 8 per cent in science. Both boys and girls consistently perform better than others do nationally. The pattern of high attainment by age 14 has been a consistent feature of performance in the core subjects, with the school's average National Curriculum point score improving at a rate above the national trend.
2. When compared with similar schools (based on the percentages of pupils in schools known to be eligible for free school meals) this school is performing very well in National Curriculum tests in the core subjects taken at age 14. A significant number of pupils attain levels which exceed the national average for their year group.
3. Non-core subjects are teacher assessed. History and design and technology assessments are broadly in line with national results. Geography is considerably below and in this subject boys are assessed as performing poorly compared with girls. Assessments in art and design are in line with national results but again boys perform less well compared with girls.
4. Pupils attain results above the national average in all other subjects. However, teacher assessments in music and information technology reflect particularly high attainment. These assessments are at variance with the judgements of inspectors who found attainment by age 14 to be below average in relation to national standards in music and in line with national standards in information and communication technology (ICT).
5. Standards in GCSE examinations are high. 60 per cent of pupils at this school attained five or more passes at GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent, a figure above the national average. The school has consistently achieved results above the national average for this indicator of success since 1995. Girls attain higher grades than boys in many subjects. The picture for the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE's at grades A*-G or equivalent is more variable, with the school attaining below national average results since 1997. This year the school has made a significant improvement upon previous performances and 95 per cent of pupils achieved success. Based on comparisons with similar schools, pupils' results this year are well above the average for the percentage of pupils achieving 5 A*-C grades or equivalent and above that for the percentage achieving 5 A*-G grades. Results previously have been close to the national average for 5 A*-G grades, with girls attaining significantly higher results than boys.
6. Challenging targets for achievement have been set by the school and agreed with the local authority. The school makes very effective use of data to set individual targets and uses this information well to inform decisions about realistic targets for the school as a whole. The analysis of attainment is rigorous and systematic and this contributes significantly to a culture of continuous improvement.

Achievements by pupils currently in the school

7. The School has effective strategies for teaching basic literacy skills, and standards in literacy are good. The English department has recently initiated a literacy programme in Year 7, which complements its existing schemes of work and builds on pupils' experiences in primary school. This programme will be extended into Years 8 and 9 in 2001. The strength of the school's provision lies in the contribution which all departments make to the development of literacy skills.
8. Pupils speak with clarity, confidence and expression, and they show an awareness of audience. For example, in a Year 11 geography lesson, pupils debated nuclear energy articulately. In a Year 7 art lesson pupils spoke formally and unselfconsciously about artefacts which they had made for homework, using a range of appropriate vocabulary.
9. Pupils listen well, show understanding and build on the contributions of others. In a Year 10 RE lesson, after researching the Five Pillars of Islam, one member of each group circulated to others to share findings. Pupils listened well and built on contributions where gaps in knowledge were identified. In a Year 7 drama lesson, pupils evaluated others' performances constructively, and used the comments of others to improve the standard of their performance work.
10. A good range of task books, sources and worksheets is used in a number of subjects, and most pupils are able to read and understand the material provided. When given the opportunity, pupils are able to retrieve, understand and collate information themselves from a number of different sources. Reading aloud in class sometimes lacks expression.
11. A sense of audience is shown in writing where pupils are usually able to adopt the conventions of formal expression when required. A variety of written tasks is given, for example diary extracts, newspaper articles, reflective pieces, advertisements and leaflets. Pupils at all levels are able to draft and re-draft work, correcting both the spelling of key words and mistakes in punctuation. Technical vocabulary is used with confidence. Key words are posted around the walls of all teaching rooms and in many cases are referred to by teachers during lessons. Specific reference to key words is made in teachers' planning, and the learning of these words is often set as a homework exercise. Spelling is weaker when pupils are writing their own views, or completing pieces of extended writing. Standards of literacy would be further improved if subject guidance on writing was expressed in a common format.
12. The standard of numeracy is good in many curriculum areas across the school. The mathematics department is leading the implementation of the whole school numeracy policy. The school is at the beginning of the process and recognises that there is still some way to go in fully implementing the policy. The mathematics department is using the national numeracy strategy in Year 7. Mental calculations and numerical practice are expected in most lessons in other year groups, usually during the 'warm up' activity at the start of each lesson. In a number of other subjects pupils are able to apply numerical skills well. Pupils are able to collect and represent data, and interpret graphs in a wide range of subjects; for example, deducing the relationship between predator and prey in science; identifying employment patterns in the UK/EU/World in history; nutritional analysis in food, and accurate working drawings in design and technology. Pupils can make predictions from data; for example, in science pupils examined the variation in finger length and discussed the limitations of their sample size. In geography pupils are able to use percentages to analyse population data and growth rates.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. From Year 7 pupils' progress in basic skills is good. By Year 9 pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards in national tests, given their prior attainment. GCSE results for pupils with special

educational needs are also good. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening and good progress in acquiring numeracy skills. Pupils become confident, independent learners and are able to use research skills to very good effect. This contributes to their progress in subjects across the curriculum.

14. The progress of pupils with special educational needs in using ICT to improve basic skills and to support their learning is outstanding. Pupils select appropriate computer programmes effectively, including downloading photographs from a web site to use in an advert for the communication skills module in the Year 11 National Skills Profile and e-mailing Sioux Indians in a Year 7 Accelerated Literacy Programme History course. Pupils use Success Maker independently and effectively to improve basic skills. They read fluently and with confidence texts that are challenging to their ability. Pupils report that they know that their basic skills are improving because they can add more quickly in mathematics lessons.
15. In English language good progress is made by pupils throughout the 11-16 age range. Standards are improving and successive year groups of pupils, particularly since 1998, have improved to the extent that the attainment of boys now matches that of girls. This represents a dramatic increase on results in 1999 when 49 per cent of boys compared with 77 per cent of girls attained grades A*-C.
16. Pupils' progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall in the 11-14 age range and good in GCSE examination classes. Year 9 pupils are judged to make unsatisfactory progress in too many lessons in this year group and teaching is, too frequently, found to be unsatisfactory.
17. In science standards overall are good. Girls outperform boys at age 14 and also attain results which are better than those for boys in GCSE at Grades A*-C or equivalent. However, girls attaining grades A*-C in science achieve lower results than in their other subjects, indicating scope for improvement. Progress in science is best in Years 9 and 11. In Year 9 work is challenging and the pace brisk. In Year 11 pupils are able to apply knowledge in unfamiliar contexts.
18. Standards in ICT are satisfactory in the 11-14 age range but unsatisfactory overall. Progress is inadequate for pupils not studying this subject at GCSE level. Pupils following the college-linked course make good progress.
19. In other subjects pupils in the 11-14 age range make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects except in geography and music where standards need to be improved. Standards in modern foreign languages, drama, history, PE and dance are good. In the 14-16 age range standards are satisfactory in drama, good in art, design and technology, geography, history, music, PE and RE and very good in dance.
20. Pupils with English as an additional language make significant progress because the school makes very good provision for both out of class and in class language support. Where out of class provision is made standards could be improved by matching better the age relevance of the reading material to the high intellect of pupils. One member of staff is providing dedicated support to work with pupils from the Yemeni community.

Progress since the last report

21. Since the last inspection the attainment of pupils has demonstrated a significant increase. The attainment of pupils at age 14 in comparison with national averages shows that the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all core subjects is above the national trend: the school is improving and doing so at a rate which is faster than the average for other schools.
22. By age 16 pupils are now achieving success in a broader range of subjects and also attaining higher grades in core subjects. Attainment is significantly above that of other schools nationally.
23. The issues identified in the previous report as serious weaknesses resulted from the way the school was managed and its finances controlled. Vocational courses offered in the Key Stage 4 curriculum were poorly organised and support in English for pupils for whom it is an additional language was also poor.
24. These significant weaknesses identified in the previous report are now areas of considerable strength. Governors and the new headteacher have taken effective strategic action to transform provision. The redefinition of roles within, and strengthening of, the senior management team has brought about remarkable change in a very short time.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attitudes

25. 'Learning matters for all pupils' is one of the school's values prominently set out in the School Prospectus. The attitudes to learning at Windsor High School very positively reflect this value and are a strength of the school. While attitudes are generally good in all classes, pupils in Year 11 display exemplary interest, conscientiousness and an eagerness to perform well. An example of pupils showing these attitudes when given responsibility for organising their own work and taking an active part in their learning was a Year 11 geography class engaged in an excellent debate on issues of nuclear energy.
26. 95 per cent of parents on the parents' questionnaire agreed that the school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best and this view matched inspectors' findings. Pupils were able to sustain concentration and stay on task in lessons, including lengthy double periods, and in weaker lessons when the pace of teaching slowed. Pupils are obviously happy in this school. This is demonstrated by the general demeanour of pupils around school and in the opinion of the vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire. Pupils are smart in appearance and show respect for property. The new toilet facilities, lobbied for in school council, are obviously valued and this is reflected in their high standard of cleanliness.

Behaviour

27. Behaviour is good, often very good and seldom less than satisfactory. When supervised it is often of a high standard and in some assemblies, tutor periods and classes it is excellent. The behaviour of Year 11 pupils is remarkable, as noted in a registration period where pupils entered quietly, took their seats before the bell for the start of school and sat in undirected silence respectful of an inspector's presence. Parents have expressed concern about the behaviour of pupils when unsupervised. Between lessons, at break and lunchtimes and often in the narrow corridors, a small amount of high-spirited behaviour exists. Instances of pupils misbehaving were observed.
28. In the last two years the number of exclusions has increased, with a very significant rise in the number of fixed-term exclusions, bringing it into line with the average for other schools. Fixed

term exclusions have risen but these have been justifiably used to deter repetitive poor behaviour. Whilst some parents report that there is bullying at the school very little evidence was seen during the week of inspection. However, given the number of concerns expressed by parents the school should explore this matter further.

Relationships and Personal Development

29. Relationships in the school are consistently very good. Pupils work well collaboratively, often in mixed sex groups, and with evident racial harmony. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into mainstream classes and these pupils readily assist those with disabilities. Pupils are well able to empathise, as demonstrated in a Year 7 English class where pupils recounted life in a Victorian School, and in a Year 8 class with pupils showing empathy for Dickens' Oliver. Particularly good relationships exist between pupils and year heads. Similarly, form tutors who stay with pupils as they progress from one year to the next show good knowledge and understanding of individual pupils' needs. Reception staff warmly welcome visitors and display caring attitudes toward pupils. This adds to the happy and friendly ethos of the school. Many pupils show high levels of maturity, responding well to the many roles and responsibilities offered, including form captain, sport captain, Year 11 helper for younger pupils and school librarian.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are very supportive of one another. Boys and girls work collaboratively in group activities in the Learning Support Base. They help one another in paired reading (Reading Buddies scheme). Pupils with special educational needs value this provision and arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with cerebral palsy are enhanced by the scheme. Behaviour of pupils in the Learning Support Base is generally good and often very good.

Attendance

31. Attendance continues to be very good, with unauthorised absenteeism very low. There has been a small, steady decrease in attendance over the past four years from 96.3 per cent in 1996/7 to 95 per cent in 1999/2000. There are no identifiable trends to account for this and the school needs to be vigilant of factors such as parents taking pupils out of school for annual holidays. A small number of pupils arrive late for registration and this hinders the school's attempt to make a purposeful start to the school day. Most lessons start and finish on time despite the distances some pupils have to move between lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

32. Teaching at Windsor High School is good overall. There is a high proportion of very good teaching, particularly to the older pupils, and some examples of excellent teaching. Teaching is stronger in Years 10 and 11, where as many as four in ten lessons are very good. In these lessons planning is closely aligned to identified learning objectives and pupils are very clear about what is expected of them. Only a few lessons, one in twenty, are unsatisfactory.
33. Teachers make good use of correct, subject specific terms. This reflects the good subject knowledge of teachers and their ability to convey ideas with clarity. For example, in most lessons, teachers give clear instructions at the beginning of the lesson as to what pupils are expected to do. This contributes to understanding by pupils and ensures that progress is made. In too few lessons, however, are learning objectives shared with pupils – pupils are told what to do but not why they should be doing it. Opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills are therefore missed.
34. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a major strength. Innovative and imaginative activities engage pupils' interest and teachers use their knowledge to involve learning support assistants well to plan and prepare lessons.

35. In art there is some excellent teaching, particularly in the three-dimensional area. Teaching is effective because practical work is sensitively punctuated by the teacher reviewing work with pupils and re-establishing objectives, giving clear structure to lessons.
36. Teaching is good throughout the school in PE and very good in dance, particularly in GCSE practical work. Very good pace and high expectations, together with good dialogue between teacher and pupil combine to drive up standards.
37. In design and technology, very good use is made of exemplar projects and project planners, which help pupils to understand how to plan and do their work and how their work is assessed. Some teachers used good questioning techniques and demonstrated personal skills effectively.
38. The good relationships that prevail in most lessons and the clearly focused teaching techniques produce an atmosphere where good concentration and hard work are expected. Pupils recognise and respond well to this, they learn well and make good progress.
39. There are weaknesses in a minority of lessons in mathematics, science, art, design and technology and geography. These weaknesses are mainly due to poor planning but, in some cases, arise from a lack of confidence or experience or lack of subject expertise.
40. The most common weakness in teaching is the lack of emphasis on the development of independent learning skills, thinking skills and higher order thinking skills. Basic skills in the use of ICT are underdeveloped and this is restricting independent learning. In mathematics, most teaching provides clear tasks for pupils to do but few challenging opportunities are offered to pupils, particularly the gifted ones. For example, pupils are not required to analyse, speculate and think for themselves. In science, objectives are sometimes not clear, leading to lessons which lack a clear purpose and direction.
41. In geography, planning is based on a poor scheme of work and a lack of understanding of the National Curriculum, particularly in Years 7 to 9. This leads to significant gaps in pupils' enquiry skills and tasks which do not challenge all pupils at an appropriate level. Pupils do not have sufficient understanding of the levels they are at, targets to aim for or how to improve. The teaching of pupils in the 14-16 age range is much better because of the demands made of pupils.
42. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is mostly good and often very good. Lessons are well planned; high expectations are set for both learning and behaviour. Very good lessons are characterised by innovative and imaginative activities that sustain pupils' interest, with individual learning objectives clearly understood by pupils and staff. Lessons are well paced, teachers use challenge and encouragement expertly to involve pupils in improving their learning. In a small number of lessons some pupils behave less well when learning activities are not well matched to individual abilities and needs. Pupils in these lessons are not always sufficiently challenged.
43. Support for pupils with special educational needs in both mainstream lessons and withdrawal groups is good. Learning support assistants are knowledgeable. They are often involved in lesson planning and preparation. They have very good relationships with pupils and provide support where it is needed. They contribute positively to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.
44. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language has improved greatly since the last inspection and it is now satisfactory. Planning and organisation are well co-ordinated. Pupils' needs are clearly identified and support is provided where possible. This support is flexible, adapting to changing circumstances, as pupils join the school from a variety of backgrounds, particularly Yemeni, at different times of the year it makes effective provision within the

available resources. Assistants work hard to provide much of the early support to individual pupils, who are withdrawn from other lessons until they have the basic skills, particularly in literacy, necessary to cope in each subject area. This targeted support is effective in enabling pupils to understand and communicate well enough to work in groups that match their level of attainment in each subject. In lessons, most pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Teaching resources are relatively limited, although plans are in place to extend the range, as are plans to improve communication with subject teachers, to ensure that support is more effectively co-ordinated across the curriculum.

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

45. The school provides a wide ranging curriculum throughout the 11 – 16 age range and covers the subjects of the National Curriculum but does not meet statutory requirements in some aspects. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are well founded and effective.
46. At age 11 to 14 pupils take the full range of subjects, including RE and drama. Pupils have the choice of either French or German as their main language and are able to study a second language in Year 9. However pupils studying two languages have a reduced time allocation and the time allocated to design and technology is low. The National Curriculum subjects meet requirements except in geography, which lacks balance and progression in the scheme of work. ICT is taught partly but not consistently through other subjects, for example mathematics and English, and in Year 9 in specific lessons. These arrangements do not cover the requirements of the Programme of Study in breadth or depth, and pupils are unable to reach the higher levels of capability.
47. At age 14 to 16 most pupils take nine GCSE subjects in Year 10 and ten GCSE subjects in Year 11. There is a good choice of options at GCSE but vocational options are limited. In Year 11 the time allocation for physical education is less than what is recommended but this has been remedied in the Year 10 curriculum. There was some criticism in the last inspection of the vocational courses organised in conjunction with the local colleges. This provision has improved and arrangements made for pupils following vocational courses in Year 11 are good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided at both college sites in text processing and mechanical engineering. They make good progress and relate well to the college lecturers. Year 10 pupils do not currently study vocational courses. The school development plan includes the introduction of GNVQ courses in September 2001. Business studies makes a positive contribution to curriculum choice and pupil take-up has increased. The school is now entirely responsible for teaching this course. The school has not yet evaluated the impact of the new Year 10 option choice, particularly on history/geography/RE or the effect of the disapplication of modern languages for some pupils. There is no provision for RE in Year 11 and although two units of six weeks have been introduced into Year 10 this is well below the minimum recommended by the Dudley Agreed Syllabus. Statutory requirements are not met. The development plan for next year is not sufficient to meet the requirement.
48. All pupils aged 11 to 14 have access to the full curriculum, although in ICT proficiency is not guaranteed by a cross-subject approach in Years 7 and 8. All pupils do not have access to their RE entitlement. Pupils attending college placements miss some of their timetabled lessons in other subjects and do not have equal access to taught time. Pupils studying two foreign languages have sessions in 'twilight' time, which will prevent some pupils from exercising this choice.
49. Provision for personal, social, and health education (PSHE) is good. There is a detailed and well thought-out programme, which includes sex and drugs education. PSHE is taught as one lesson per week in the tutorial programme but the expertise of the staff who teach it is variable. The central planning of lessons is a good quality control measure. In addition to the taught

programme pupils have the opportunity to take part in other activities, for example charity work and the Motorola Youth Parliament competition.

50. Provision for careers education is good. The specific programme begins in Year 9 and is focused on options choices. The new arrangement in Year 10 gives increased guidance to pupils and prepares them for work experience. This will continue through to Year 11 in 2001. The present Year 11 have careers within the PSHE programme, which includes some sessions with the 'Prospects' careers service provider. The work experience in Year 10 lasts one week, with the opportunity to undertake a second week in activities week. The careers library has a good range of information in both printed and electronic form. There are helpful careers displays around the school.
51. There is a very good programme of extra-curricular activities, which is publicised in a booklet to pupils and on posters around the school. There is a wide range of sporting activities, music opportunities, several subject-based clubs and societies, and some individual activities. The school also offers a wide range of residential and school-based activities during a designated activities week. A large number of pupils take advantage of these enriching opportunities.
52. The links with primary schools work well for pastoral liaison but are less effective for curriculum continuity. The extra-curricular Rocket Club has linked with two primary schools. The pen-pal system between Year 7 and Year 6 pupils is a strong part of the transition arrangements. However, the transfer of pupil performance data is weak. The school has established a working group to promote curriculum liaison, which has recently commenced its work. Links with the colleges for post-16 transition are mainly through careers information and the remaining vocational courses in Year 11. There is scope for further development of post-16 opportunities and curriculum liaison. The local community contributes to the pupils' learning through provision of work experience, competitions (for example, the Rotary Club), and through visits to school.
53. Recent innovative developments in the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs impact positively on pupils' learning. The Year 7 Accelerated Literacy Programme provides good opportunities for improving pupils' basic skills, as well as enabling them to continue to work within the framework of the National Curriculum in English, history, geography and RE. Pupils value this provision. Appropriate arrangements are made for pupils with cerebral palsy to enable them to be fully integrated, including effective use of a peer buddy system.
54. Statutory Code of Practice requirements for statements of special educational needs, annual reviews and transition reviews are met. The policy, which is reviewed regularly, provides appropriate information that is clearly written and presented. The school has made good progress in developing individual education plans. They provide precise, measurable and appropriate targets for pupils on the register of special educational needs. Additional information is provided through individual pupil updates and the register of special educational needs. Teachers are provided with detailed information on pupils with special educational needs, however this is not consistently referred to in all lessons.

Spiritual and Moral Development

55. The school aims to make good provision for the spiritual and moral development of its pupils. This is reflected in the example set by teachers and other adults, a comprehensive and specific policy, the school's mission statement, and the policy for collective worship. The life of the school is based on clear values which contribute to the atmosphere of mutual respect where pupils can discuss feelings and beliefs. There are very good examples of work in RE throughout the school where pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and consider questions of meaning and purpose. In Year 9, for example, in the unit 'Belief in God?' pupils are encouraged to explore theological arguments of Aquinas and Feuerbach about the existence of God.

Pupils in Year 7 reflect on values in life when designing their own personal symbol. In history, spiritual and moral aspects are developed through the study of native Americans as a spiritual people, and through considering the moral issues involved in the murder of Thomas Becket and in the slave trade. Good examples of pupils reflecting on their own experiences were also observed in art, when pupils in Year 11 interpreted through art the feelings involved when a family is separated and in Year 9 when inspiration for a mother and child sculpture was taken from personal photographs. Moral issues concerned with health education and personal development are explored in a comprehensive personal and social programme.

56. However, the policy to promote opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum is not sufficiently implemented, identified on schemes of work, nor adequately monitored.
57. Assemblies are not usually acts of worship though they are worthwhile occasions and sometimes allow pupils to reflect on feelings and experiences through the use of poetry, for example, in a good assembly seen on the theme of Remembrance. The school does not yet meet statutory requirements to provide an act of worship every day for all pupils but a working party exists to consider further development.
58. Although the school has introduced RE for all pupils in Year 10, when moral issues such as prejudice and discrimination are discussed, at present the time allowed is inadequate.

Social development

59. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils respond well to opportunities in lessons to work in pairs and in larger groups. For example, in French lessons they listen well to each other and work productively. This is the case in most lessons. Personal and social education lessons make a good contribution to social development. Pupils consider a number of social issues as part of the programme. For example, a Year 8 class considered the meaning of democracy. Pupils had the opportunity to chair meetings, take minutes and relate this experience to the work of the school council. Their approach was mature and they showed respect for other people's views. Pupils respond well to the school's expectations for good behaviour. In physical education lessons pupils show a well-developed sense of rules and fair play. In RE pupils consider some of the social aspects of a range of religions. For example, they investigate conflict through Judaism and Sikhism and consider racial discrimination through studying the work of Martin Luther King. In geography they compare the social conditions in different urban areas.

Cultural development

60. Overall provision for pupils' cultural development is sound, but the contribution of subject areas to cultural development is underdeveloped. Although several subjects do make a contribution, this is not monitored across the school and there are no plans to enhance this in the future. Religious education makes a good contribution to cultural development. For example, pupils are able to visit a mosque and local churches. They consider cultural differences and similarities in religions but do not have sufficient opportunities to meet with community representatives visiting the school. The school has started to take positive steps to celebrate the cultural diversity of its own pupils. There has been some attempt to use the local Yemeni community as a positive example of the cultural richness found within school. In geography, food technology, art, music and drama some contribution is made to the study of the diversity of cultures around the world. Overall, however, this is a relative weakness. For example relatively little recognition of the contribution of different cultures is found in science and mathematics. The preparation of pupils for life in an ethnically diverse society is underdeveloped.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

61. Windsor High School has created a happy, safe and caring environment, assisting pupils to develop to their full potential.
62. In the last report the pastoral system was considered 'a strength of the school where year heads and tutors ensured effective support and guidance'. The school continues to enjoy the benefits of this strength.
63. The school has high expectations of pupils in all aspects of school life. Through the distinction award system for the upper school and the merit awards for the lower school pupils, the school rewards effort, achievement and contribution to the community. The pupils value the awards. They are particularly pleased when a distinction letter goes out to parents and this recognition of achievement raises pupils' self esteem. Sanctions are applied consistently, monitored by the use of green and peach referral slips which act as a record of poor behaviour. The anti-bullying policy has been adopted by the governors and pupils report that when bullying occurs it is dealt with swiftly and effectively and that they would feel confident in approaching staff to report incidents. Parents have expressed concern about a small minority of pupils' poor behaviour commanding teachers' attention thus impacting negatively on the learning of others. The school has reacted to this by grouping pupils in more appropriate ways and this is having a positive effect on behaviour management in the school.
64. The collation of data from registers is laboriously done by hand by assistant heads of year. This system allows for inaccuracy and though registers are kept in accordance with guidelines, a few errors in totalling attendance were noted. Attendance figures are shared with parents in the weekly newsletter and this raises the profile of attendance. Pupils and tutor groups are awarded shields, certificates and badges to reward good attendance. Data collected about lateness did not match evidence of pupils observed arriving late for registration during the inspection. There is some confusion as to what constitutes lateness and there is inconsistency in the sanctions taken by tutors to deter it.
65. Effective systems are now in place to allow the governing body to monitor matters of health and safety in the school. A considerable amount of both human resource and expenditure has been invested to ensure the welfare of pupils and staff. Risk assessments are carried out in all areas at least once a year and in higher risk areas, such as design and technology, more frequently. The premises book is used effectively by staff to record concerns and this book is monitored on a daily basis by the caretaker. This method is successful in allowing for speedy rectification of problems. In design and technology, machinery and working practice have now been made safe and dust extractors have been installed and are used effectively. Dangerous substances are stored securely and a rigorous programme for testing portable electric equipment has been successfully implemented. The inspectors shared the school's concern over road safety outside the main gate. The positioning of the crossing encourages pupils to cut corners and road safety would be greatly improved with the erection of a safety rail directly in front of the gate to force pupils to use the crossing correctly. The introduction of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras and the erection of security fencing have greatly enhanced security at the school.
66. Child protection is securely in place in the school and staff involved have had suitable training. All staff, having received training, are secure in their knowledge of procedures. The school benefits from the services of a conscientious School Health Advisor. In the past year the service has supported pupils' welfare by administering the meningitis immunisation programme, holding drop-in clinics for pupils and staff and helping to deliver some sex and health aspects of the personal development programme. This service is rightly valued by the school and makes a positive contribution to the welfare of pupils.

67. Pupils' personal development is well catered for through a well-structured programme. Pupils' views and opinions are sought and used to inform planning and development. The programme is generally well administered by form tutors and the recent initiative, which frees up time for the assistant year head during personal development lessons, will allow time for teachers to share good practice.
68. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are generally good. In many subjects, including English, modern foreign languages, mathematics and physical education, procedures are very good. Assessment procedures are at least satisfactory in all other subjects but in history arrangements do not yet adequately match the National Curriculum levels for pupils in the 11-14 age range. In this age range, procedures in geography are poor and assessment in ICT is poor throughout the school. Overall, satisfactory use is made of assessment to promote the progress of pupils and for planning. In many areas good use is made of assessments made at the end of a task, an example being in art where at the end of a project knowledge of pupils' level of attainment is passed on to the next teacher to promote continuity.
69. The academic monitoring, which was in its early stages at the time of the last inspection, is now satisfactorily established. Tutors agree new learning targets with pupils, monitor them and review them regularly and this raises achievement for many pupils. A mentoring scheme for underachieving pupils is successful in supporting pupils and raising the work ethic.
70. For pupils with special educational needs, assessment data are well used and include reading, comprehension and spelling ages and learning support assistants' working records. When opportunities arise, good use is made of specialist local education authority personnel in assessing particular special educational needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

71. The school continues to be successful in promoting good links with parents. 'Securing positive involvement of parents in support of their children's education' is one of the school's aims and this exemplifies the esteem in which the parental role in learning is held by the school.
72. The weekly newsletters keep parents well informed about daily life at the school. It is used to celebrate achievement, inform of activities and to encourage parents to become involved in children's learning. Parents attending the meeting held prior to the inspection, and in a high majority on the questionnaires returned, agree that the school is easily approachable with concerns and problems. The 1999/2000 edition of the Governors' Report to Parents, printed during the inspection, more than fulfils the requirements for reporting and makes informative reading. The Prospectus is of high quality and one can understand why it won a Times Educational Supplement award.
73. Over 80 per cent of parents, completing the questionnaire, feel they are kept well informed about their child's progress. The school sends out two scans (a snapshot of attainment) and one progress file each year. The progress files are of a high standard, a particularly pleasing aspect being the detailed curriculum content for each subject and, in Year 10 and Year 11, the specific GCSE course content where appropriate. The written comments of teachers are generally of a good standard and report on pupils' progress and attainment, though at age 14 attainment grades are not compared with national standards. In many cases good individualised targets for improvement are set, but often there is insufficient information on progress since the last report.
74. The head teacher and year head hold three meetings each year for the parents of new Year 7 pupils, two tutor groups at a time in the autumn term. This more personalised approach gives parents an early opportunity to feel part of the school community. Year 9, 10 and 11 parents attend a meeting about GCSE options, courses and revision focusing which includes them in the learning process. Good use is made of the homework diaries, where pupils share

achievements with parents and teachers and parents can communicate concerns. Scrutiny of the diaries, and observations of tutor periods, confirms that the diaries are monitored regularly by teachers in a majority of cases.

75. An excellent example of parents' involvement in their children's learning is the recent initiative from the English department for Year 8 pupils. Parents were involved in helping pupils with the difficult text of Beowulf. Parents found the task challenging but were rewarded for their hard work with the pleasing outcomes from the pupils.
76. Parents are provided with very good suggestions on how to help their children at home. Parents' attendance at Annual Reviews and Individual Education Plan meetings is improving. The school should explore ways of helping parents to become more involved in reviewing their children's progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are provided with very good information on how to help their children at home. Individual teachers use homework planners well to share information with parents. In a Year 8 English lesson feedback from parents was used to review the match of learning activities to pupils' abilities. Some parents are involved in reading projects.
77. The Windsor High School Association is very successful in raising large amounts of money which is used to benefit learning for all pupils. Overall parents view the school as being good and the school has effective links with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

78. Over the last two years the new headteacher has established a clear educational direction for the school as a centre of excellence in which all children can achieve their potential. He has delegated authority to senior staff and holds them accountable for success. This has produced many positive features and brought about much needed change. Under his leadership the process of self-review has become part of the culture of the school. The headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and empowers other senior staff to work well together to address areas in need of development.
79. The governors are very committed to the success of the school. Their knowledge of procedures and processes is now excellent and they have active involvement in monitoring the work of the school. Their involvement in policy formation is good and financial planning and control systems are now secure. The significant budget deficit identified at the time of the last inspection has been transformed into a substantial surplus and there are well-founded plans to use this to enhance curriculum provision. Statutory requirements are met except for coverage of the programmes of study in ICT, RE and the daily act of collective worship. The governors, through the work of key sub-committees for finance, personnel, building and curriculum, critically review the match of resources and plans to ensure best value through very rigorous tendering processes.
80. The excellent work of the financial manager ensures very good day-to-day administration and recording. The school has a very clear picture of what has been spent and all invoices are logged in a rigorous and systematised approach to management. The manager was introduced by governors in response to the deficit accrued whilst the school was Grant Maintained. The school will continue to carry the burden of previous weak financial planning for some time to come. The contract covering the recent capital building programme may yet require the school to reimburse the contractor for costs incurred and this legacy is inhibiting reinvestment of the current budget surplus.
81. The senior management team now operates in an open and supportive manner. New roles have recently been defined and there are clear accountabilities. Regular meetings enable the team to plan effectively at both strategic and operational level. Leadership through this senior team is

now very good. There is genuine participation by all members who have been empowered to contribute and lead in their areas of responsibility.

82. The leadership function of the school is well supported through very effective management by heads of department focusing on academic achievement and year heads supporting the pastoral needs of pupils. Subject leadership is a very strong feature in most areas but in some, planning requires particular attention. In RE, technology and music new heads of department are working hard to achieve success. However, the absence of a scheme of work for GCSE music, the plans to introduce a new eight level system to meet the changing requirements of the agreed syllabus in RE within an inadequate time allocation, and the absence of adequate assessment arrangements which might inform curriculum planning in ICT are significant weaknesses.
83. The school has specialist staff to teach the curriculum and the ratio of staff to pupils is more favourable than the average for similar schools but there are areas, mathematics, geography, history, RE and ICT for example, where staff are not teaching their main specialist subject.
84. The school manages its accommodation well. There has been recent investment to improve the environment and plans for expansion to provide additional specialist accommodation are well constructed. Some temporary accommodation remains but this is in good repair. Corridors are very narrow given the number of pupils in the school but staff manage the movement of pupils well. Very good facilities exist for physical education and specialist provision for science has recently been upgraded, though not all laboratories are to the same high standard. The absence of individual practice rooms for music results in high levels of noise caused by several instruments competing within the same work space and this is inhibiting the progress pupils make.
85. Learning resources are adequate in all areas and the library is a vibrant area which is well used. The ratio of computers to pupils in the school is very favourable and good access to this resource is provided for pupils. The managed service for providing resources to support learning in ICT through the Dudley Grid for Learning has been very recently introduced to the school and has the potential to make an effective contribution to learning. Non-teaching and learning support staff make a very effective contribution to the life of the school. Staff are focused on important priorities which support learning.
86. The co-ordination of special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides clear direction for the school in meeting special educational needs effectively. The co-ordinator has taken the lead in ensuring appropriate support is provided for pupils in subjects across the curriculum. The involvement of a wider range of teachers in writing individual education plans and the introduction of new courses in Year 7 have enhanced special educational needs provision.
87. The learning support base is a very well used resource and this, as with resources in general, is effectively and efficiently managed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88. To build on and improve further the good standards in many areas the school must:
 - (1) Improve consistency in the quality of planning for curriculum delivery by:
 - mapping what is taught in ICT to ensure coverage of the Programme of Study by all pupils;
(Paragraphs: 46, 118, 173, 175, 177, 178, 179, 181, 183, 202, 211, 223)

- improving the provision for religious education;
(Paragraphs: 47, 48, 58, 79, 82, 83)
 - producing a scheme of work for GCSE music;
(Paragraphs: 82, 200, 202)
 - setting out more clearly the work planned in geography;
(Paragraphs: 41, 46, 68, 83, 156, 157, 161)
 - monitoring rigorously individual lesson plans in mathematics and science.
(Paragraphs: 39, 83, 90, 124, 126)
- (2) Provide support for the most able by:
- ensuring that the quality of challenge is appropriate to the individual pupil's learning needs;
(Paragraphs: 33, 113, 114, 123, 159, 161, 189)
 - broadening the range of learning styles to develop pupils' independent learning and higher order thinking skills.
(Paragraphs: 33, 40, 46, 96, 98, 109, 113, 116, 118)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

- 89 Since 1998 substantial changes have been made to the curriculum. Most significant of these was the decision to increase the number but reduce the duration of teaching periods. The flexibility afforded by this change has resulted in a curriculum which is more appropriate to the needs of pupils. Vocational and off-site provision has been rationalised in accordance with the principles of best value and business studies is now delivered at Windsor High School and taught by a new head of department. Text processing and mechanical engineering courses are taught at Halesowen College. GNVQ provision is planned for introduction next year.

Split site

- 90 The volume of off-site education is now very small and involves very few pupils. Links with the local college are good and pupils attend college for text processing and mechanical engineering but the school has the capacity to provide a good standard of education for pupils within its own premises, currently located on one site.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	226
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	27	33	32	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1,367
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	126

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	202

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.3	School data	0.1
National comparative data	7.9	National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	137	131	268

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	100	94	102
	Girls	117	107	108
	Total	217	201	210
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	81 (93)	75 (75)	78 (74)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	47 (42)	53 (53)	46 (44)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	116	89	108
	Girls	124	105	112
	Total	240	194	120
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	90 (79)	73 (77)	82 (77)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	44 (41)	50 (51)	56 (55)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2000	134	124	258

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	70	127	131
	Girls	85	119	121
	Total	155	246	252
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	60 (54)	95 (89)	98 (96)
	National	49 (46.6)	88.8 (90.9)	94.4 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	43 (38)
	National	38.7 (38)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	0
	National		[n/a]

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	12
Indian	17
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	4
White	1,283
Any other minority ethnic group	33

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other	1	
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	27	2
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	81.63
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	14.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	454.75

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.0
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22.7
Key Stage 4	21.2

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	3,100,377
Total expenditure	2,932,094
Expenditure per pupil	2,145
Balance brought forward from previous year	117,574
Balance carried forward to next year	285,857

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,367
Number of questionnaires returned	282

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	52	7	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	49	3	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	58	7	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	57	12	4	1
The teaching is good.	34	55	3	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	45	12	2	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	37	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	35	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	49	12	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	35	48	6	3	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	48	6	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	43	6	3	5

Other issues raised by parents

At the parents' meeting and in letters sent to the Registered Inspector a few parents complained that there had been no response to comments entered in pupils' homework diaries. Other parents reported that the homework planner was a useful vehicle for communicating with the school. A minority commented on the inconsistent delivery of science and mathematics and upon bullying at break times and lunch periods. The great majority expressed appreciation for the work of the school, which they felt helped their children develop into confident young adults.

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

ENGLISH

91. Although pupils enter Year 7 with attainment at the national level of expectation, attainment by age 14 has been well above national expectation since 1998. Good progress is made throughout the 11-14 age range. Pupils are able to talk confidently and listen in a range of situations. They are able to read texts and select information to support their ideas. Pupils' extended writing grows in quality, confidence and accuracy. At the end of Year 9, most pupils use formal written language appropriately.
92. There has been a continuous improvement in GCSE English results since 1998. In 2000, English Language results were well above the national average. Results in English literature were slightly below national expectation, and there has been a decrease in the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades since 1998. The department has set out clear strategies for the improvement of English literature results, including the introduction of more challenging texts and the development of analytical skills in Years 7, 8 and 9. A high proportion of pupils were entered for both examinations and all succeeded in gaining a pass at A*-G. Achievement in both English and English literature by boys has improved since 1998, and is now comparable with that of girls. Progress in the 14-16 age range is good.
93. Basic literacy improves from Year 7 to Year 9, through suitable teaching approaches and the effective use of in-class support for pupils with special needs. A literacy programme, which builds upon work undertaken in primary schools, has been introduced in Year 7 in which skills for analysing texts are taught. A wider reading programme has also been initiated in the 11-14 age range to improve standards of reading. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in class and group discussion and role-play. The use of key words in teachers' lesson planning is effective, as is the good use made of the key word displays in all English teaching rooms. The learning of spelling is used as a homework task.
94. The quality of teaching in English is good. Almost half of all lessons seen were very good, and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Lesson planning is good, and expectations of behaviour are high. Where teaching is most effective, clear lesson objectives are communicated to pupils and they are referred to regularly to reinforce progress. In the most effective teaching recapitulation is always used at the end of lessons to consolidate learning. Teachers are able to employ a variety of teaching techniques, for example, role play was used as a stimulus for the analysis of character in a short story in Year 9; pictures and a video clip were used in order to encourage closer analysis of a Shakespearean character in Year 10; mime and drawing were used to demonstrate comprehension of a complex text in Year 8, and in Year 11 pupils were asked to answer questions about a particular examination text in character. Recall of previous learning is also used at the beginning of lessons, in order to put work into a context. Where teaching is less effective, tasks rather than lesson objectives are used to structure lessons. There is a lack of pace and a lack of variety in the approaches used. Although there are examples of good practice, clear developmental targets for improvement are not generally being set by all staff, and there is a failure in some cases to check pupils' completion of previous targets. Homework set is appropriate.
95. The ethos of the department is one of good working relationships and purposeful learning, and pupil response is good. In all years pupils appear motivated and keen to learn. Where poor attitudes were observed, teachers challenged them appropriately. Pupils recall information from previous lessons relevantly. Most get down to work quickly and remain on task. They listen to each other and work well collaboratively. The boy/girl pairings in all lessons in the 11-14 age range encourage socialisation. At GCSE, pupils are focused on doing well, and they listen attentively when teachers discuss ways to improve standards. Good learning, seen in some lessons, would be further improved if pupils were allowed to take the initiative and if

they were encouraged to evaluate their own and others' learning more. This is particularly the case with high ability pupils.

96. The head of department provides very effective leadership, and the department is very well managed. There is a clear direction for work and targets for improvement are systematically set through department development plans and action plans. Monitoring of these is good and a co-operative team spirit exists. Teachers are willing to reflect upon their teaching and they listen to constructive criticism. Responsibilities are delegated well. The department offers a good range of extra-curricular activities including theatre trips, visits from local theatre companies, a Latin club, debating societies and journalistic activities. The curriculum is wide-ranging and the content meets requirements. There is, however, a need to ensure that pupils in all years are able to use ICT in English lessons.
97. Since the last inspection, the department has improved throughout. It has introduced challenging texts in the 11-14 age range, has developed the skill of drafting throughout and has introduced word derivation into its schemes of work. Clear strategies for recapitulation still need to be included in all lessons, and the consistency of marking remains an area for development. Overall, however, progress has been good.
98. In order to improve further the department should:
- introduce more varied independent learning approaches;
 - ensure that all pupils have opportunities to use ICT in English;
 - develop a more consistent approach to marking, where all staff are setting clear developmental targets for improvement and are monitoring pupil progress in meeting these targets.

Drama

99. Pupils enter Year 7 with a wide range of dramatic experiences and skills. In the 11-14 age range the course provides a programme which enables pupils to develop a repertoire of dramatic techniques and confidence in performance. Standards of achievement in drama in Years 7 and 9 are good for both boys and girls.
100. Results at GCSE in 2000 were below the national expectation, with 67% of pupils achieving grades A*-C compared with 70.5% nationally. There has been a slight decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C since 1998. All pupils entered achieved grades A*-G, but boys' achievement in 2000 was significantly lower than that of girls. Work in Year 10 and 11 lessons was of a good standard. Pupils are able to use a variety of techniques, for example by using their awareness of space to communicate the passage of time, or by conveying the concepts of status and oppression through mime in a more stylised piece of work.
101. Literacy is supported well. Effective use is made of technical vocabulary throughout. Key words are clearly posted around the two designated drama rooms and they are referred to in lessons. The majority of pupils express themselves with clarity and confidence. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language often find success in performing in character. Drama also contributes to the spiritual, cultural and moral development of pupils. There is a programme of extra-curricular events, including well-attended clubs for Year 7, Years 8 and 9 and Years 10 and 11. A sixth form pupil from another school also assists at the Year 10 and 11 drama club. The emphasis on collaborative and group working encourages social development. The topics, which form the basis for much of the work in the 14-16 age range in particular, allow pupils to explore moral issues within a context. For example a Year 11 lesson encouraged pupils to consider concepts of oppression and authoritarianism.
102. Standards of teaching in the 11-14 age range are good and are often very good in the 14-16 age range. Teachers have secure drama knowledge and understanding, allied to a real enthusiasm

for, and commitment to, the subject. Planning is careful, and learning objectives are stated at the beginning of every lesson. This means that both teachers and pupils are focused upon what is going to be learnt during the particular session. Recapitulation is used very effectively at the end of lessons in order to make pupils fully aware of their learning. Assessment objectives for particular year groups are posted on the walls of the two designated drama rooms. Teachers refer to these objectives, and pupils are asked to evaluate their own success in achieving them. Throughout the school, pupils are able to do this perceptively and self-critically. Such approaches ensure that all pupils make progress.

103. Pupils are encouraged to respect the views of others, and to approach all tasks conscientiously. The majority does so. They politely evaluate the work of others and frequently make perceptive suggestions for improvement. In the 14-16 age range, pupils are able to recognise subtle layers of sub-text in performance. In a Year 11 lesson, for example, comments were made on the use by other pupils of body language and colour to convey complex messages. The majority of pupils listen and watch attentively during performance - the expectations of proper behaviour having been made clear to them by their teachers. They work sensibly, even in situations where the conditions are cramped. A calm and collaborative atmosphere is present in most lessons. Pupils are able to work independently and remain on task when engaged in practical activities.
104. The department is well managed. The recently appointed head of department sets high standards and there is a shared commitment to improve and succeed. There is observation of teaching and strategies for improvement are drawn up in consequence. Clear schemes of work have been produced and regular meetings are held to ensure that communication is effective. The two drama rooms have attractive and appropriate displays and there is sufficient space for effective activity to take place. However, the use of classrooms elsewhere in the school for drama lessons, where space is much more limited, is less satisfactory. The full effectiveness of a Year 7 lesson, where one of the stated learning objectives was "to develop spatial awareness" was limited because of a lack of performance space.
105. Provision for drama in Year 8 is minimal and there is a need to ensure that greater continuity is maintained between Years 7 and 9. Prior assessment data needs to be used more systematically at both key stages in order to set formal and challenging targets for pupil achievement.
106. Although achievement at GCSE in 2000 has decreased since the last inspection report, standards of teaching and learning are now improving.
107. In order to improve standards further the department should:
 - ensure that there is properly designated drama space for all drama lessons;
 - make greater use of prior assessment information in order to set all pupils targets for improvement;
 - dedicate more curriculum time to drama in Year 8.

MATHEMATICS

108. Pupils receive a good mathematics education and most make good gains in their learning. Most achieve high levels of attainment particularly in national tests at age 14 and external examinations at age 16.
109. Overall pupils are making satisfactory progress across all aspects of mathematics throughout Years 7, 8 and 9, and good progress in Years 10 and 11. More able pupils make very good progress in Year 10 and good progress in Year 11 but their progress in Year 9 is unsatisfactory. High attaining pupils in Year 10 quickly learnt to use the cosine rule in a non-right angled triangle to find an unknown side and pupils with special educational needs in Year 8 were able to work out the rule and find a formula to calculate the perimeter of a square. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the 11-16 age range. Pupils also

demonstrate that they can use and apply mathematics well, particularly in their GCSE coursework investigations; for example, an investigation by a Year 11 pupil into number pattern reached A*/A standard. However, opportunities for using ICT are rare in mathematics lessons and pupils' progress is uneven in this aspect.

110. In the national tests for 14 year old pupils in 2000, attainment by both boys and girls at Level 5 or above was well above national expectations both in relation to all schools and to similar schools nationally. This has been the case for the last four years. Teacher assessments are similar and indicate that staff know well pupil capabilities. In GCSE examinations in 2000, the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C results is well above the national average and continues the rising trend in performance over the last three years. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A/A* is above national average though the percentage gaining A* is relatively low.
111. In almost all lessons, teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. In over half the lessons teaching is good and in one quarter of lessons teaching is very good. Throughout the school there are examples of good quality teaching though teaching is better in the 14-16 age range. This is linked to the experience and qualifications of the staff, and the way in which mathematics is timetabled in Years 7, 8 and 11.
112. All the teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding to teach their classes. However, several staff for whom mathematics is not their main specialism teach a small number of mathematics lessons. Thirteen out of 59, classes have more than one teacher and in some instances this is detrimental to the progress of the pupils. Teachers plan their lessons well and the adoption of the national numeracy strategy in structuring lessons is a key feature of planning. The use of a 'warm up activity' provides a positive start to lessons and creates a good working ethos from the moment the pupils enter the classroom. During lessons pupils are given very good support and are told what to do to improve. For example, in a Year 8 lesson pupils were solving linear equations and the teacher's good circulation among them enabled efficient checking of pupils' understanding by effective targeted questioning. A common misunderstanding was quickly identified and turned into a class teaching point, so deepening pupils' understanding.
113. Where teaching and learning are at their best, the teaching pace is brisk and a variety of teaching methods is employed. Relationships are good, there is an appropriate sense of humour, and pupils are involved in their learning and make very good progress. For example, in a Year 11 algebra lesson the teacher's clear explanation and very good questioning, about some common mistakes made in examination answers, enabled pupils to have a very good understanding of expanding two linear expressions. However, in some lessons teachers miss opportunities to use questions to deepen pupils' understanding, particularly when time is not well managed and the end of the lesson is rushed. For example, in a Year 9 lesson the pupils were not given any time limits for the completion of activities. This resulted in the teacher telling the pupils at the end of the lesson what they had learnt rather than asking and exploring their understanding of using ratio to assess 'best buys'. In some lessons with high attaining pupils the needs of the most able pupils are not fully met by planning extension work which is very challenging, and which would enable some pupils to achieve A* rather than A grades at GCSE. The extension work planned offers 'more of the same' and tends to be reinforcement rather than extending thinking and independent learning.
114. In a very few lessons there are some significant weaknesses in teaching which affect progress and attainment. Planning is weak, the task is not clear, not all pupils are managed effectively, praise is given when not deserved, and pace is slow. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their work or kept on task and consequently make little progress. For example, in a Year 11 lesson the pupils were not clear about organising data into two ordered gender lists and were unable to do the next task of finding the mean, mode and median. The teacher put the answer on the board, which the pupils duly copied. Many of the pupils did not know the meaning of the terms mean, mode and median despite the definition being on the worksheet, which the

teacher did not explain until later. Some pupils finished the task and waited idly, but others had hardly started.

115. Attitudes towards mathematics are very good. In almost all the lessons observed pupils were attentive, volunteered answers, worked hard, sustained concentration and were respectful towards their teacher. Pupils talked well about their work and were keen to demonstrate what they could do. In a Year 7 lesson pupils volunteered some ingenious and thoughtful answers to the question “What can you tell me about the number 10?” which showed a wide range of mathematical thinking and understanding about number and shape and space. The pupils were asked to research whether a decahedron existed or not as part of their homework. Behaviour is very good in the large majority of lessons. In the small minority of lessons in which pupils were less co-operative, progress and attainment were adversely affected.
116. The subject development plan has clear priorities and is manageable and achievable. There is a good analysis of examination results and the performance of pupils. This information is well used to set individual pupil targets. An effective system for observing the practice of teachers has yet to be fully implemented. The curriculum is very good throughout the school and meets requirements. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, but the use of ICT is weak and the department’s contribution to the whole school programme is not systematically applied. Assessment is good. There is a clear schedule of regular and systematic testing of pupils’ understanding but the marking of pupils’ work fails to indicate to pupils what they have to do to improve. Display work creates a positive learning environment and the accommodation is good. Resources are good but the computers are under-used.
117. Since the previous inspection improvement has been very good. Standards have risen, the GCSE course for low attaining pupils has been improved and the proportion of pupils achieving lower grades at GCSE has reduced significantly. Planning is more detailed and better matched to most pupils’ needs. The development plan has fewer targets and greater precision. Accommodation is much improved.

118. To improve further the department should:
- offer training to improve subject knowledge to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching;
 - further develop the use of ICT;
 - improve the provision for gifted and talented pupils;
 - develop independent learning.

SCIENCE

119. Pupils receive a good standard of education and make good progress in science. The science department has the ambition and potential to be a very good department.
120. The overall attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 in the 2000 national tests was above the national average. This has been the position for the last three years, though the results are no longer improving from one year to the next. Attainment was well above that of pupils in similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the level 5 norm or higher, and level 6 or higher was also above that in similar schools. The 2000 results show a higher proportion of girls than boys attaining the level 5 norm or above. This difference is greater than that found nationally. Results in GCSE are also well above national averages, as they have been for several years. In 2000 a higher proportion of girls than boys attained A*-C grades. However, overall girls did not perform as well in science as they did in their other subjects, whilst boys performed better in science than in their other subjects. This suggests that there are further improvements which can be made by the girls. There is no upward trend in the proportion of pupils attaining grades A*-C at GCSE whereas the trends nationally are increasing.
121. Pupils enter the school at age 11 with average attainment in science. By age 14 good progress has been made. The attainment of current pupils is well above national expectations. Progress in science is fastest in Year 9, where the work is most challenging. Whilst clear progress is made in Year 7, it is limited by the repetition of work which pupils have covered in their primary school. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good, as is that of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding is very good. Practical skills are well developed. Pupils' understanding and use of the technical language of science is very good. They are able to discuss science accurately, confidently and in detail. This is a result of the work the department does in discussing the meanings of key words, having them prominently displayed in laboratories and using them frequently in lessons. For example, a Year 9 boy was able to describe and explain predator-prey relationships with exemplary conciseness and clarity. The development of literacy is aided by an emphasis on spelling and other strategies including book research and the development of note-taking skills; for example, in a lesson in which pupils researched different types of renewable and non-renewable forms of energy and gave presentations to the class. Numeracy development is sound. Some opportunities are taken to use numeracy skills in lessons; for example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils were asked to calculate what percentage of food stuffs was protein. In a Year 9 lesson on human variation the length of pupils' index fingers was plotted onto a bar chart, and interpretations made of the data. The development of skills in ICT is sound. At present it is limited partly by the amount of data-logging equipment the department has, but there are plans to increase this substantially this year.
122. At age 16 attainment is well above national expectations. Progress is greatest in Year 11. In Year 10 a significant amount of time is spent repeating work done in previous years. Pupils' investigative ability is very well developed. They are able to use their knowledge and understanding to predict the outcome of an investigation; for example, the ideas of the kinetic theory and activation energy were used by Year 10 pupils to predict the effect of temperature on the rate of reaction between an acid and a carbonate. They make accurate measurements and identify anomalous results, repeating readings where necessary. Pupils work quickly and accurately with good manipulative skills. Pupils' ability to apply their learning to a new situation is also good. A Year 11 pupil was able to apply what had been learned in a lesson on

osmosis to the problem of measuring the concentration in cells of a potato. Lower attaining groups make good progress in most lessons, as do pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

123. Teaching is frequently of a high standard. In half of the lessons seen teaching was either good or very good. There was a small proportion of unsatisfactory lessons. Good lessons were characterised by the teacher communicating clearly to the pupils what they were to learn that lesson. Teachers also had well thought-out approaches to develop pupils' learning. This resulted in teaching and learning which had a clear purpose. The teaching of topics by teachers with a particular expertise in that subject area is a strength in the department. It results in high expectations, confident teaching and good learning. This sort of lesson tended to be with lower attaining groups. However, there is also in the department some very good practice with such groups. For example, in a Year 11 lesson a lower attaining group was revising work on photosynthesis. Pupils understood clearly what the purpose of the lesson was. They were given a range of well chosen aids, including a short practical, a video clip and work cards to be sequenced as well as a discussion with their teacher, to develop their understanding. This resulted in a successful lesson in which pupils made good progress. The use of a range of approaches in a lesson to maintain the interest of pupils over a long period of time was used to good effect in a Year 9 lesson on human variation and in a Year 11 lesson on oil refining. Lessons tend to be taught at a good pace and there are few lessons where the pace of work is unsatisfactory. The marking of books is a strength in the department. Pupils' work is regularly marked and this enhances pupils' learning. However, there is insufficient information given to pupils on what their strengths and weaknesses are and what they should do to improve in their weaker areas of work. Homework is used well to reinforce what has been learned in class. Able pupils would benefit from more challenging homework and work of a more challenging nature in lessons. Teachers' use of questions is effective in helping pupils recall work they have done earlier and in motivating pupils. It is evident in many lessons that boys are called upon to answer more frequently than girls.
124. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of science is tested frequently but the preliminary tests given to pupils before they begin a topic are not analysed and used to influence what is taught in the topic. This leads to some unnecessary repetition of what has been taught earlier. For tests taken at the end of a topic there is as yet insufficient analysis of the answers that pupils give. As a result the information from testing is not used sufficiently to evaluate the teaching approaches. After tests in Years 10 and 11, very good analysis is done by the head of department to identify any pupils who are not performing as well as expected. These pupils are then closely monitored. The same is not done in Years 7-9 where under-performance can result in pupils being moved into a lower set, rather than being challenged to improve their work.
125. Pupils respond well to their teachers. They show interest in their lessons and they are co-operative. Pupils help each other to good effect; for example, one pupil in Year 8 helped another, who was not yet fluent in English, to understand his work. In a lesson which involved pupils presenting short reports to the class, the response of the class was positive and supportive. Pupils handle equipment with care, and behaviour is of a high standard.
126. The science curriculum is very well planned. The guidance notes to teachers are very thorough. This is a strength of the department. There is good planning for the development of literacy skills, and satisfactory development of numeracy skills. Lower attaining sets have less challenging work in the main, which is appropriate. There are occasions though where the work is taught too slowly and this results in insufficient challenge. Teachers are planning for the needs of differing abilities but have yet to deliver this in all groups. Science lessons make a satisfactory contribution to the development of pupils' social development, but on the basis of the work seen there is little attention paid to spiritual, moral or cultural development.
127. There is strong, purposeful leadership of the science department and this has a major impact on standards. The monitoring of teaching and of pupils' books occurs regularly. Teachers are

encouraged to observe others teaching in order to further develop their own practice, and this is having a positive effect. The department's development plan is firmly based on continuing to raise standards.

128. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained at high levels. Investigative skills have improved. A wider range of teaching approaches is used. Guidance notes for teachers now include sufficient detail about what pupils are expected to learn. The quantity of technician support has improved and the new senior technician has begun to improve the quality of service provided by the team of technicians. The storage of dangerous chemicals has much improved, and the annual testing of portable electrical equipment is almost complete.
129. To improve further the department should:
- analyse pupils' responses on test papers to identify:
 - where improvements are needed in the way ideas are taught;
 - how much pupils already know so that the teaching programme can be adjusted accordingly;
 - pupils who are not learning as well as they should be, and take steps to ensure that they do.
 - use the guidance notes for teachers to set work more appropriate to pupils' different levels of understanding, both in lessons and in homework.
 - improve the pace and demand of work for lower attaining pupils in some topic.

ART

130. Art contributes positively to the personal development of pupils at the school. There are significant strengths promoted by inspirational leadership of the subject although the widespread location of art rooms inhibits implementation of the shared ethos for creativity expressed in the excellent departmental documentation.
131. The review of pupils' work across the 11-14 age range shows attainment to be broadly in line with teacher assessments and national expectations.
132. In a significant proportion of lessons observed pupils were working at a higher level, particularly in Year 9.
133. Owing to consistently good teacher knowledge of and support for individuals, pupils of all abilities are able to handle two and three-dimensional materials, balancing creativity with control. For example, a Year 9 group were observed using mixed-media to interpret music they had listened to, working over and inside surfaces and spaces they had made by pursuing their ideas and skills. Pupils are also able to make abstract images and forms by developing work from direct observation. For example, a Year 9 group created compositions by manipulating drawings of musical instruments and applying colour boldly.
134. In some instances pupils are able to apply their knowledge and understanding of different artists and movements to their own work; for example, in stylising their figure drawings a Year 9 group made reference to the work of Leger. A Year 8 group also showed their understanding of Cubism by creating an image which represented several views of the same object. The structured support given by the teaching team to research artists has a positive impact. However, there are few examples in sketchbooks of pupils' investigative work with media. A narrow range of drawing approaches, materials and methods restricts a full range of art elements from being comprehensively explored.
135. Pupils continuing with their art make good progress in the 14-16 age range. GCSE results for 2000 were well above the national average and broadly in line with pupils' attainment in other subjects. Expressive work on an ambitious scale enables pupils to enjoy the physicality of materials and processes and provides opportunity for them to capitalise upon the imagination

which characterises the most successful work. This is most evident in the three-dimensional area where standards have been consistently high and where boys do particularly well in relation to their other subjects. Pupils apply their experience of skills learnt in previous years, knowing clearly the strengths and ambitions they wish to realise. In a Year 10 lesson pupils were observed analysing each others' work in the context of an 'art conference', drawing upon previous experience in order to hypothesise about how others' work could be improved. The thorough approaches which the teaching team use to record and share pupil progress provide an opportunity to promote continuity across the school.

136. The strength of two-dimensional work is often evident in preparatory studies which are well presented. These studies show pupils' understanding of the experimentation objectives and at best incorporate direct observation of first hand sources. However, the final piece does not always live up to the promise of preliminary work. Schemes of work need to enable pupils to draw upon experience of a wider range of experiences; for example, in printmaking and textiles in order to visualise the full potential of their ideas.
137. A range of artists is referred to, reflecting the main characteristics of the curriculum offered. To build upon the research approaches developed previously, pupils now need to demonstrate their understanding of art and artists by recording their feelings and, in particular, showing how the artists' work connects with their own. This is not consistently achieved through class discussion.
138. The quality of teaching in this subject is widely variable, although good lessons predominate. The most effective teaching provides pupils with opportunities to learn through demonstration and practical challenge with materials. Some teachers intervene very skilfully to set and re-establish learning objectives and learning is effective when this happens.
139. In a small minority of lessons poor teaching results from a lack of teacher confidence, long periods without intervention and success sharing, poor planning and organisation which do not engage the pupils quickly in practical learning. Generally, however, art lessons follow a good shape, sensitively include reference to other pupils' art alongside other artists, and promote good relationships.
140. The organisation of resources directly affects pupils' learning skills. In one area for example, pupils were able to access and return a range of drawing media quickly, owing to the inviting arrangement in the classroom. In another pupils swiftly accessed three-dimensional work in progress, showing understanding of the need to maintain materials workably. However, not all studios are equal in size. There is also variation in the provision of storage space and resources.
141. Art is popular with the pupils, who enjoy the opportunities to learn about new techniques and artists. The art club was well supported during inspection week. The ability of pupils to apply their previous experience of art with confidence is an evident outcome of the curriculum liaison work with primary schools; for example, a Year 7 pupil talked confidently about a painting he had brought into the lesson, which he had completed in Year 3, inspired by Modigliani. This was skilfully connected by the teacher to the characteristics of Glenys Barton's sculptures in order to influence the quality of pupils' work in clay.
142. In an ICT-based art lesson, pupils were able to apply their ICT skills to work based on the proportions of the human figure completed with a different teacher. Good communication in this instance is promoting higher attainment. Pupils work effectively in paired and group activity, showing respect for the views, ideas and safety of others. Their use of specialist words in discussing art is consistently good.

143. The work displayed around the school is enjoyed by pupils and has further potential to inform their learning by increasing evidence of process. A Year 10 group was observed using the school environment critically but positively to create a piece of public art.
144. The supportive atmosphere of the art department allows pupils' expression of their inner feelings to impact upon their work. For example, in a Year 10 group responding to the theme of 'divide and separate' pupils tackled themes of death and family conflict. In a Year 9 lesson a pupil interpreted Henry Moore's Madonna and Child theme by creating a sculpture inspired by an image of his own mother and baby.
145. The sharing of themes across years provides particularly good opportunities for pupils to gain inspiration from each other. While these are generally adequate, the most powerful stimulus involves direct contact with the work of an artist. Often examples are provided from teachers' private resources. The gallery visits and artist residencies, which have involved some pupils, have contributed to this experience.
146. There are significant strengths of art at the school. A diversity of two and three-dimensional experiences is enjoyed by the pupils and their imaginative work is displayed in many different areas of the school. The department is expertly led by example.
147. The school should promote and build upon the features of excellence and develop a strategy to improve the unity of accommodation. To develop further the department should improve:
- the consistency of the teaching;
 - curriculum progression through a wider range of materials and processes;
 - the role of the sketchbook as a facility in which to experiment, analyse, criticise and as a source for independent research.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

148. In design and technology, pupils benefit from a wide-ranging experience. They take a good level of interest in their work, and by the end of Year 11, achieve good standards overall.
149. By the age of 14, pupils are achieving similar standards to those normally seen at this age. Within the comparatively short time available within each material area in Years 7 to 9, girls and boys are making sound progress. In Year 7, they develop a good foundation of basic skills and techniques through a series of short focused tasks. For example, in graphics, pupils learn how to draw accurate three-dimensional sketches and to apply basic colouring techniques. In Years 8 and 9, they develop their designing and making skills in each material area through a range of suitable projects. When designing, pupils use design briefs, learn how to analyse the problems set, undertake relevant research and propose their own ideas when working in the different materials. For example, in food technology in Year 8, pupils designing new products for the school canteen, research using questionnaires, analyse the nutritional value of different foods and experiment with their own recipe ideas. In graphics in Year 8, pupils designing children's party packs use modelling effectively to develop their understanding of how different packages can be constructed. When making, pupils use a good range of tools and equipment with increasing confidence. For example, in food technology in Year 9, pupils designing airline meals work safely and independently in the kitchen to produce a whole range of ideas for people with different dietary needs. Pupils with special educational needs integrate well into the mixed-ability groups, and make sound progress developing their designing and making skills.
150. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are able to specialise in one material area. In these years, pupils make good progress, extending their designing and making skills to produce a range of appropriate products. By the age of 16, pupils are achieving good standards, above those normally seen at this age. In Year 10, they learn a broad range of skills before starting upon their GCSE coursework projects. For example, in graphics in Year 10, pupils develop a good range of graphic techniques to enable them to effectively communicate their design ideas. In resistant materials in Year 10, pupils making 'flat-pack' furniture use a range of hand and machine processes to assemble their products. However, these pupils have not had the opportunity to develop and model their ideas in sufficient depth before starting on their final model. As a result, a significant number lack the skills and techniques required to know how to proceed confidently within the lesson. Coursework folders in Year 11 for GCSE demonstrate that at this stage of the year, pupils have embarked upon a good range of projects, matched closely to the requirements of the examinations. For example, in food technology, pupils successfully test out and evaluate a wide range of individual dishes, including ideas for vegetarian 'cook-chill' meals and multicultural food products. In resistant materials, pupils making a variety of storage products use hand and machine processes with some confidence. When working in textiles, pupils experiment with a good range of decorative ideas, using hand and sewing machine techniques. A good number of pupils in all material areas use ICT effectively to enhance the presentation of their GCSE coursework folders.
151. Recent statutory teacher assessments of 14 year olds have been just above those recorded nationally. However, these results were not subject to moderation. Pupils' results in the GCSE examinations in the design and technology subjects over the last three years have been rising steadily and have been consistently well above the national average. Recent results have been most successful and are well above average in food technology, graphics and textiles, and in line with the national average in resistant materials. These results are similar to pupils' performance in their other subjects.
152. Overall, teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of their material specialisms. Individual lessons and projects are well planned to make good use of the time available. Teachers generally give clear introductions to lessons to clarify their

expectations for the session. They usefully bring pupils together at the end to summarise the work that has been undertaken and to evaluate the learning that has taken place. For example, in food technology in Year 11, the teacher questioned the group carefully towards the end of the lesson, challenging them to think of ways in which their dishes could be improved. At the time of the previous report, designing skills were being taught quite separately within each material area. Teachers now use a common approach to the teaching of designing skills across the department, and the success of this initiative is evident in the quality of pupils' design folders in all years. The introduction of GCSE project planners across the department provides pupils with a clear route through their Year 11 coursework and a clear picture of what is required to attain success at GCSE level. In food technology and graphics, teachers make good use of products made by others to improve pupils' designing and making. In resistant materials, however, pupils have insufficient opportunities to handle well-designed and manufactured products to inspire their own designing and making.

153. Pupils respond well and show a good level of interest in the subject. They settle down quickly and sustain concentration throughout lessons. However, in a small minority of lessons, boys lack concentration and command a disproportionate amount of their teacher's time. Generally, pupils at GCSE level show a good level of initiative, for example working both in and out of school on their coursework folders.
154. The recently appointed head of department is providing clear leadership and management of the design and technology team. Since the previous report, the team have worked well together under an acting head of department to address the issues raised, including the teaching of designing skills in Years 7 to 9 and strategies to improve performance at GCSE level. The monitoring of teaching and learning has become well established across the department. The accommodation for food and graphics provides stimulating environments in which pupils can successfully design and make. Within resistant materials, the health and safety issues raised in the last report have all been successfully addressed. However, these workshops still do not provide effective learning environments for pupils engaged in designing and making activities.
155. Since the previous report, the department has made good progress. Standards have risen and are now above the national average. In order to raise standards further within resistant materials, the school needs to:
 - make improvements to the working environment;
 - use focused practical tasks and product analysis to progressively improve knowledge, skills and understanding of materials and products;
 - ensure that best practice in designing and making is fully shared across the department and is effectively monitored.

GEOGRAPHY

156. In geography pupils show a lot of interest and work hard, but some inconsistency in the teaching means they do not always do as well as they should, particularly in the 11-14 age range.
157. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 gain a sound grasp of basic mapwork, but are less skilled in investigating places and environments for themselves. For example, in Year 7 lessons, they spend a number of lessons practising routine skills including measuring distances, and describing how to show height on maps, but spend less time using these skills to find out about the geography of different places. In Years 8 and 9, they learn about Kenya and Japan, from the resources provided, but do not have sufficient opportunity to identify geographical questions and issues for themselves. Consequently they only gain a low level understanding of how and why these places are changing.
158. Pupils who choose geography make better progress in Years 10 and 11. They gain a good understanding of patterns in human geography, from their work on employment in the UK,

Europe and around the world. They have a good knowledge of places, from case studies such as that on the changing geography of South Wales. They have well-developed skills of analysis and evaluation, from using a range of resources including maps, statistics, photographs and video.

159. Attainment by the age of 14 is well below national standards. On the other hand, attainment at 16 is much better. Boys attain standards which are significantly below those of the girls, and few of the gifted and talented pupils reach the highest levels. In recent years GCSE results have been above national averages, with a significant number of pupils gaining the highest grades.
160. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their work in geography supports their individual targets, particularly with literacy weaknesses. Work in geography also provides some useful opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills, for example when writing about industrial change as part of the GCSE course. Using statistics of world employment structures provides useful gains in numeracy skills, and there are some good examples of the use of ICT. The work in Year 9 for example, on the use of databases to analyse levels of development of countries, is particularly useful.
161. The main reason for the differences in attainment is the variation in the effectiveness of teaching. All of the teachers establish a good relationship with their classes. They manage their lessons well and the pupils work well. Some lessons are very challenging. For example in a lesson in Year 11, the pupils worked in groups to investigate different aspects of the proposed siting of a nuclear power station. The teacher then managed a class debate with great skill, so that all the pupils could take part. As a result they all gained a good understanding of the effects of environmental change on different groups of people. However, some of the lessons do not make similar demands on the pupils. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on Kenya, the pupils used their textbooks to write simple descriptions of aspects of the homes of the Maasai people. This made very little demand upon most of the pupils, and particularly the higher attaining pupils. Their response therefore was poor. Levels of concentration were unsatisfactory, and they worked with little enthusiasm or commitment. They gained little from the lesson other than some superficial knowledge, which for some simply reinforced a stereotyped image of Africa. The main weakness in the teaching is some lack of understanding of the demands of the National Curriculum, and of how to set learning objectives which challenge all pupils. A scheme of work that sets out more clearly the work that pupils should be doing is required.
162. The attitude of the pupils overall is good. There is a high standard of behaviour in lessons, and the pupils try hard. They show interest in their work, particularly when given responsibility for planning and organising their own investigations. This is apparent from the high standard of much of the coursework which the pupils do as part of their GCSE.
163. There is sound organisation by the head of department, who provides a lot of help and guidance for a team of teachers which includes some non-specialist and temporary staff. There is a strong sense of purpose in the department, and a positive atmosphere in which improvement is constantly being sought. As a result the department has maintained a steady improvement since the last inspection, although there still remain some important areas for development.
164. To maintain improvement the school should:
 - through a continuation of the programme of professional development ensure consistency in teaching;
 - make better use of the results of assessments to set learning targets for all pupils.

HISTORY

165. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 and those following the GCSE course make good progress. They are taught well and most enjoy studying history.
166. By the end of Year 9 pupils are achieving standards in line with national norms. They can recall information accurately from previous lessons, including the main events and dates, and they are able to understand and explain the major events they have studied; for example, in Year 8, the reasons for Henry VIII's break with Rome. They use sources to answer questions set, including looking at events from more than one perspective, as in Year 8 when the Gunpowder Plot was being considered both from the point of view of the Catholics and those in power. Year 7 show a good understanding of chronology and can analyse some of the main features of a past society, as in one lesson when they could describe the different components making up a feudal society. Most pupils, including the most able, are making the progress which would be expected for their age. Those with particular learning needs are making good progress.
167. Pupils by the end of Year 11 are achieving standards above those expected nationally. They can recall information and use appropriate vocabulary. They can extract relevant information from source material to answer questions posed by the teacher, as in a Year 10 lesson discussing the changing nature of warfare. They can also use the material to support a particular point of view and analyse the reasons for events, such as the Year 11 lesson looking at Hitler's rise to power. The pupils are developing a good understanding of examination requirements and what is needed to reach different levels of attainment. Progress across the GCSE years is good for all pupils including those with particular learning needs and those of higher prior attainment. The latter are given opportunities and are challenged to reach the higher levels.
168. Teacher assessment results at the end of Year 9 are just above the national average for those reaching level 5 and above and in line at the higher level 6 and above. At GCSE level, the percentage of pupils gaining an A*-C pass has improved each year for the past three years, to well above the national average in the summer of 2000. The number of those gaining the higher A* and A grades has also improved significantly in the last year. Girls' attainment has improved so that now boys and girls do equally well in this subject.
169. Teaching in history is good overall with all teaching being at least satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 with some very good teaching at GCSE. In all lessons teachers keep the pupils focused on their task and make good use of the time and resources available. Homework often builds on classwork or prepares for the next lesson. For example, Year 9 pupils were asked to consider the causes of the Russian Revolution they had been studying and to decide which they thought was most important and give reasons why. Good questioning is also used to identify what pupils have learned and to encourage pupils to give more detail or be more precise. Where teaching is very good, as in a Year 11 lesson on Hitler's rise to power, there was a clear introduction showing a good command of the subject. The expectations for the lesson were made clear and a framework for the task was provided so that pupils gained a good knowledge and understanding of the topic. The lesson was well planned and structured. The teacher made good use of the examination criteria so that the pupils were able to practise and reach as high a standard as possible. Where teaching is satisfactory, as in a Year 9 lesson on the Russian Revolution, a good overview of the topic was built up by the teacher, developing knowledge of the topic, but there was insufficient clarity about the outcomes expected from the lesson. The task set was appropriate but it was not clear what level of detail was expected or needed. Time limits were not set for the task so that towards the end of the lesson some pupils lost their concentration.
170. Most pupils show an interest in this subject, they concentrate well and remain focused on their task. Those who lose concentration respond positively to the teacher when brought back on task. Some pupils in Years 7 to 9 and more in the GCSE classes ask questions to develop their knowledge and understanding. They are willing to respond to questions when asked directly

and some volunteer their own suggestions and ideas. They co-operate well when given the opportunity to work in pairs or small groups. They are mostly well behaved with good relationships between pupils and between the teachers and the pupils. Most work is well presented, although the work of low prior attaining pupils is not always complete.

171. There is very good leadership and management in the history department. The head of department clearly understands the areas for further development and has taken positive action to make improvements in the subject; this can be seen in the action taken to address the underachievement of girls at GSCE. Working with a consultant the team put into action a successful plan to improve this position. There is very good monitoring of exercise books and teaching. The department needs to further share good practice particularly with non-specialists and newly qualified teachers. There is a positive ethos in the department with teachers looking to improve standards further.
172. Good progress has been made with the issues raised during the last inspection, and in areas identified as good previously, standards have been maintained. In order to make more progress, further work needs to be done on planning the key elements, such as the interpretation of history and cause and consequence, from Year 7 to Year 9. Clarity about what is expected from each lesson requires improvement. The assessment process used does not yet sufficiently reflect National Curriculum levels.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

173. The recent installation of equipment through the Dudley Grid for Learning has provided the school with excellent resources for the teaching of ICT. Currently, the department is in a stage of transition as staff familiarise themselves with this new equipment. Pupils enjoy the opportunity of using computers. However, the taught ICT curriculum in Years 7 to 9 only offers pupils regular access to computers for part of Year 7 and throughout Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, only those pupils following the GCSE course are able to develop their ICT skills on a regular basis. At present, this does not provide all pupils with an experience of sufficient breadth or depth to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum.
174. By the age of 14, pupils are achieving similar standards to those normally seen at this age. In Years 7 to 9, girls and boys are making sound progress in the taught ICT lessons. In these, they demonstrate a good range of basic skills, including word-processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, databases and use of the Internet. For example in Year 7, pupils learn how to compose a report, using word-processing effectively to generate, amend and present their work. In Year 9, they use a good range of software in a project on running a small business. Pupils use the Internet efficiently to research relevant information on products and their costs. They develop an understanding of the use of spreadsheets, constructing formulae to calculate profit, and learning how to model different profit margins. Finally, they use word-processing to evaluate the work they have undertaken. Within the taught ICT lessons in these years, pupils with special educational needs make sound progress.
175. Subject departments are now establishing ways in which they can give pupils opportunities to apply and develop their ICT capability to support learning within their subject. The implementation of these plans is at an early stage. Currently, the opportunity for all pupils to use their basic skills within other subject areas in Years 7 to 9 is limited. In Year 8 some pupils in mathematics use spreadsheets to construct graphs, and in science, use datalogging equipment to measure temperature changes. In design and technology, some successfully combine word-processing, desktop publishing and use of a digital camera to design posters for a school function. In geography in Year 9, some pupils' geographical understanding is enhanced by the use of a database of relevant statistics. In history in Year 9, pupils make effective use of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website for project research.
176. Within the Learning Support Centre, ICT is used extensively with lower attaining pupils. For example, Successmaker (a software package) is used effectively before, during and after school to enhance pupils' basic skills. Pupils undertaking the Accelerated Learning Programme in Year 7 make good use of IT, for example using e-mail to find out about native Americans through direct contact with Sioux Indians.
177. From ages 14 to 16, pupils' opportunities to build upon these skills and to be taught and develop their command of ICT, continue to be limited and dependent upon subject choice and on the individual teacher's decision to use ICT. An increasing number of pupils are now able to study ICT to GCSE level. Currently over 40% in Year 10 do so. These pupils are making good progress and are achieving good standards on the GCSE course. For the remainder of pupils in Years 10 and 11, the acquisition of knowledge and skills is less systematic. By the age of 16, these pupils are achieving similar standards to those normally seen at this age. In Year 10, pupils on the GCSE course use the Internet effectively to research material for a company promotion and demonstrate competent use of a wide range of graphic software to develop designs for logos. In Year 11, GCSE pupils show a good understanding of the use of databases, designing data capture forms to collect information for their individual coursework projects. In Year 10, pupils in the taught ICT lessons consolidate their knowledge and understanding of spreadsheets, setting up a spreadsheet to calculate the costs of owning a car. However, lower ability pupils need considerable help and support to complete the task successfully. A significant number of pupils in all years take the opportunity to apply their ICT skills to enhance their coursework in a good number of subject areas; for example in art,

using images from gallery CDs, and in design and technology and English. Pupils undertaking the National Skills Profile in Year 11 are able to select and use appropriate software with some confidence to present their work.

178. Recent statutory teacher assessments of 14-year olds have shown attainment well above that recorded nationally at level 5 and above. However, these results were not subject to moderation. Pupils' results in the GCSE examinations in ICT over the last 3 years have been rising steadily to well above the national average in 2000. However, these results were approximately half a grade below pupils' performance in their other subjects.
179. Teaching overall is satisfactory, and in one-third of lessons is good. Where teaching is good, teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the software in use, for example in Year 11, encouraging pupils to use the appropriate technical vocabulary when using databases. They use a range of activities to maintain pace and motivation within the lesson. For example, they demonstrate effectively using the interactive whiteboard. Discussion at the end of the lesson to confirm pupils' understanding of the work undertaken. Where support materials are available, pupils are able to proceed independently and at their own pace. Where teaching is less effective, support materials are unavailable, and pupils are too reliant on their teachers to know how to proceed. For example, in a Year 11 GCSE group, pupils were unclear about the work they were expected to submit for their major coursework project. Good use is made of homework, extending the opportunity for pupils to work independently, using ICT either at school or at home. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place for the taught ICT courses. Currently, there are no records of pupils' use of, and capability in, ICT across subject areas.
180. Pupils' response to ICT is good. They settle down quickly, access the software efficiently and show a good level of interest in the tasks set. Relationships between teachers and their groups are good. On an individual basis, pupils make very good use of the ICT facilities out of lessons, undertaking a wide range of relevant ICT applications; for example, using the Internet and e-mail, and completing coursework and homework tasks.
181. Currently, ICT is taught either in specific ICT lessons or within subject lessons. This does not provide pupils with a sufficiently continuous and progressive course as they move through the school. For example in Years 7 to 9, pupils are not taught a full range of ICT applications until they are in Year 9, skills which if taught earlier they could have been using throughout the key stage. Most of the ICT equipment has been recently installed, and has only just started to make an impact on practice. At present, the management of ICT within the school has not secured a model of delivery which ensures that all pupils receive a full entitlement to ICT and sufficient access to this equipment. The monitoring of teaching and learning has now become established within the department. Insufficient opportunities are taken to share the best practice that is currently taking place.
182. Since the previous report, the provision of ICT has been through a considerable period of change. The delivery of ICT to GCSE level has now become firmly established within the school and recent results were well above the national average.

183. In order to raise standards further, the school should:
- implement a model of delivery that will provide all pupils with a full entitlement to the National Curriculum and a more continuous and progressive course of study;
 - ensure that pupils have the opportunity to apply and continue to develop their ICT skills to enhance their learning in all subject areas;
 - introduce an assessment scheme which will provide the school with an overall picture of individual pupils' developing use of, and capability in, ICT as they move through the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French and German

184. Pupils studying foreign languages at Windsor High benefit from very good teaching and effective management and good opportunities to develop and use their language skills in language lessons and in extra-curricular activities such as visits and exchanges.
185. Pupils have the choice of French or German from Year 7. They enjoy language learning and rapidly gain a good grasp of the language they take, including grammatical structures such as adjective agreements, word order and different tenses.
186. By the end of Year 9, most achieve levels well above the national average. This is evident in the confidence with which pupils speak. They have gained a good understanding of the familiar language covered and many are able to develop extended dialogues in both speaking and writing. This is mostly in structured conversations and few use French or German routinely or spontaneously outside set tasks. The high attaining pupils are able to apply their grammatical knowledge, so they speak and write accurately, using a wide range of expressions. Middle and low attaining pupils also gain a good understanding and reply well to direct questions in familiar contexts but their ability to sustain a dialogue is limited. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress, benefiting from the good range of tasks and resources matched to their level.
187. In Year 9, pupils who do well in their first foreign language are offered the chance to take a second. They are driven hard by their teachers and make good progress despite the limited time available and the fact that some of the lessons are after school.
188. Recent GCSE results are above national averages in French and usually well above in German. Both languages show an improving trend and results compare well with other subjects in the school. Languages are now offered as an option from Year 10. A few, mostly low attaining pupils, opt for other subjects and, although many pupils are capable, few take two languages, as it would restrict their other choices. All apart from a few pupils who lack motivation continue to make at least steady progress. By the end of Year 11, the low attaining pupils who take French have a sound knowledge of basic expressions and are well supported through a non-GCSE certificate course. They generally learn well in lessons but lack the study skills and motivation to sustain good progress over time. All others are on course for at least a pass and a high proportion is set to gain high grades. High attaining pupils have a confident and accurate command of a wide range of structures and expressions, for example to complain about hotel accommodation, using complex sentences and giving reasons. Most others have a good understanding, although they are less fluent in open conversation.
189. Girls achieve better than boys in most cases. Few boys start a second foreign language in Year 9. Boys' attainment at GCSE is generally lower than girls and there are fewer boys in most top groups. However, there are some groups where boys are as motivated and successful as girls. The most gifted pupils are not achieving levels as high as they should. This is reflected in the relatively low number of A* grades at GCSE. However, in some lessons, there were instances

of the most able being targeted for specific higher challenge. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds do at least as well at languages as other pupils.

190. Teaching in modern foreign languages is a major strength of the school. It is very good in more than half of lessons (half of the French, three out of four of the German). In lessons observed, teaching was good in eight out of ten French lessons and very good in five out of ten. In German all lessons were at least good, three in four were very good and there was some outstanding teaching. No lesson observed was unsatisfactory. Good classroom management and relationships contribute strongly to the good pace of learning. The teachers make the most of the co-operative spirit. In most classes teachers take pupils rapidly through a series of thoroughly planned tasks, engaging them actively and keeping up high levels of concentration.
191. In the best lessons, as in a Year 11 German lesson, the teacher creates an atmosphere in which high expectations for language learning and behaviour are understood; the teacher does not need to reinforce them. There is an expectant hush as pupils listen respectfully to the teacher or other pupils. There is a buzz of controlled and concentrated activity during speaking practice, whether it is the teacher leading whole-class work or pupils working in pairs or groups. Teachers lead quick-fire practice, as in a Year 9 French lesson, using attractive visual images to prompt and generate interest in learning how to talk about illnesses. They judge well the balance of methods in a lesson. Intensive practice in pairs is stimulated by colourful card activities and supported by resources tailored to different levels within the group. This allows all pupils to succeed at the appropriate level. Most tasks are carefully structured and very well organised, keeping a rapid flow of learning. Occasionally tasks are set which encourage pupils to develop their creative and spontaneous use of language, as in a Year 8 class, where they were planning a fantasy journey.
192. The areas of relative weakness in teaching are that teachers could do more to get pupils to use French and German routinely in lessons, to develop more effectively pupils' language learning skills and to encourage them to learn more independently.
193. Pupils like language learning; they behave well, and respond well to the good teaching. Apart from a few instances of low motivation, good relationships between pupils and with teachers help to generate a very positive learning mood in which pupils concentrate well, work hard, listen respectfully and co-operate well in pairs and group work - everyone wants to succeed.
194. The head of the languages department and the head of German both provide leadership and management of a very high calibre. There is a clear vision for the teaching of languages which is shared by the entire department. Development planning is thorough and impressively related to planning for team meetings. This results in everyone knowing what is expected of them and that they are fully supported. Assessment information is very well used to plan at all levels, including lesson planning and setting challenging targets for pupils. Language teachers have no clerical or foreign language assistant support. There is a strong team spirit, which results in an open sharing of ideas and materials, a culture of wanting to go on improving and finding new ways of giving pupils an enjoyable and challenging language learning experience.
195. The department has continued to improve since the last inspection. The challenge for the department is to go on building on their strengths, to bring the standard of all teaching up to the excellence of the best and establish a culture in lessons, where all pupils speak French and German as the norm.

MUSIC

196. The music department has been through recent personnel changes and all teachers took up post just a few weeks before the inspection. For a short period before this time some lessons were covered by supply teachers with the support of established members of staff. The department has a great sense of optimism and a desire to improve and develop.

197. The attainment of Year 11 GCSE pupils is above average. Recent examination results have been consistently above the national average. These results reflect the fact that pupils opting for music have generally received extra instrumental tuition outside class lessons and their performance skills are above average. Most are secure instrumentalists who have experience of playing in ensembles. Several play in groups outside the school. They cope well with constraints imposed by a relative lack of accommodation. Their compositions and ability to listen to music with understanding are less developed. Overall, their examination results are in line with what would be expected given their experience. There is, however, still room for further improvement in their composing and listening skills.
198. The attainment of Year 9 pupils is below average. Pupils are able to respond to tasks, such as composing music for the media. They produce pieces that are simple in structure and often make use of sound effects in order to accompany a particular film clip or TV advertisement. Pupils lack the more sophisticated skills expected for this age group, such as using chords, and have relatively little technique when playing instruments such as keyboards. Pupils have to cope with high noise levels in lessons because of a lack of suitable accommodation. This means that pieces rarely use dynamics, or other forms of musical expression, since there is not the opportunity to do so. Keyboard technique is often restricted to playing with single fingers. For example, in a lesson where pupils were asked to write music for a short film clip they planned their work without using instruments or hearing the sounds they would use. Later when they started to use instruments the generally high noise levels in the room caused by several instruments playing together meant that insufficient progress was made.
199. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have good attitudes to learning. They are experienced musicians who have made a positive choice to take this subject. They value music and do their best to make progress despite the difficulties they encounter through the lack of accommodation. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have satisfactory attitudes to learning. They arrive at lessons on time, listen to instructions and answer questions with enthusiasm. In practical tasks they find it more difficult to be enthusiastic because they cannot hear their own work or because they are sharing small glockenspiels which give a disappointing sound quality. In one Year 7 lesson pupils made insufficient progress because they found it difficult to concentrate sufficiently well and all pupils did not listen to the teacher's instructions or requests for silence.
200. The teaching of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good. There is a positive atmosphere in lessons. Teachers give good support and constructive comment on individual performances. Some areas require development. These are particularly in the area of curriculum planning. For example, there is no scheme of work for GCSE pupils and activities are taught separately. This means that pupils do not make sufficient links between music they hear and music they compose. Pupils have secure performance skills but other areas of their work require further development. The teaching of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is sound. There are some good aspects to this teaching. Relationships and classroom management are positive. Teachers cope well with difficult circumstances. In one Year 8 lesson on folk music the teacher had limited resources and insufficient space. Pupils were asked to sing a folk song and were clearly embarrassed. The teacher coped with this situation well and created a positive and supportive atmosphere that allowed the pupils to succeed. Long term planning requires further development. The scheme of work for these pupils does not ensure that they will have sufficient skills to reach national expectations by the end of Year 9. When teaching double lessons in Year 8 the pace of learning sometimes drops towards the end of the lesson and the pupils are not sufficiently re-focused or asked to increase the pace of their learning.
201. Accommodation and resources are a problem. There are insufficient good quality instruments for class use. There are insufficient rooms and spaces for pupils to develop their work. This is made worse when instrumental teachers are in school. On one occasion three instrumental teachers were in the department whilst two class lessons were being taught. This made a difficult situation almost intolerable. The department has started to gain access to information technology resources. The effective use of these has not yet been consolidated.

202. In order to develop its work further the department should:
- develop schemes of work which ensure the integration of activities and the development of sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding, especially in the 11-14 age range;
 - plan ways in which accommodation can be developed. In the short term this might include the use of headphones and ensuring that timetabling of all teachers does not mean that some lessons have several instrumental lessons as well as class lessons taught at the same time. However in the longer term the department requires access to more spaces where pupils can work undisturbed;
 - develop the use of information technology and other resources so that all pupils have access to instruments or other sound sources of high quality.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

203. In physical education pupils experience a wide range of activities, both in lessons and as part of the extra-curricular programme. Teaching overall is good with some very good features and as a result pupils make good progress through the school and many achieve a good level of performance in a wide range of activities and in their GCSE theory work.
204. The majority of pupils, by the end of Year 9, are performing at a level that is at least typical for their age and a significant number are producing good performances in a range of activities. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and acquire a good knowledge, understanding and level of skill in a wide range of activities. A particular strength is pupils' level of knowledge about the effect of exercise on their bodies, and they are starting to develop good observation and evaluation skills. For example, in a Year 9 rugby lesson pupils were readily able to describe the four aspects of fitness, strength, speed, stamina and suppleness, and how to warm up before, and cool down after, exercise. In a Year 7 swimming lesson pupils were able to observe their partner's stroke and offer constructive suggestions about how they might improve.
205. By the end of their time in the school (Year 11) many pupils are working at a level above that typical for their age. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical education is generally better for those who opt to study the subject at GCSE, where it is a popular option. Many of these pupils are making very good progress, particularly in the theoretical aspects of the course. For example in a Year 10 class, by the end of the lesson, all pupils had made good progress in learning the correct names for the major bones, their functions and the types of bones and joints found in the body. GCSE results are excellent and from a high base the percentage of pupils attaining a grade A*-C has continued to rise year on year. In the most recent examination it was 89 per cent, which is significantly above the national average.
206. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they respond well to the demands teachers make upon them. They are keen to do well. Most pupils listen carefully and follow instructions well and at the same time show high levels of effort and self-motivation. Working relationships are always very positive. Pupils show respect for each other, for teachers and other adults and work hard to improve their performance. They are particularly sensitive in providing constructive criticism to others when observing their performance and are able to work well independently.
207. Teaching in the subject is always satisfactory and much of it is good with some very good features. Teachers establish excellent working relationships with their pupils, set very clear objectives of what they want to cover for every lesson, explain these fully to their pupils and review them at the end of the lesson to ensure they have been met. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, instil in them an enthusiasm for the subject and support them well to achieve a good standard of performance. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of physical education is very good and they make excellent use of questioning to ensure pupils have understood what they have been taught. Lessons are very well planned and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills very often by providing activities that are appropriate to the different levels of attainment within the group. For example

in a Year 10 GCSE theory lesson the teacher had effectively planned different activities for the range of attainment levels within the group, gave them very good support and as a result all pupils made good progress. In a Year 7 swimming lesson the two very able swimmers were provided with their own programme of activities at the appropriate time and made very good progress in developing their personal survival skills. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support by subject teachers and make good progress. There is also an opportunity for those pupils with weaker co-ordination skills to attend a lunchtime extra-curricular club where they benefit from more intensive work on developing gross and fine motor skills through ball skills practices and small-sided games.

208. The curriculum comprises a wide range of activities and includes an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities involving a number of staff beyond the department. There are good opportunities for pupils to study the subject at GCSE. The school has benefited from a good deal of success at local and regional level in a wide range of sporting activities and the faculty works hard to maintain the interest of older pupils in the subject, by offering a good range of activities both within school and through the use of local facilities in the area. Whilst there is sufficient time overall for the subject, pupils currently in Year 11 who do not study the subject for GCSE only have a fifty minute lesson once a week. This situation will, however, be resolved at the end of this academic year. Teacher assessment of pupils' knowledge, understanding and performance is good and the department has incorporated the new eight levels of attainment into this process well. This information is effectively shared with pupils and reported to parents. Assessment against GCSE requirements is particularly good and again the information is shared with pupils, targets are set and pupils are clear what it is they need to do to improve.
209. The department is very well led and the head of department provides a very clear purpose and direction for the subject's future development in the school. Colleagues in the department, particularly those who have a designated responsibility for an aspect of its work, offer good support. The department enjoys the expertise of subject specialist teachers and these are used effectively to teach to their strengths. Resources are used well. The effective use of coaching cards which enables pupils to grasp the main elements of an activity to develop both their own skills and, through observation, evaluation and feedback to partners, raise their performance also. Facilities for the subject are good. In particular, the astro-turf provides a superb facility, particularly for developing hockey skills. The playing fields, however, suffer from very poor drainage. Although the department has a good range of multi-gym equipment, currently it is in storage because there is no dedicated area for its use.
210. The subject received a very positive report at the last inspection. Areas identified as in need of development have been effectively addressed. For example, objectives are now consistently set for lessons and are reviewed at the end; schemes of work identify where and how elements of fitness are to be taught; the formal monitoring of teaching has also promoted an understanding of the effects of fitness and has led to the spread of good practice; the use of coaching cards, which cover most areas of activity, provide a good focus on developing evaluation skills; All lower ability pupils were observed to be making at least satisfactory progress.
211. In order to raise standards further the school needs to consider the following points for action:
 - develop opportunities for the development of ICT through identified physical education activities, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9;
 - build on the current good opportunities for pupils to observe and evaluate their own and others' performance by providing opportunities for pupils to undertake a self-review and set targets to improve their own performance, as part of the department's assessment policy.

Dance

212. All pupils study dance as part of the school's physical education provision in Years 7 and 8, but the opportunity to study the subject in Year 9 is only available to girls. Dance is also taught as a GCSE option for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
213. The majority of pupils by the age of 14 have achieved a level of performance that is above that typical for pupils of their age. Pupils make very good progress and they are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the main elements of dance terminology and are able to present performances of a very good standard. By the age of 16 pupils' attainment is at a level which, in terms of performance in lessons, is well above that which is typical for their age. Pupils have the opportunity to study the subject at GCSE and the school's results have improved considerably over the last few years and in the 2000 entry 81% achieved a A*-C grade, which is considerably higher than the national average. Pupils make excellent progress in their GCSE lessons in their development, interpretation and performance of dance routine and in their understanding and application of the theoretical elements of dance.
214. Pupils respond well to the teaching and show high levels of interest and concentration. Their levels of collaborative working and appreciation for others' performance are very good. GCSE pupils in particular are provided with good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, particularly in developing their individual and group dance routines for GCSE assessment.
215. The teaching in dance is of high standard. Teacher-pupil relationships are very good and the quality of relationships together with the teachers' knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm for the subject are major strengths. The pace of lessons is very good. There are high expectations made on pupils, with an appropriate emphasis placed on self-motivation and on the presentation of performances which are of a high standard. In a Year 11 lesson pupils were choreographing their own work using excellent dialogue which showed high levels of critical thinking to develop their performance.
216. The subject is currently taught in one of the two gymnasiums or the school hall and, whilst this accommodation is adequate, the provision of more specialist accommodation for this area of the curriculum would raise the profile of the subject and embed it as part of an expressive arts provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

217. Standards in RE for pupils by Year 9 are satisfactory. Pupils show a good and coherent knowledge of the beliefs and practices of religions such as Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. They can identify features of a mosque, church and gurdwara, for instance, and show a sound understanding of how belief affects the lives of believers. Development of conceptual understanding is satisfactory. For example, they can explain with understanding the meaning of symbols within faiths, the idea of commitment when learning about the five K's of Sikhism, and display a sense of the sacred when learning about the Qur'an. They are developing a very good specialist vocabulary which they can use with accuracy. Their ability to apply what they are learning to their own ideas and experiences is more limited, although some good examples were seen when pupils had written about what qualities made a person special to them.
218. For those pupils who opt for GCSE RE, standards are good by age 16. Results show that 77.1 per cent of pupils entered for the exam achieved A*-C grades. This compares very well with the national average of 58.9 per cent. Pupils display a good knowledge of Christianity and Islam and a good understanding of motivation for the believer. For instance, when learning about Islam they can explain in detail what the five pillars are and why Muslims would want to observe them. They show a good understanding of concepts such as sacred and purification when discussing the

Qur'an and can discuss the concepts of immanence and transcendence when learning about the Christian belief in God. Their use of specialist vocabulary is very good and they are able to answer questions well both in writing and orally. Pupils need further opportunities for, and guidance in, how to structure essays and extended writing.

219. Since the last inspection RE has been included in the curriculum for Year 10 pupils who follow two modules, each of six lessons. This still falls far short of the minimum of five per cent of curriculum time required to implement the locally agreed syllabus for all pupils, therefore standards for RE at this key stage remain unsatisfactory.
220. Teaching is satisfactory in the 11-14 age range and good in the 14-16 age range. Good specialist knowledge and expertise is evident, especially in lessons for older pupils where the skilful questioning extends knowledge and probes understanding at an appropriate level. A particularly good example was seen in a lesson where the teacher, through a respectful demonstration and sensitive questioning, developed a deeper understanding of the concept of sacred and revelation as well as leading into the idea of purification. Planning of lessons is very good with careful time keeping. Activities are carefully organised and are interesting and at times include the opportunity to respond creatively, though lessons for pupils in the 11-14 age range still make insufficient use of learning strategies requiring personal responses such as reflection and empathy. Expectations of behaviour and of work are high and made clear to the pupils. Pupils are therefore kept on task and complete work expected of them. A good example was observed when a Year 10 GCSE group was exploring what Muslims learn from observing the five pillars. The structure of the lesson, which involved group research and presentation of findings, and the expectations of learning by these activities, contributed directly to the good standards achieved. Pupils are managed well in a variety of situations for example, whole-class discussion, a presentation by a pupil and group activities. Teachers show sensitivity, skill and quiet assertion in managing pupils.
221. Currently, there are nine non-specialists teaching classes in the 11-14 age range. They are supported well with lesson plans and have worked hard to increase their own knowledge of religions. These efforts ensure a coherent knowledge of the 11-14 age range. However, there is a lack of specialist expertise evident in the limited use of affective and active learning methods and learning is not often linked with the experience of the pupils. For example, when considering fasting as part of Ramadan, pupils did not explore sufficiently what they could learn for themselves.
222. Regular assessment occurs but the development plans of the newly appointed head of department, designed to implement a new eight level system to meet the changing requirements of the agreed syllabus, have the potential to further increase the progress of pupils.
223. Pupils are interested in the subject and are convinced about the importance of learning about different beliefs. They make a good effort to achieve what is required of them and show eagerness and greater involvement when responding creatively. Pupils can work well independently but activities and resources that more closely match the needs of individual pupils are required. Further opportunities should be provided for the use of ICT. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils listen well to teachers and to their peers. They change activities well and treat people and resources with respect.
224. The curriculum for pupils in 11-14 age range provides a good balance of religions studied and opportunities to consider questions of meaning and purpose. For example, a unit on 'Belief' in Year 9 allows pupils to consider the questions raised about the existence of God through a study of Thomas Aquinas and Feuerbach. The

introduction of two modules of RE for Year 10 pupils, though a positive step which represents progress since the last inspection, is nevertheless inadequate.

225. RE makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils through the many opportunities provided to think about issues of belief and behaviour, for example, when learning about prejudice and discrimination through a study of Martin Luther King. At present insufficient use is made of the local community to celebrate positively the variety of cultures it comprises.