

INSPECTION REPORT

PARK VIEW SCHOOL

Alum Rock, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103524

Acting headteacher: Mr K Whitby

Reporting inspector: Mr R Hancock
2715

Dates of inspection: 26th February – 2nd March 2001

Inspection number: 187797

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Naseby Road
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Birmingham

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr T Alam

Date of previous inspection: March 1999

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2715	Mr R Hancock	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9708	Mrs S Daintrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20421	Mrs E Raitt	Team inspector	English	
19278	Mr R Allan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
18850	Mr A Hodges	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17556	Mr M Miller	Team inspector	Art and design Equal opportunities	
31779	Mr V Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology	
8197	Mr D Jones	Team inspector	Geography	
18032	Ms I Randall	Team inspector	History Information and communication technology	
7483	Mr R Donne	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
19532	Mrs E Charlesworth	Team inspector	Music	
31821	Mr B McCann	Team inspector	Physical education	
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24887	Mrs Y Salmons	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Park View is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school located in an inner city area of Birmingham known as Alum Rock. Most of the pupils' families originate from the Mirpur region of Pakistan. The vast majority of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is 63.7 which is very high. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is over 96 per cent. The percentage of pupils on the special needs register is 39.1 which is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is 2 per cent which is broadly in line with the national average. There are 476 pupils on the current roll of the school. On entry, pupils' overall attainment is well below average and for a significant number of pupils it is low, with only about half the pupils reaching average standards in English and science and even less reaching this level in mathematics.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Park View is an improving school and no longer has serious weaknesses. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in the vast majority of lessons. The attitudes of most pupils are positive and behaviour is satisfactory. Morale in the school is good and the school has the will and the capacity to improve further. Although without a permanent headteacher at the time of the inspection, the school is well led and effectively supported by the governing body. There are still some marked deficiencies in provision and performance. The pupils' overall attainment levels are well below the national average but the majority make satisfactory and often good progress during their time at the school. The curriculum does not provide an effective education for pupils in French and, because of current staffing difficulties, music is not taught at all. The school has appropriate systems for dealing with finance and is giving satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Helps pupils with special educational needs to make good progress
- Helps pupils for whom English is an additional language to show increasing mastery of it the longer they stay in the school
- Encourages positive attitudes to school and helps to develop good relationships
- Provides effectively for pupils' moral and social development
- Provides good careers guidance

What could be improved

- The overall attainment of pupils at Key Stage 3, and boys' attainment in particular at Key Stage 4
- The emphasis on literacy and the use of spoken language in teaching and learning
- Provision for teaching music and French
- The broadening of pupils' experiences through art, drama, dance and music
- The school's partnership with parents and the wider community
- Pupils' rates of attendance

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When inspected in 1996, the school was subject to special measures. It was last inspected in 1999 when the school was considered to be providing an acceptable education for its pupils but was found to have serious weaknesses. The main areas of weakness were pupils' low standards of attainment, their limited skills in speaking, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), the quality of teaching and the development of the roles of middle managers. Since that time, the school has made satisfactory and, in some respects, good progress on each of these issues. It has improved pupils' attainment at Key Stage 4 and in 2000 the school's GCSE examination results were average when compared with those of pupils in similar schools. The school has started work on strategies to improve pupils' standards of literacy but these are not yet fully embedded in the day-to-day practice of all teachers. It also has still to develop an effective policy for teaching numeracy. Good progress has been made on the development of pupils' skills in ICT. The quality of teaching has improved. The school has developed the role of middle managers so that their expertise can benefit the whole school, particularly in the areas of assessment and on work connected with pupils for whom English is an additional language. These developments are not being disseminated to best effect so that they benefit the whole school. The school has also formulated a sound improvement plan and a school improvement group is working well to ensure its effective implementation.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	E*	E	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

In 2000, the school's overall results based on the pupils' average points score in the GCSE examinations were well below average in comparison with all schools. However, when these results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools they were average. Furthermore, when the results are compared with those of schools whose pupils had similar results at the end of Key Stage 3, the school's performance was well above average. This is a clear indication that many pupils make satisfactory and often good progress over time. Pupils' results were best in English literature, history, combined science (double award) and design and technology. Results in GCSE English in 2000 were below the national averages for all grades but were a significant improvement on the 1999 results, showing that these pupils had made good progress since their Key Stage 3 tests in 1998. Results in mathematics were well below the national average, but current work shows that standards are improving and that pupils are making satisfactory progress. Although results in science were below average, results are getting better. The trend in improvement in results for English, mathematics and science has been above the national trend. In the examinations as a whole, girls' results were much better than those of boys.

In the year 2000, and over a three year period before that, the pupils' average points score in the English tests taken by 14-year-olds was well below the average for all schools. In comparison with similar schools, the results were below average. Results have been better in English than in mathematics and science, despite the fact that approximately 80 per cent of the pupils start the school with a reading age which is below their chronological age and barely half of them have reached average levels in English. Although the pupils' results in terms of average points score were well below the national average in 2000, their achievements in English at Levels 5 and 6 compared well with those of pupils in similar schools. In the same year and over a three year period, results in mathematics and science were low, both in comparison with all schools and with similar schools but in both subjects pupils were starting from a low point of attainment. Girls' results were much better than boys' results in the tests in each of the three subjects. Current work at Key Stage 3 shows that standards are improving in English, mathematics and science because the quality of teaching is improving, and in science in particular, because staffing is more stable.

The pupils' low levels of attainment on entry, higher than average absence rates and the school's problems with staff recruitment, together with weaknesses in some teaching which does not adequately address the pupils' literacy needs, have been the main factors which have prevented standards from rising by the time pupils reach the end of Year 9. There are also more pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4.

In the school as a whole, pupils achieve well in design and technology, history and religious education. Their achievement is satisfactory in geography, information and communication technology and physical education but is unsatisfactory in French. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. The achievement of pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory overall but is good at Key Stage 4. By this time, pupils have become more confident as users of English and this is one of the main factors in helping them to make faster progress the longer they stay in the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The majority of pupils want to learn and to succeed
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The majority of pupils behave well, inside and outside classes
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are mostly positive between pupils and between pupils and teachers
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance rates are considerably below the national average.

Pupils' attitudes make a positive contribution to the progress they make while at school. However, progress is slowed for a substantial proportion of the pupils by their unsatisfactory levels of attendance. The majority of pupils of all ability and ethnic groups have positive attitudes to learning. Their response to learning has improved since the last inspection in 1999 and is now consistently good in all year groups. This is because of the improvements in the quality of teaching. Pupils work together productively in lessons. Behaviour in the school is satisfactory although it deteriorates in lessons where teachers do not establish sufficiently clear expectations of classroom routines and discipline. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. So far this school year, attendance has fallen again to 87.7 per cent which is considerably below the national average of 91.3 per cent.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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.

The quality of teaching was very good in 16 per cent of lessons, good in 36 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 40 per cent and unsatisfactory or poor in 8 per cent. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in mathematics and English and, although the quality varies widely in science lessons, it is satisfactory overall. Despite some good practice, the teaching of basic skills is unsatisfactory overall. In some lessons very good attention is paid to the language needs of pupils but in others this is far less effective.

A major strength of the teaching lies in the use of subject targets, based on the pupils' individual learning needs, to raise attainment. Marking is also thorough and provides helpful guidance to pupils as to how they might improve their work. Successful lessons often begin with teachers setting out clear learning objectives. Pupils are praised when they produce good work or show persistence in their learning. Good relationships underpin the lessons and pupils want to learn. Clear planning helps the lessons to be well organised which in turn provides coherence to learning so that pupils can see where they are going. Teachers vary the style of learning to keep pupils interested.

The main weakness in teaching is to be found in the lack of emphasis on the use of the spoken word in all subjects of the curriculum. This means that in many lessons pupils do not get the practice they need to improve their confidence in the use of language by providing extended answers to questions or fully developing their ideas out loud. This is particularly significant for those pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language at Key Stage 3 but also applies to other pupils. Despite some good practice in some lessons, pupils are not always provided with enough support in literacy to help them write confidently at length. In some lessons the use of assessment is limited which means that pupils are unaware of how successful their learning has been. On some occasions teachers do not manage pupils well and this also limits progress. Some teachers lack a specialist's knowledge of the subject and this leads to lessons being uninteresting which demotivates pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. Music is not being taught in the school. There is no French teaching in Year 10. There is insufficient time for several other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Well managed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall but good for those in the early stages of language acquisition.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall but good moral and social provision.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school provides a calm and secure environment in which pupils are able to make progress.

National Curriculum requirements are not being met in relation to music and French. There is insufficient time in some years for the teaching of geography, religious education and drama. The school's partnership

with parents is underdeveloped. The pupils feel safe and confident that they can receive the help they need, whether with their academic performance or their personal development. Careers education is well organised and effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. Good leadership from the acting headteacher. Supportive governing body. Sound planning for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Some breaches of the statutory requirements in relation to the curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory but not fully developed.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory.

A strength of management lies in the expertise of some middle managers in the school. The provision for students for whom English is an additional language and those who have special educational needs are both well managed. The roles of the senior leadership team are clearly defined but their influence in promoting initiatives from inside the school which can help the school to move forward under its own steam is limited. This particularly applies to the need to ensure that the best practice in helping pupils to develop their literacy skills is shared by all teachers. Financial planning is sound. The principles of best value are understood and the school does its best to ensure that it gets good value for money from all its purchases.

The provision of teaching staff is satisfactory overall. The school continues to be generously staffed with a favourable pupil:teacher ratio and non-teaching time. There is a good balance of male and female staff and staff from different ethnic groups. Staffing is particularly effective in mathematics and design and technology and is helping to raise standards in those areas. These positive features are offset by difficulties in recruiting permanent specialist staff for music, French and drama which have a negative impact on standards and provision in those subjects. The long-term absence of the oracy/literacy co-ordinator, although managed well within the English department, has delayed the continued promotion of this important whole-school development. Arrangements for staff training are sound, with good support provided for new, newly qualified and student teachers. The provision of non-teaching staff is good; they are well qualified and make a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.

Accommodation is satisfactory. Premises staff take very good care of the building and site to ensure that they are clean, safe and well maintained. Learning resources are satisfactory. They are good in physical education and special educational needs. There is adequate provision of computers for use by the whole school. Pupils make good use of the computer suites but there are weaknesses in the provision of hardware and software in art and design, geography, and design and technology. The library is a good resource for learning, but access to it and to the homework clubs run there has been restricted recently because of the departure of the permanent librarian.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school. • The progress made by pupils. • The school expecting children to work hard and to give of their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Information about their child's progress. • Behaviour. • The school's partnership with them.

Very few parents attended the registered inspector's meeting and only 12.8 per cent of questionnaires were returned for analysis, so it cannot be said that these views are in any way representative. The low response figures are an indication that the school's partnership with parents is weak. Inspectors found many children do enjoy school and that the majority make progress. The school does expect that pupils will work hard. Homework is making a good contribution to pupils' achievements in many cases but its use is not always consistent. The information that parents receive about pupils' progress is adequate but does not provide sufficient detail. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 2000, the pupils' average points score in the English tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 was well below the average for all schools. Over a three year period results were also below average and in 1997 they were low. When the pupils' English results are compared with those for pupils in similar schools they are still below average. In the same year, pupils' results in the mathematics test were low and were also low for the previous three years. When these results are compared with those of pupils in similar schools they are also low. Pupils' starting point in mathematics is even lower than in English. The picture for science results is the same. The performance of pupils in science has been adversely affected by staffing difficulties but the current position is much better. When the pupils' results in English, mathematics and science are taken together they are well below average in comparison with the results of pupils in all schools.
2. When the pupils' results at Level 5 and above are compared with those of pupils in similar schools, they are average in English but are well below average in mathematics and are low in science. When the overall points score is used as the criterion, in comparison with similar schools, results are below average in English but are well below average in mathematics and are low in science. Girls did much better than boys in the most recent English tests, nearly half reaching Level 5 or above, whereas less than 20 per cent of the boys did so. Boys' attainment is also lower than that of girls in mathematics and science. Girls' results were particularly low in science. The overall trend of improvement in the core subjects is in line with the national trend. The overall attainment of pupils by the end of this key stage remains well below the national average but their standards of achievement are satisfactory.
3. In 2000, the school's overall results based on the average points score in the GCSE examinations were well below average in comparison with all schools. The school comes out better when the comparison is made with similar schools as they are average. There is a clear indication here that pupils do make satisfactory and often good progress over time.
4. Furthermore, when the percentage of pupils gaining grades A*-C is used as a measure, the school is well above average in terms of prior attainment and well above average in terms of free schools meals. It does not do quite so well on the 5 or more grades A*-G measure where it is average in terms of prior attainment but is well below average on the basis of free school meals. The inference here is that it is the more able pupils who are making the best progress. The pupils' overall results in the GCSE examinations are best in English literature, history, combined science (double award) and design and technology. They are weakest in mathematics where results are far less good than the English results.
5. In the 1996 inspection report, standards in the GCSE examinations were described as low. The percentage of candidates reaching grades A*-C was only 7.2 per cent and a target of 10 per cent was being set for 1997. It is now 31 per cent which indicates that the school has made good progress in this area.
6. In the school as a whole, the achievement of pupils is satisfactory in English and mathematics but is good in science where pupils' achievement is now being raised by some good teaching. Pupils also achieve well in design and technology, history and religious education. Their achievement is satisfactory in geography, information and communication technology and physical education but is unsatisfactory in French because there is no continuity of provision for this subject. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, albeit from a low base of prior learning. The small number of pupils who are not from an Asian background make satisfactory progress.

7. Pupils at all stages of English language acquisition are found in both key stages but the majority of those at the early stages are at Key Stage 3. The larger numbers skews the achievement and attainment across the curriculum because the early learners at Key Stage 4 are not only fewer but are generally more mature linguistically in their own language. Nonetheless, pupils' achievement at Key Stage 3 has been affected by their low starting points, some difficulties with staffing which have resulted in lack of continuity in learning, absence rates and some weaknesses in the teaching which have not adequately addressed the linguistic needs of all pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, relationships and personal development are good. These make a positive contribution to the progress pupils are able to achieve while at the school. However, progress is slowed for a substantial proportion of the pupils by their unsatisfactory levels of attendance.
9. The majority of pupils of all abilities and ethnic groups have positive attitudes to learning. Parents say their children like school. Pupils' response to learning has improved since the last inspection in 1999 and is now consistently good in all year groups. This is because of the improvements in the quality of teaching. In seven out of eight lessons, pupils are interested and involved in the tasks which are set and want to do well. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson on probability, pupils in the upper ability band responded to the very good teaching with enthusiasm, expressing pleasure at the rapid pace and success they were achieving. In English in Years 10 and 11, pupils rise to the challenge of the GCSE syllabus and coursework, often covering more than the minimum required and work assiduously, even in the long-term absence of their usual teacher. On the occasions when attitudes are unsatisfactory or poor, this is usually because pupils are not responding well to an inexperienced or temporary teacher or to tasks and resources which do not match their learning needs.
10. Personal development and relationships are good. Pupils work together productively in lessons, sometimes by using their home language to help a friend understand a question. The different ethnic groups and sub-groups represented in the school mix well and there is very little racial tension. The pupils of all ages interviewed by the inspectors were very confident that bullying is not a problem at the school and that any incidents are dealt with successfully by the peer mediators and pastoral staff. Pupils respond well to the steadily increasing range of opportunities to play an active part in the life of the school. They particularly enjoy organising events to raise significant sums of money for charities, for example to alleviate suffering in Mozambique. They make worthwhile contributions to a range of newspapers and magazines published by the school. Older pupils help in the library and with sports activities and hear younger pupils read. Occasionally, pupils show a degree of immaturity in their personal development. This was seen, for example, in a very few lessons in Years 10 and 11 where boys and girls displayed some lack of respect for each other.
11. Behaviour in the school is satisfactory. Pupils behave well in assemblies and in the majority of lessons. They are usually polite and respectful to adults and each other and listen attentively to what others have to say. They mostly move around the narrow corridors and staircases in an orderly way. Their behaviour deteriorates in lessons across the school where teachers do not establish sufficiently clear expectations of classroom routines and discipline. On these occasions, pupils stop listening to each other, have a tendency to call or shout out answers and become excitable or silly. This slows down the progress they are able to make. The number of exclusions, both permanent and fixed period, has risen in the current academic year. This is because the school is making it clear to pupils and the wider community that a pattern of defiant and abusive behaviour by boys from all ethnic groups is not acceptable.

12. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection in 1999 it has slipped below the school's target of 90 per cent, although last year it was in line with the average attendance rate in Birmingham schools. So far this school year attendance has fallen again to 87.7 per cent, which is considerably below the national average of 91.3 per cent. Levels of attendance are below 90 per cent in each year group and for half the school population. During the week of the inspection, which took place immediately after the half-term holiday and during a period of pilgrimage in the Islamic calendar, there were significant numbers of absences in many classes. Teachers had to spend some time enabling returning pupils to catch up on work they had missed. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average and there is very little truancy. The vast majority of absences are condoned by parents who do not place sufficient priority on ensuring that their children attend school regularly during term-time. Pupils' intermittent and long-term absences have a significant negative impact on what they are able to achieve. This is especially noticeable for pupils with particular learning needs and for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who require sustained periods of time in which to complete the coursework required for GCSE examinations.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. In the school as a whole, the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in over 90 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching does not vary greatly between the two key stages, but because it is the younger pupils who need the most help to develop their literacy skills, the weaknesses in teaching are especially telling in not helping pupils to move forward faster at Key Stage 3. In just over a half of lessons at both key stages, the quality of teaching is good or better. In eight per cent of lessons it is unsatisfactory. This represents further improvement from that described in recent inspection reports and monitoring visits. This has been the major factor in helping the school to overcome its serious weaknesses.
14. At both key stages, a major strength of teaching lies in the use being made of subject targets to raise attainment. Marking is also thorough and provides helpful guidance to students as to how they might improve their work. Successful lessons often begin with teachers setting out clear learning objectives. Pupils are praised when they produce good work or show persistence in their learning. Good use of homework is also a strength of teaching. Good relationships underpin the lessons and pupils want to learn. Clear planning helps the lessons to be well organised which in turn provides coherence to learning so that pupils can see where they are going. Teachers vary the style of learning to keep pupils interested. Lessons in English and history in particular, are often characterised by lively and imaginative assignments which capture the interest of students and develop their skills. The use of intensive question and answer sessions is being especially well used in mathematics to keep pupils concentrating and focused on their learning. The support staff in the history department work closely with teachers to improve the learning of pupils by ensuring that weaker pupils are aware of the aims of the lesson and know what they have to do to improve.
15. The weakest feature of the teaching is to be found in its lack of emphasis on the use of the spoken word. This means that in many lessons pupils do not get the practice they need to improve their confidence in the use of language by providing fully developed answers to questions or expressing their ideas out loud at greater length. This is particularly significant for those pupils who are in the early stage of learning English as an additional language but also applies to other pupils, especially at Key Stage 3.
16. In some lessons pupils are not given the support they need to ensure that their literacy skills are adequate for expressing ideas at length in written form. The use of assessment is limited which means that pupils are unaware of how successful their learning has been. On some occasions teachers do not manage pupils well and this limits progress or lack a specialist's knowledge of the subject and this leads to lessons being uninteresting which demotivates pupils.

17. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory overall. The teaching of pupils at the early stages of learning English is good overall. Lessons for these pupils are well structured to include a range of learning tasks. This motivates the pupils and uses lesson time efficiently. A good example was a Year 9 English lesson in which the stages of making tea were clearly explained and where the key words written on the board were subsequently used by the pupils in speaking, reading and writing tasks. In a Year 10 science lesson, with good guidance in English from a bilingual support assistant, three pupils at the early stages of English acquisition had no difficulties in progressing from reading and copying from a sheet to taking part in an experiment. Staff in the language support unit produce clear high quality support sheets which enable pupils, for example, to identify and copy key expressions, answer questions with the help of structures which help pupils to sequence their ideas when writing and use carefully selected illustrations as clues to the meaning of unfamiliar words.
18. The learning of good speaking habits is not sufficiently emphasised by teachers. Pupils at the early stages of language acquisition need more opportunities to speak in extended sentences and to acquire good pronunciation at the point of learning new language. Although some teachers encourage pupils to develop their speaking, this is not consistently applied in lessons in all subjects. At the higher stages of learning English, pupils have specific language needs which are not always consistently addressed in their learning in subjects. For example, one pupil at the higher stages of English who spoke fluently, could not readily understand the written instructions for solving a mathematical problem which he was capable of solving. The pupils at the early stages of English language learning also have an increased need for guidance from subject teachers on those occasions when they are not supported in lessons by the work of the language support unit.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and often good across a range of subjects. As a result pupils achieve well and make good progress. Good assessment procedures accurately place pupils at learning stages and this enables teachers to build on prior learning. Targets in pupils' individual education plans are precise and measurable and these provide a focus for the work. Teachers plan their lessons well and manage pupils in a positive way. This helps them to settle into school routines and become more confident learners. Effective planned support from integration assistants, learning mentors and language support assistants in English, mathematics and science, enables teachers to engage all pupils in planned class discussions and investigative work and, as a result, learning improves. However, where support is not available in some foundation subjects, for example in French and history, progress for all pupils is adversely affected.

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

20. The school has made only limited progress since the last inspection report and because so many weaknesses remain, curriculum provision is unsatisfactory, largely because of failings in providing adequately for the foundation subjects. The teaching of ICT is not yet fully meeting legal requirements at Key Stage 4. At present, because of difficulties in recruiting staff, no pupils are able to study music at any level. The present construction of the timetable means that no pupils are able to study French in Year 10 and this deficiency makes it virtually impossible for any pupil to take a long course GCSE in this subject. There is also insufficient time allocated for the study of French in Years 7 and 11 that compounds the problem. No provision is made in geography for pupils to study the geomorphological aspects of the National Curriculum. Insufficient time is allocated to the study of geography at Key Stage 3, physical education in Years 8, 10 and 11, religious education in Year 9 and for drama within the English curriculum. These weaknesses have an adverse effect on the standards of education in these subjects and on the overall breadth and balance of the curriculum.

21. The school is actively planning the introduction of a more relevant vocational experience for its pupils. This will be through the extension of the use of GNVQ and other work-related education programmes. To this end, the school is giving active consideration to flexible arrangements for the study of certain subjects at Key Stage 4. Since the 1996 inspection, clear progress has been made with the time allocations for most subjects, the basic entitlement to information and communication technology at Key Stage 3, the underdevelopment of independent learning, such as research and investigation and with the strategies for language and literacy development. Little progress, however, has been made with the systematic provision of music and French.
22. The quality and extent of provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. Learning support staff provide very good support overall in lessons. It is clear that there is good co-operation and joint planning between the teachers and support staff and this makes sure that the support is well used and has a positive effect on the progress of these pupils.
23. Improving the quality of provision for oracy and literacy was a key issue at the time of the last inspection. The school has responded to this and now has a comprehensive policy setting out expectations and giving clear advice to teachers. There is evidence of a good response from some subjects, for example science, history and design and technology, where the application of the policy can be seen in many lessons. Here key words have been clearly identified and teaching strategies have been developed to encourage speaking and listening. This good practice is not being consistently applied in all subjects. In many subjects this area remains underdeveloped and is not being promoted strongly enough at senior leadership level.
24. There is currently good provision for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Bilingual support staff operate in an efficient and positive way so that pupils make progress. Some developing bilingual pupils benefit incidentally from other support in lessons and from the school's promotion of oracy and literacy skills. Pupils have the use of a well-stocked library and reading is actively encouraged in form time with some groups. Provision for the development of numeracy skills across the curriculum is making slow progress. Cross-curricular links are not sufficiently developed to ensure that numeracy skills are learnt and practised in consistent ways. The use of these skills has been fully and recently audited but the results of this have yet to develop into a policy and then into practice. Stronger numeracy links are beginning to be established with the main feeder schools.
25. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory but is good in physical education. Many of these are to do with the learning in subjects, such as homework, revision or extra-work clubs. All these have a very positive effect on the standards achieved by the pupils. The pupils appreciate these clubs and the efforts made on their behalf by the staff who run them. Residential trips and visits to educational sites are offered but the uptake of these is limited.
26. The curriculum does not provide equality of opportunity because of the deficiencies in music and French and inconsistencies in the delivery of some subjects, for example drama, so opportunities for some pupils in lessons are more limited than for others.
27. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school offers a well thought out programme which is broad and balanced and covers health education, including sex education and drug education, environmental education, economic and industrial understanding and some aspects of citizenship. The school has an appropriate policy for sex education, which has been agreed by the governors. Information about this is readily available in the school's prospectus.
28. The programmes of careers education and work experience are well organised and effective in preparing pupils for the opportunities of further education, training and employment when they leave school. Careers education starts in Year 8 as part of the personal, social and

health education programme and builds up to the work experience placement in the autumn term of Year 11. In their last full term at the school, most Year 11 pupils are clear about what they want to do post-16 and how they are going to achieve their ambitions. The school's above average provision has been recognised by the award of Stage 1 of Birmingham's quality standard for careers education and guidance. The GNVQ courses in business studies and health and social care and the GCSE courses in geography and law make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of the world of work. Very little work-related education takes place in other subjects.

29. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. This is similar to the picture described at the last inspection in 1999. Planning, co-ordinating and monitoring the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have been given a low priority at a time when the school's efforts have been focused on raising academic standards.
30. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school is actively working towards fulfilling its policy for collective worship which provides for regular Islamic assemblies and alternative arrangements for non-Moslems. The quality of assemblies seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to good and was good overall. The assemblies provide a sense of occasion to which pupils respond with respect. They give opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own achievements and to learn about important festivals and traditions in the Islamic and Christian calendars. There were no opportunities for pupils to take an active part in any of the assemblies seen and no use of music in the alternative assemblies. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship, as there is no provision for reflection in the form tutor time attended by pupils on the days when their year group has no assembly.
31. In the subjects of the curriculum there are good opportunities for spiritual development in English, where pupils are able to express themselves in lively imaginative writing on topics such as 'I have a dream' and in religious education and Islamic studies. A notable feature is the Ramadan Club held at lunch-times which offers books, videos, talks, visiting speakers and the opportunity to contribute to a local radio station. There is limited provision for spiritual development in other subjects. The 'Paradise Garden' project led by the two artists in residence made an important contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
32. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. There is a clear code of behaviour which is displayed all over the school and in pupils' homework planners. Pupils understand what is expected of them and accept the rewards and sanctions as fair. Assemblies cover such themes as 'who is your role model' and 'how to control your anger'. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss moral issues in English, drama, geography, history, information and communication technology and the GNVQ health and social care course. Teachers are alert to the need to address issues of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.
33. Provision for pupils' social development is also good. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to co-operate with each other in pairs and small groups, for example in mathematics, geography and history. In English pupils work together to produce magazines of their creative writing. There are now good opportunities for pupils to take an active part in the life of the school, for example by becoming trained peer mediators, school council representatives, librarians and prefects. A few pupils are starting to become involved in the wider community, such as a local residents' association and a scheme to regenerate a piece of local land. A residential experience is provided in North Wales for a limited number of pupils in Years 9 and 10.
34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, with a major weakness being the current lack of sustained opportunities to take part in music, dance and drama activities or to develop an understanding of European cultures. Nevertheless, pupils are taught to appreciate a wide range of cultures in many subjects of the curriculum. For

example, in history there is a strong emphasis on providing local examples to enable pupils to understand British aspects of the curriculum, on raising awareness of the cultural mix of various racial groups in this country and on dealing with the historical implications of indigenous cultures on other continents, such as the Mughal, Arabic and North American native peoples. There is similar wide-ranging provision in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology and geography. Pupils value the way in which teachers respect their culture and religion. The school is increasing its provision of educational visits to broaden pupils' horizons, with a particular focus on introducing pupils identified as gifted and talented to opportunities that are available in the wider world.

35. The quality of links with the community and with other schools and colleges is unsatisfactory overall. This is because the school, understandably, has concentrated in the past few years on improving its internal provision. It is now in a position to go out into the community with confidence and develop links that should enhance pupils' learning. It has already started this process; for example it works with local schools in publishing a community newspaper funded by 'Barclays New Futures' which celebrates the achievements of pupils of all ages. The strong links with local businesses remain and enable the school to find work experience placements for all pupils in Year 11 as well as work-related material for the vocational courses. There are some good links with external agencies, colleges and sports clubs which enhance the provision for pupils' personal, career and physical development.
36. Links with primary schools are very patchy and do not have a coherent effect on ensuring a smooth curriculum transition for many pupils joining the school in Year 7. Links are good for pupils with special educational needs but very limited for pupils with English as an additional language, which slows down the progress they are able to make in their early years at Park View. Good links are developing between mathematics staff and the nearest primary school. Useful links with primary schools have been established in English but are currently in abeyance because of the long-term absence of a member of staff. There are good plans to develop links further using music, drama and football as 'bridging' activities.
37. Although the site is used by the local community at evenings and weekends this currently has little impact on pupils' learning. The school is aware of the untapped potential of its position 'at the heart of the community'; for example, governors are developing links with a Sunday morning school which provides additional curricular provision for local schools on the Park View site. With a City Learning Centre funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative about to open on the site, the school is poised to become a local focus for training in information and communication technology that has the capability to benefit both the pupils and their families.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school provides a calm and secure environment in which pupils are able to settle and make progress. The pupils feel safe and confident that they can receive the help they need, whether with their academic performance or their personal development. Parents also appreciate the stable community which the school creates, often in difficult circumstances, and the ways in which the school looks after pupils in an atmosphere of tolerance.
39. The school's procedures for ensuring the welfare, protection, health and safety of pupils are satisfactory. Clear systems are in place and implemented appropriately by key members of experienced staff who know the pupils well. The governing body has paid good attention to improving the security of the site. Pupils are provided with good information and guidance on healthy living as part of the school's personal, social and health education programme. Health and safety matters are managed satisfactorily in most departments and areas across the school. However, a number of issues in the art department were identified during the inspection. The annual electrical testing of computer equipment is overdue. Arrangements for child protection are broadly sound and benefit from good liaison with the long-serving school nurse. New and existing staff were not reminded of the school's child protection

procedures at the beginning of the school year and some written guidance will need updating once the new designated teacher has received her specialist training.

40. The school continues to employ a good range of procedures and strategies for monitoring and improving attendance, as reported at the last inspection in 1999. These include home visits by staff and governors, first-day follow-up of absence and clear information to parents in annual reports and individual education plans about the effects of absence on their children's progress. However, these measures have not been sufficiently effective in the last year or two in overcoming the deep-seated religious and cultural traditions within the parent community of keeping their children away from school for short or long periods of time. The school is aware of this and has just started, or is about to start, a number of new initiatives to improve attendance. These include better managed home visits by bilingual staff to address pupils' underachievement which is often caused by too much absence. The school is also improving its facilities for Moslem pupils to carry out their religious observances, including during fasting periods, so that they can remain at school during important times in the Islamic year.
41. Procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are good. A lot of work has been done to improve the skills of teachers in managing behaviour in classrooms. A highly experienced member of staff is available to give confidential guidance and support to colleagues who encounter difficulties with particular individuals or groups. Heads of year carry out mediation using 'circle time' techniques to help small groups of pupils to discuss their behaviour problems and agree on ways in which they can be solved. The school works well with outside agencies to provide support for pupils whose behaviour is a factor in their underachievement. Mid-day supervisors work hard to maintain pupils' satisfactory behaviour at lunch-times. They are assisted by a rota of peer mediators from each year group who are effective in resolving conflicts between pupils. The school is mainly successful in establishing a climate in which any form of harassment is not tolerated. Staff are alert to the issues of stereotyping by gender, for example when discussing the roles of men and women in the vocational area of social care. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour do not take full account of all the different ethnic groups and sub-groups represented within the school.
42. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the 1999 inspection. They are now satisfactory. The school has devised a clear new marking and assessment policy and most teachers use the National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3 and the GCSE grades, as well as the school's effort grades, when they mark pupils' work. Many are also using the criteria for these levels and grades in a style that the pupils can understand, in order to explain to pupils what they have achieved and how they can improve in each subject. The best examples of this are in history, where pupils also often evaluate their own work, in science, geography and English. Some English teachers keep records for encouraging pupils to improve on their personal best and enter into healthy competition with each other. However, effective arrangements for assessing pupils' work and indicating how they could improve are not consistent within departments nor across the school. Senior staff are not monitoring the school policy to ensure that it is being implemented by all teachers. Assessment for pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language is very good; detailed records and very good monitoring of pupils' achievement enable the school to deploy the learning support to the pupils who need it. At the later stages of language acquisition pupils' needs and achievement are very well assessed. However, although the relevant data are disseminated to all teachers, the guidance they give to these pupils at the later stages is inconsistent and often inadequate, and therefore unsatisfactory.
43. The use of assessment information to improve the school's planning and teaching is at present unsatisfactory. The school has started to collect data about the achievement of boys and girls and about some ethnic groups in the school. Two teachers have spoken with local communities about factors that limit pupils' progress and all teachers are generally aware of the findings. Nevertheless, this initiative is not far enough developed to ensure that the

school analyses and caters for the needs of all pupils, boys or girls, whichever ethnic group they belong to, whether they have special needs or are particularly gifted and talented. History, geography, mathematics, English and science have introduced alternatives to GCSE for pupils who find the language and concepts of GCSE too difficult and most teachers enable pupils to acquire subject specific vocabulary. However, action to provide for the pupils' particular needs across the school, to improve boys' achievement, to develop pupils' skills in speaking and to further their literacy, is currently too slow.

44. The school now amasses an increased amount of data about pupils' prior attainment, their current attainment and effort and progress and their predicted levels and grades, as well as such data about pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The co-ordinator disseminates this to all teachers, and both subject teachers and form tutors use the data to help them track whether pupils are making enough progress and to set targets with them. Pupils are thus receiving a good level of support and advice on their academic and personal development. This has improved since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents are satisfied with what the school provides and achieves for their children. The numbers of parents giving their views to inspectors were small, but were greater than for the full inspection in 1996. Those responding to the questionnaire are particularly pleased with the school's expectations and the progress their children are making, as well as with the quality of leadership and teaching. Some parents have concerns about the way in which the school works with them, a weakness which the school has recognised and is taking steps to overcome. The school has responded well to parents' requests that facilities be provided for the observance of religious customs such as lunch-time prayers. The few parents at the meeting with the registered inspector were keen to voice their support for the school and their confidence that the school is ready to go forward under a new headteacher.
46. Links with parents are not sufficiently strong but they are improving rapidly since the appointment of more bilingual staff to talk to parents in their homes and mosques. A mathematics teacher, who himself comes from the largest ethnic group represented in the school, has made a very effective start in informing parents about how well their children are doing and how they can help. This has already had a significant effect on encouraging parents to support Year 9 pupils' attendance at revision classes and in reducing the number of referrals for misbehaviour. Useful home visits are also made by senior staff, governors and learning mentors. The quality of written information for parents is satisfactory overall. The annual reports on pupils' progress provide good information in English about all subjects studied as well as pupils' personal development. A range of publications are produced which feature pupils' writing and achievements. The prospectus and governors' annual report are unsatisfactory and do not include all the information for parents which is required by law.
47. The impact of parents' involvement with the work of the school and pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. In part, this is because of the tradition within the majority community served by the school to leave education to the teachers. It also stems from a lack of parental understanding about the effects that frequent or long absences from school have on pupils' rates of progress towards achieving qualifications and a better future. Staff and governors are working hard to educate parents about the importance of supporting their children's learning at home and school; for example by suggesting that they provide a quiet place for pupils to study at home. Teachers set homework tasks that involve parents, for example asking pupils to find out the cost of the monthly grocery bill. They persevere with encouraging parents to check homework diaries weekly. They arrange activities such as work experience and visits to further education colleges with care and sensitivity to ensure that they maintain parents' support whilst broadening pupils' horizons. The governing body has a full complement of parent governors and represents the views of parents well. The school has good plans to involve parents further in celebrating and raising achievement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The school has been without a permanent headteacher since the beginning of the academic year. Whilst the school has been seeking a successor it has been well led by an acting-headteacher. Understanding the nature of the situation and seeing the need to keep the school stable and purposeful, the acting-headteacher has skilfully and sensitively sustained positive relationships with all members of the school community and enabled the school to consolidate its successes and to move forward.
49. The school has clear aims and is on course to meet them. Its planning for school improvement has a sound basis in the form of a school improvement plan which has identified and costed a range of key priorities and established appropriate timescales for their completion. The departments are well managed, in the case of English expertly so, and growing expertise in this area has been a major factor in helping the school to improve. The school's prospectus, whilst providing clear and especially helpful information for prospective parents on homework and the school's policy for helping pupils with special educational needs, does not fully comply with statutory requirements. Some details relating to the school's admissions procedures have been omitted, references to extra-curricular activities are restricted to those of a sporting nature and the school's arrangements for teaching religious education and for complying with the requirements to hold a daily act of collective worship are not included. National comparative data for Key Stage 3 test results have not been made available.
50. The governing body is committed to improving the school. It is taking a close interest in its rate of progress, being particularly active in trying to ensure that all staffing appointments fit the requirements of the school. It is intent on shaping the future direction of the school but is aware that because of recent communication difficulties it has still to gain the trust and confidence of the teaching staff before it can move forward strongly. It is not currently fulfilling statutory requirements in relation to the teaching of the full National Curriculum nor in terms of ensuring that there is a daily act of collective worship in the school. Key requirements have been omitted from the governors' annual report: the school action plan; arrangements for school security; admission arrangements for disabled pupils; Key Stage 3 results; school targets for the year 1999/2000 and the school's links with the community. The governing body is not yet in a position to work with the school on a detailed and rigorous evaluation of the school's overall performance.
51. The roles and responsibilities of members of the senior management team are clearly defined and the team is providing good broad support for the school's improvement process but is not proving active enough in ensuring that forward-looking developments initiated at middle management levels are embedded in the practices of the school as a whole. For instance, especially significant areas of the school's work, such as the management of pupils for whom English is an additional language, are well managed in themselves but the importance of their work is not promoted strongly enough to ensure that the whole school benefits from good practice. This particularly applies to work being done in the fields of literacy and spoken English which need to underpin the learning of all students. Similarly, the effective work being implemented by some departments in the field of assessment has not been disseminated or rigorously monitored to ensure that it is taking root in the work of all departments.
52. The management of the language support unit is very good, promoting very high standards of professionalism and a shared team commitment to the achievement of the pupils. Since the last report there has been good improvement in this area. While the percentage of pupils at the early stages of English language has almost doubled, the standards and achievement of these pupils are now systematically assessed and monitored by the language support unit.

53. The special needs provision is well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator. She provides professional leadership and a clear sense of direction for the work of her colleagues in making special educational needs a whole-school issue. Staff and resources are efficiently deployed to match the needs of pupils. The special needs provision is satisfactorily monitored by the headteacher and governing body. However, there is a need at senior management level for clear and long-term vision with regard to the future of the recently defunct learning/behavioural support unit.
54. The provision of teaching staff is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in music and French. The school is currently without a member of staff to promote and maintain the library. The school continues to be generously staffed with a favourable pupil:teacher ratio and non-teaching time. There is a good balance of male and female staff and staff from different ethnic groups. Staffing is particularly effective in mathematics and design and technology and is helping to raise standards in those areas. These positive features are offset by difficulties in recruiting permanent specialist staff for music, French and drama which have a negative impact on standards and provision in those subjects. The long-term absence of the oracy/literacy co-ordinator, although managed well within the English department, has delayed the continued promotion of this important whole-school development. Arrangements for staff training are sound, with good support provided for new, newly qualified and student teachers. The provision of non-teaching staff is good; they are well qualified and make a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.
55. Accommodation is satisfactory. It is at least adequate in all subject departments and good in design and technology where the rooms have been refurbished. There are some good displays, particularly on the top floor of the school, which enhance learning and celebrate pupils' work in English and mathematics. There are appropriate areas both inside and outside the building for pupils to socialise. The school uses an adjacent park for outdoor physical education lessons to compensate for the lack of playing fields. The premises staff take very good care of the building and site to ensure that they are clean, safe and well maintained. There is ramped access to the front of the building, but no arrangements to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities can reach classrooms on the second and third floors.
56. Learning resources are satisfactory. They are good in physical education and special educational needs. There is adequate provision of computers for the school as a whole. Pupils make good use of the computer suites but there are weaknesses in the provision of hardware and software in art and design, geography, and design and technology. The library is a good resource for learning, but access to it and to the homework clubs run there has been restricted recently because of the departure of the permanent librarian.
57. The school has sound systems in place for financial management. The school ensures that it gets value for money when purchasing books and equipment. Specific grants are used for their intended purposes. Auditors' reports confirm that basic practices are in place and remark on the way in which the school follows up any recommendations for improving practice. The school is aware of the best value principles. It is comparing its performance with that of other schools and is consultative. It sees the need to comply with legislation and is largely doing so. It is setting appropriate levels of challenge for itself. When pupils enter the school their attainment is low but they make satisfactory progress and although the cost of educating the pupils is higher than average, pupils are receiving a satisfactory education. Consequently, the school itself is giving satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to help the school to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governing body now need to:

- (1) improve the overall attainment of all pupils at Key Stage 3 and of boys in particular at Key Stage 4; (paras. 1, 2, 70, 72, 81, 89, 103, 106, 145)
- (2) strengthen the response to the significant number of pupils learning English as an additional language, or whose English needs further development, by ensuring that more emphasis is placed on the development of literacy and the use of the spoken word in all teaching and learning; (paras. 2, 7, 15, 16, 18, 23, 51, 61, 65, 68, 73, 76)
- (3) improve curriculum provision so that music and modern foreign languages comply with legal requirements; (paras. 6, 20, 21, 34, 54, 127, 130, 135)
- (4) broaden the experience of pupils so that art, music, dance and drama from diverse cultural backgrounds plays a more prominent part in their education; (paras. 26, 34, 60, 94)
- (5) develop a closer working relationship with parents and the wider community so that they make a major contribution to the learning of all pupils; (paras. 35, 36, 37, 46, 47)
- (6) improve attendance rates so that pupils can maximise their time at school. (paras. 8, 12, 81, 115)

The following, less significant, issues should also be considered:

- (1) ensure that the legal requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship is met; (para. 30)
- (2) allocate more time to the teaching of geography, physical education and religious education in order to raise standards in these subjects; (paras. 20, 108, 140, 142, 149)
- (3) complete the development of information and communication technology so that legal requirements are met at Key Stage 4; (paras. 95, 96, 109, 120, 126)
- (4) ensure that the prospectus and governors' annual report are of a satisfactory standard by including all the information for parents which is required by law. (paras. 49, 50)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	127
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	36	40	5	3	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	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	476	N/A
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	303	N/A

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9	N/A
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	145	N/A

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	458

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	44

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	9.4
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.4

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	50	61	111

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	8	6	4
	Girls	28	12	5
	Total	36	18	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	32 (41)	16 (15)	8 (10)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	6 (9)	6 (4)	1 (2)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	10	3	3
	Girls	21	8	10
	Total	31	11	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	28 (26)	10 (16)	12 (30)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	11 (4)	4 (4)	4 (5)
	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

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	41	59	100

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	11	29	37
	Girls	24	47	56
	Total	35	76	93
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	35 (19)	76 (79)	93 (98)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	28.3
	National	38.4

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	13
	National	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	404
Bangladeshi	43
Chinese	0
White	11
Any other minority ethnic group	16

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	19	2
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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)	36.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.62

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	387

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	67.8
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21.59
Key Stage 4	19.47

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	1,534,381
Total expenditure	1,526,258
Expenditure per pupil	3,016
Balance brought forward from previous year	70,145
Balance carried forward to next year	78,268

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	476
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	49	44	2	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	39	11	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	46	7	7	3
The teaching is good.	44	44	5	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	44	11	7	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	34	49	11	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	25	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	31	41	16	0	11
The school is well led and managed.	51	33	5	2	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	38	7	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	38	7	5	10

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

ENGLISH

59. In 2000, pupils' English results in the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 3 were well below average in comparison with all schools and were below average when compared with similar schools. By the end of Year 11 attainment is below average but over the challenging course pupils achieve well. Results in GCSE English in 2000 were below the national averages for all grades. Girls did much better than boys. However, the results were a significant improvement on the 1999 results showing that these pupils had made good progress since their Key Stage 3 tests in 1998. Half the year also sat the English literature examination, in which all passed and the percentage gaining grades A*-C was above the national average. This was a good result. Between 10 and 15 pupils take the Certificate of Achievement, half of them gaining distinction in the last two years. In GCSE drama in 2000 all but two passed and five gained B and C grades; the 1999 results were rather better, but the numbers are too small for comparisons to be made with national results.
60. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 7 show interest in the lunch-time reading challenge and higher and middle attainers write some lively stories. Although a significant number are enthusiastic speakers, many pupils have problems speaking clearly and correctly. These problems persist in Years 8 and 9 though more pupils contribute in lessons than at the previous inspection. Underachievement in speaking persists because there is very little drama in the curriculum at present and insufficient consistent focus, both within English and across the school, on these pupils' particular difficulties with speaking. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in listening, reading and writing. Higher attainers remember what they have read and their understanding is in line with what one would expect of higher attainers in other schools. By the time they start Year 10, pupils are able to read demanding texts such as 'An Inspector Calls' for themselves. Many pupils make good progress in writing in a lively manner for a range of purposes, including tourist brochures, letters, play scripts, stories and poetry. They enjoy using words for effect. The written work of lower attainers is often short on detail and shows that spelling standards are still weak. Nearly all are writing in sentences that are grammatically correct but some have poorly formed handwriting. Classes who have had more than one teacher this year are making less progress than the others.
61. During Key Stage 4, with their increasing maturity and command of language, pupils achieve well in listening, reading and writing, although their speaking is only satisfactory. Higher attainers are fluent speakers with a number of ideas, though they are not expressive. Many others can explain what they mean reasonably fluently but they speak too rapidly and do not often speak out, although they can do this if teachers require it and they practise what they intend to say. Progress in the Year 11 GCSE drama class is at present unsatisfactory as the pupils are not showing that they can work well together. A significant number of pupils are reaching national averages in reading and show that they can understand a good range of literature, appreciating ideas, stories and characters. They find it more difficult to understand the effects of language, which is necessary if they are to reach the highest grades. Higher attainers write at length with a sound, and sometimes sophisticated, command of English. When writing cogent speeches on current issues several pupils effectively used the styles of public address of their own cultural leaders. Middle attainers generally write grammatically with the detail necessary for reaching national expectations, but they have problems selecting words with similar vowel sounds, which they are not distinguishing in their own speech. Lower attainers can follow instructions, select information and write sentences which are grammatically correct. They have many difficulties with verb and noun endings, spelling and poor handwriting.
62. Pupils enjoy using information and communication technology for research and redrafting. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages because

teachers plan well to cater for pupils' needs, setting clear objectives and including an interesting variety of tasks in each lesson. The many pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 through well planned lessons which build up their English knowledge and vocabulary in an interesting way. Their speaking is not developed as much as it needs to be. In Key Stage 4 they make good progress overall as they become increasingly confident in English. Both these groups of pupils benefit from the encouragement of classroom assistants.

63. Nearly all the lessons observed were at least satisfactory and half were good, with a few being very good. The teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. In the best lessons the teachers plan very well to give pupils a challenging sequence of related but varied activities that are linked with previous and subsequent lessons. They insist on good listening and speaking and their skilled questioning makes pupils think. The good relationships between adults and pupils create an atmosphere in which pupils want to do their best. Some of the best teaching was seen in lessons with the less able pupils at Key Stage 3, where the teachers and support staff have very clear routines, share their objectives with the class, focusing on what the pupils need to learn and give lucid instructions. Teachers show imagination in their work. In one lesson the teacher required pupils to use question words in a role play of a policeman interviewing a taxi driver about a rogue in the novel they were studying. In another class of pupils in the early stages of learning English, two teachers put on a double act involving pupils in new language for giving and understanding instructions. Other strengths in the teaching are that most classes are firmly but kindly managed.
64. Teachers are good role models as speakers, they are enthusiastic, encouraging and give very generously of their time outside lessons. Pupils, therefore, feel valued and want to do their best. Teachers use interesting topics and resources which inspire pupils to write lively and imaginative articles, stories and poems, for instance in the newsletter 'Wise Guys' produced by some Year 10 classes, in the magazine and in the work attractively displayed in the school. Some teachers assess pupils very well so that pupils know how well they are doing, set and work towards precise targets and want to compete healthily with others so as to improve on their personal best. Teachers give challenging homework, especially from Year 9 onwards, so pupils learn to work independently and assiduously. The support staff are skilled in helping pupils but are sometimes not used enough in the lesson.
65. Weaknesses in the teaching occur when teachers plan insufficiently for the specific linguistic needs of their classes. They lose opportunities for pupils to absorb new words thoroughly. They also miss chances to encourage pupils to generate ideas and practise speaking by working in pairs and groups on specific tasks and to improve their reading aloud and their presentations. Sometimes, teachers do not start the lessons crisply and then pupils are slow to settle. Occasionally, the pace flags if instructions are not clear, questions not well sequenced or chances missed for pupils to listen or watch with a specific purpose.
66. The department is very well managed. Morale is high among the permanent teachers in the department. The head of department has worked very hard to support new teachers and to minimise the effects of long-term absences over the last two years, especially at Key Stage 4. Other teachers are successfully adapting the National Literacy Strategy to cater for pupils in Key Stage 3. Since the 1999 inspection, in spite of staff changes, the department has made satisfactory progress in raising attainment by using assessment effectively, through subtle initiatives for improving boys' achievement and by celebrating success.
67. After the 1999 inspection, in order to improve approaches to the teaching of literacy in all subjects, the school continued to promote strategies for teaching speaking, listening and literacy on a whole-school basis. This initiative was successful in history, geography, religious education and science, so there has been some improvement. However, in this academic year, owing to staff absence and insufficient monitoring by senior staff, the

impetus has declined. Currently, there is insufficient teaching of language skills to meet the needs of the pupils.

68. Pupils do not speak as well as they could and this limits their progress in thinking. In history and religious education in Key Stage 3 and geography, teachers provide a variety of opportunities such as role plays or television interviews. These teachers insist on good pronunciation and standard English. In science, pupils discuss in groups the results of experiments while using appropriate scientific vocabulary. On the other hand, in many lessons throughout the school teachers lose opportunities to develop fluent, clear and expressive speech and to improve pupils' pronunciation and speech rhythm. They do not ask pupils to work in pairs or groups often enough to generate ideas or question them in ways that require pupils to speak at any length. When introducing new words and phrases, teachers lose chances to reinforce pupils' learning by using visual aids or by demonstrating the spelling while modelling the pronunciation. Occasionally teachers do not use their own language precisely enough. Pupils' listening, however, is satisfactory. Their reading and writing are, overall, below the standards expected nationally. This limits their capacity to be analytical. A significant proportion have difficulty following written instructions and interpreting questions.
69. Some teachers in some subjects take pains to check pupils' understanding when they read aloud and in history they help pupils understand the bias and context of historical sources. There is some reading for pleasure in form time and a good number of pupils enjoy using the library. Nevertheless, in the school as a whole, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their reading. Most teachers are successfully encouraging pupils to use key words and phrases. In design and technology and geography, writing tasks are not sufficiently demanding. In history lessons on the other hand, pupils are required to make notes about visual and written sources and use them for writing at length. In science lessons pupils write well constructed pieces and the teacher of religious education supports lower attainers well by helping them to organise and punctuate their writing. Such good practice is not found throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

70. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school is low. In 2000, pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 3 were low in comparison with all schools. They were also low when compared with similar schools. Pupils' attainment in the GCSE examination is well below average. The standards of work currently done by pupils are higher than indicated by last year's test and examination results. This is because the improved quality of teaching and management of the department have not yet had sufficient time to be reflected in test and examination results. Furthermore, pupils have difficulties in interpreting written examination questions, even for those in the later stages of learning English as an additional language and those for whom English is the mother-tongue.
71. Until 2000 the levels reached by pupils after three years in the school had not been as high as they should have been. Now, as a result of teachers' higher expectations, better planning and their purposeful conduct of lessons, Year 9 pupils' attainment closely matches their capabilities. Attainment of pupils of Patan or Bangladesh origin is higher than others. Girls' attainment is higher than that of boys. However, differences correspond closely with those present when pupils enter the school. The achievement of all pupils, whatever their gender, background or capability is, therefore, satisfactory.
72. At the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades in GCSE examinations was well below the national average in 2000. This matches the standards of work of current 16-year-olds. Girls' results were higher than those of boys, reflecting the differences at the beginning of Year 10. Examination results have been low in recent years, but there has been a more rapid improvement than that found in schools nationally. All pupils, whatever their ethnic origin, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as

an additional language, are making satisfactory progress; hence their achievement is satisfactory.

73. During Years 7 to 9, pupils are able to learn the properties of geometrical shapes and can find solutions to related numerical problems. For example, pupils in Year 8 can quickly and competently calculate missing angles in triangles and can readily estimate the size of angles to the nearest ten degrees, as they did during a computer-based exercise. In Year 9, pupils can grasp the concept of probability and calculate the chances of events based on equally likely outcomes. They learn important vocabulary and practise reading but have difficulty interpreting written problems. They practise formal techniques for calculation regularly but are weak in using them when solving problems, for instance, when deciding whether to use multiplication or addition when finding perimeter or area of a rectangle. Pupils in the later stages of learning English as an additional language do not attain the standards of which they are capable, due to their limited understanding of written problems.
74. In Years 10 and 11, pupils learn the content of the GCSE course at a satisfactory rate and prepare well for tests. For example, they learn to recognise proportional relationships reliably and use their knowledge to solve problems by interpreting graphs. They have difficulty using negative numbers and interpreting the meaning of statistical presentations, for example when comparing simple distributions. The highest attainers do not always learn as well as they might, sometimes having to wait whilst other pupils complete tasks that they have finished or practise skills that they have already mastered.
75. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations, maintaining a relentless emphasis on the key purposes of the lesson to ensure that pupils' learning is reinforced. For instance, in a Year 11 lesson, the teacher closely questioned pupils whilst working through typical examination questions. Pupils' learning was reinforced when they repeated standard responses together when answering questions put to the whole class. The teacher ensured specific pupils made good progress by directing well-matched questions to them individually. Year 8 pupils made good progress when learning to approximate decimals. Initially pupils had difficulty, but the teacher insisted that pupils overcame their reliance on diagrams, providing understandable explanations when pupils met new problems. Self-confidence grew and eventually all pupils acquired a sufficient degree of competence to dispense with diagrams and find approximations mentally. The teacher encouraged the least confident pupils to use diagrams to check work, thereby maintaining support whilst promoting independent working.
76. Sometimes teachers do not explain the significance of key words. For example, 'minus' 'take-away' and 'negative' and pupils are confused, particularly those who are learning English as an additional language.
77. When teachers do not plan lessons sufficiently well or become distracted from the objectives, pupils' progress slows and confusion arises. For example, when changing compound units, the teacher followed a pupil's suggestion that 'miles per hour' would be a better unit than 'kilometres per minute'. As a result, the problem was overcomplicated for the Year 10 class. Converting to 'kilometres per hour' as intended, was sufficiently challenging within the competence of the pupils and would have been less confusing. Pupils lost interest when they were unable to succeed. The teacher reacted well and regained their interest but earlier good momentum was lost and pupils' learning was not as good as it could have been.
78. Pupils who find learning difficult and those with special educational needs make good progress, especially when helped by classroom assistants. Those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language learn well with the guidance of language assistants. Both worked effectively together in a class of very weak pupils following a Certificate of Achievement course in basic numeracy.

79. The mathematics department is well managed. The small team share responsibilities and work effectively together. Improvements have been quickly introduced this school year; new plans for teaching the National Curriculum are in use and teachers now plan sufficiently challenging work for pupils. By acting on the results of analysing attainment by ethnic origin, productive links have been forged with parents, the main feeder school and the wider community. Now, better information enables teachers to plan work that matches pupils' capabilities well and to inform parents of ways in which they can help their children learn at home. Mathematics teaching at the Sunday school has been made more effective, now co-ordinated with that of the school and linked directly with the National Curriculum.
80. Action taken so far to improve numeracy is still in the early stages but there is still insufficient teaching of numeracy by other departments for long-term improvements to have been made and sustained. Pupils have a good attitude to learning and behave well in lessons, concentrate well, pay close attention to their teachers and are keen to improve. Since the last full inspection in 1996, satisfactory progress has been made because pupils' attainment has risen, the quality of teaching has improved, and teachers' planning is better.

SCIENCE

81. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school is low. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were also low, both in relation to all schools and similar schools. At Key Stage 4, in comparison with similar schools, the performance of pupils shows an improvement but is still below average for pupils gaining grades A*-C in the GCSE examination. For pupils gaining grades A*-G in both double and single science the school's results are a little above average. The results over the last few years have been steadily rising. In both key stages the performance of girls is better than that of the boys. There are a number of factors that contribute to this relatively low performance. These are: the poor standards of pupils' performance in science on entry to the school; extended periods of absence; and persistent staffing problems over the last two years.
82. The achievement of pupils as they move up through the school is clearly good. By the end of Year 9 pupils make satisfactory progress and the most able pupils achieve at levels which are appropriate for their ages. In a Year 7 lesson pupils could give a good explanation of the forces acting on a book on a table. They could then go on to draw clear diagrams that indicate the direction and relative size of these forces. This knowledge and understanding was then successfully applied in a range of new situations. In a Year 9 lesson on chemical reactions, pupils could clearly give reasons as to why they thought a chemical reaction was taking place and could say what they thought the products of the reaction might be.
83. The department is very aware of the low standards of oracy and literacy of the pupils when they enter the school and a range of strategies has been developed to help the pupils' progress in these areas. In the same Year 7 lesson the key words had been identified and were used to create verbal and written sentences. As the lesson progressed, the pupils became more accurate in their use of appropriate scientific language and when using words with opposite meanings, for example *larger* or *smaller*, *greater* or *less*. In other lessons pupils used prepared worksheets with missing words and very well prepared writing structures for investigative work. The emphasis placed on the development of oracy continues through the key stage. In a Year 9 lesson, opportunities were created to use the key words, in paired and full group discussions, about the way in which the results of a practical should be recorded as well as the reading aloud of instructions. The attention given to the acquisition of oracy and literacy skills is a key factor in the good rate of progress shown by these pupils.
84. By the end of Year 11 able pupils make good progress, many achieving grade C or above in the GCSE examinations. In one Year 11 lesson, pupils could give a clear explanation of total internal reflection of light and the significance of the critical angle for light as it passes through transparent objects of different densities. The practical work was undertaken very

carefully and diagrams were drawn with accuracy. The general improvement seen overall in literacy skills means that they are now able to undertake much more independent work. Good progress is now made with scientific enquiry skills. A unit of work designed to promote scientific and logical thinking also supports this progress. In a Year 10 lesson on the greenhouse effect and global warming, pupils were able to list the effects from previous work and suddenly realised that these could be grouped as being of positive and negative benefit.

85. Some groups and individuals make only limited progress as a result of having unsatisfactory attitudes to learning. In one Year 9 lesson, pupils made no attempt to understand the purpose of the experiment and were more interested in talking about other things. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress.
86. The quality of teaching ranges from poor to very good with half the lessons being good or better. In the best lessons teachers gave clear simple explanations and instructions that were easy to follow. Their plans contained clear learning intentions that were shared with pupils so that they understood what they had to learn. Their planning clearly took into account the present level of literacy skills as well as those for the area of science being studied. The resources for the lesson were very well prepared and used. Classroom management of behaviour was good and effective methods of teaching were chosen. In these lessons it was clear that assessment was beginning to guide the planning on a day-to-day basis.
87. Where the teaching was less strong, the learning intentions for the lesson were more generally planned but did not take into account the specific needs of the pupils. These aims were not shared with pupils in a way that they found easy to understand and some of them quickly lost track of the long-term goal for the lesson. The management of behaviour was less effective, which led to a slowing of the pace of the lesson, which in turn led to lower levels of concentration from pupils. This all led to lower levels of learning taking place. In a significant number of lessons opportunities were missed to practise enquiry skills such as predicting, close observation and inferring in planned ways.
88. The science staff work well together and the technicians contribute strongly to the progress that the pupils are making. The head of department provides positive and clear leadership. The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements but not enough use is being made of information and communication technology. The department realises this and is taking steps to remedy the situation. Despite this, the department fulfils its statutory requirements in this area. There has been refurbishment of some of the laboratories that has contributed greatly to the creation of a more stimulating learning environment. Refurbishment of the other laboratories is now needed to improve the quality of the learning environment further. There is a regular system of monitoring, marking and lesson observations that is becoming embedded in the culture of the department which is starting to remove inconsistencies in practice. Overall, the department has made good progress since the full 1996 inspection and satisfactory progress since the 1999 one.

ART AND DESIGN

89. When they enter the school, pupils' understanding of art is well below average and their skills in the subject are undeveloped. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 9 is below the national average although their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils find it difficult to understand perspective and to grasp the concept of three-dimensional study. For example, when using tone to develop optical qualities, the majority of pupils 'flatten' the image to give the impression of pattern rather than shape. Although line is used well to describe geometric form, it fails to create the illusion of space. Blocked colour is used effectively, for example in textile work based on David Hockney's representational Californian landscapes, or abstract cityscapes in the style of Paul Klee. However, observational work involving, for example, more 'realistic' landscape, portrait or animal art images shows pupils' techniques in this area

are underdeveloped. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses tend to be more polarised than normally seen, largely because of strong social and cultural community influences. Key artwork skills and techniques are being soundly developed but their application in broader contexts is more limited.

90. The pupils' results in the GCSE examination for grades A*-C in 2000 were significantly below the national average. Their overall grades at A*-G and higher A*-A passes were also below the national average. These grades go against the good trend in improvement since the last full inspection in 1996. The reasons for these disappointing results are attributable to the lack of continuity in learning as a result of staff changes during the last academic year, which have since been resolved. However the unstable situation led to some disillusionment, particularly amongst boys, who failed to complete the necessary coursework for the examination. Overall, pupils averaged half a grade lower than in their other subjects. Girls achieved nearly all the higher grades. Only one boy gained a grade C.
91. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 11 is mainly in line with the national average. Achievement overall is satisfactory. In lessons seen, the majority of pupils show sound potential to achieve a grade C in the GCSE examination. There are some gifted and talented artists at the school, whose commitment to the subject has ensured portfolios and sketchbooks suitably packed with preparation and ideas for work. Their willingness to experiment is providing them with a range of choices and coursework, which is well completed to bolster their marks prior to the examination. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' technical artistic vocabulary is still underdeveloped which has implications for their critical and analytical studies. It also affects the art history element of their research work.
92. During the week of inspection, two artists in residence were working with pupils on a major project to improve the environment of the school's central quadrangle. This is very good provision, particularly for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. In nearly half the lessons seen, pupils were involved in preparing designs for mosaics based on a 'Paradise Garden' theme. This enabled pupils in all year groups to use their imagination and work to their artistic strengths, which include the use of pattern, shape and colour. Nearly all pupils made good use of Islamic cultural influences in their designs. The choice of mosaic work also supports the pupils' numeracy development through the use of tessellation and symmetry. Both the teacher and visiting artists presented this project well, encouraging the pupils and stimulating their interest. Pupils' attainment in their preparation work for this project was above average and their achievement good. Pupils understand and make good use of artistic styles from their own cultural heritage, but appear reluctant to explore or make use of work, for example from western European traditions. In spite of the encouragement of their teacher, this self-limitation restricts the breadth of their potential to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and examination boards.
93. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants alike. Their individual needs are well understood and good working relationships between staff and pupils often enables them to make satisfactory progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language communicate satisfactorily through visual media. They are often well supported by their classmates, who translate for the teacher when specialist support is not available. There is, consequently, much use of the pupils' home language in lessons. However, older pupils and fluent English speakers switch easily to the language when talking with their teacher.
94. The quality of teaching is good overall, and was at least satisfactory in all the lessons observed. Learning is mainly satisfactory in all year groups. Both teaching and learning have improved since the last full inspection in 1996, when they were mainly unsatisfactory. Lesson planning is now clear, targets for improvement well-defined and there is efficient classroom organisation and management. Teachers communicate well with pupils. One of the teaching's main strengths is a focus on multicultural art. Pupils are encouraged to take from the richness of the past and to re-interpret it through their own inspiration and

imagination. The teaching shows great respect for Islamic art but works hard to provide a balance in order to broaden the pupils' artistic horizons. Sometimes, pupils can politely reject such approaches and this can be self-limiting on the quality of pupils' learning. The teaching encourages the exchange of creative ideas. However, the majority of pupils appeared very self-contained in their work. For understandable cultural reasons, boys and girls do not mix freely and this means that in GCSE classes in particular, the 'spark' of creative pupil interaction is largely missing. This can lead to a certain pedestrian element to the pace of learning, which was also a criticism in the 1996 inspection report. A consequence of this is that the majority of pupils are not prepared to take artistic risks, which prevents them from reaching higher grades.

95. The department is well led and soundly managed and the direction for improvement is clear. A new development plan has been drawn up, but schemes of work are still to be updated in line with the National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 3. New computer equipment has only recently been acquired and the department's contribution to ICT has yet to be planned into lessons.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. When they enter the school, the level of pupils' understanding is low and their skills are undeveloped. Pupils' current attainment by the end of Year 9 is well below the national average but their levels of achievement are satisfactory and sometimes good, particularly in practical work. There are examples of good work in design folders, especially where pupils use a range of graphical skills to illustrate information. The majority of work is, however, weak with a limited range of ideas used to express and develop solutions to design problems. Information and communication technology is insufficiently used at this key stage. Girls usually perform better than boys.
97. Pupils' results in the 2000 GCSE examination were in line with the national average. This represents good progress overall. Girls' results were above the national average but boys' results were well below for A*-C grades. The percentage of pupils reaching grades A*-G was above the national average for both boys and girls. These results show improvement since the last inspection with pupils doing particularly well on courses in textiles and food technology but less well on courses on resistant materials, especially at the higher grades.
98. Pupils' current attainment by the end of Year 11 is in line with the national average in textiles and food technology but is below in resistant materials. Levels of achievement are good, particularly in practical work and design folders which show good use of colour, graphs, charts, commercial material and freehand sketching to show and illustrate information. This was well demonstrated in a textile project investigating different methods of decoration for a child's dress. Where the work is weaker, particularly in resistant materials, it is mainly due to poor line quality, weak graphical skills with a limited range of ideas and poor written work. The use of information and communication technology is insufficient.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and is good at Key Stage 4. In the best lessons, time and resources were used effectively to increase learning. Good examples were seen in a Year 7 lesson where pupils were working well to improve their accuracy, a Year 9 lesson where pupils produced a product design specification for a particular age group, a Year 10 lesson which was looking at cultural influences in dress design and a Year 11 lesson which evaluated a packaging project. The weaker features of teaching are found in lessons where teachers dominate, where pupils are not kept on task or where pupils are not paying full attention to an explanation or demonstration. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory and often good progress, especially in practical work.
100. Pupils' attitudes are usually good and they work well in groups and share workplaces willingly. They are sometimes reluctant to discuss their work and literacy skills, including

written work, are often weak. This improves at Key Stage 4 where pupils are more confident in their various specialisms. The majority of pupils enjoy working in the area and take a pride in their work.

101. Satisfactory procedures for assessment are in place but are not yet strongly linked to target setting. Marking is consistent and comments are helpful and supportive. Some pupils do not understand the levels at which they are working or what is realistic for them to achieve.
102. The curriculum meets statutory requirements at both key stages but there is a weakness in the delivery of the structures and control modules at Key Stage 3 and the use of information and communication technology at both key stages.
103. The department is efficiently led and management structures allow for responsibility to be taken within the department. Areas of policy are monitored and the development plan reviewed annually. The monitoring of teaching and learning and of pupils' work is limited and is not focusing sufficiently on the performance of boys. The teachers work well as a team and are well supported by a technician on a part-time basis.
104. Accommodation is good and offers a stimulating learning environment with good displays of work and key words used in each area to reinforce learning and support literacy development. Resources are adequate overall but some information and communication technology equipment needs upgrading and further hardware required in the textiles and food technology areas.
105. The department has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in examinations has risen, facilities are better and the department is making a stronger contribution to the literacy development of the pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

106. When they enter the school, pupils' understanding is well below average and their skills are undeveloped. By the end of Year 9 pupils' attainment is well below average. The attainment of middle and lower ability pupils is limited by their command of English but that of the more able is in line with national expectations. The attainment of girls is much closer to the standards of achievement expected for their age group than that of boys of the same age. Evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations indicates that the subject challenge provided in Years 7 to 9 begins at too low a level in order to provide access for those whose command of English is still weak.
107. By the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment is well below the national average but has improved over the last three years and is at least satisfactory when measured with their performance at Key Stage 3. Evidence from GCSE folders shows that the limited number of able pupils have responded well to the guidance given. Pupils in the second term of Year 10 are already functioning at the grade E/D boundary. The teacher-led development of information and communication technology research skills is improving pupils' development of coursework.
108. The progress of pupils at Key Stage 3 is intermittent in Years 7 and 8 due to the limitations of time, but improves in Year 9 when a second lesson each week is available. Evidence from pupils' work shows that standards of achievement of many pupils is limited because teachers are trying to cover too much geography in the time available. The pupils' progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory because they are benefiting from teachers' well-judged guidance on how to write in the required examination style.
109. The department currently does not teach the statutory requirements for physical geography and subject based information and communication technology because of the limited access

it has to the appropriate facilities. Schemes of work do not show that the department is covering the complete range of key geographical experiences and skills.

110. All of the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory and some lessons were good or better. Some of the best lessons seen made strong connections to the world of work, notably those focused on GCSE coursework.
111. The qualities of pupils' responses are satisfactory from middle and higher ability pupils. In a Year 10 lower ability group, pupils on a Certificate of Achievement course produced simple, accurate responses to very well focused teacher guidance. Lower ability pupils in Year 9 make sound comparisons and offer basic explanations when provided with well structured questions. The impact of good teaching upon pupils' attainment is always positive. High quality teacher questioning in Years 8, 9 and 10 is raising standards. The impact of teaching on pupils' learning was noticeably strong where well-structured tasks were appropriately resourced. Knowledgeable teacher exposition and clarity of explanation were common features of the good lessons.
112. The subject has made good progress since the 1996 full inspection. GCSE results show an improving trend and the Certificate of Achievement is used appropriately. Teaching and planning have improved, learning objectives are consistently shared and good work is in progress on assessment and to strengthen subject-based literacy and oracy.

HISTORY

113. When they enter the school, pupils' understanding is well below average and their skills are undeveloped. Pupils' performance in history throughout the school is below the national average, but their achievement is better than that in most subjects. The standard of pupils at the end of Year 9 is below national expectation, but this must be seen in the context that pupils in Year 7 entering the school have a lower than expected standard of historical knowledge, skills and understanding. They tend to make instant decisions without reference to the full picture contained in the available evidence and so hamper their historical understanding. By Year 9, the most able pupils can explain the reasons for, and importance of, the attitudes of people in the past. They can compare historical sources in order to find out about aspects of the past. The majority of pupils have good overview of the periods they have studied, but still tend to believe what they see in writing rather than question its accuracy in relation to the circumstances in which it was written. Pupils with special educational needs can describe and tell the story of the issues they are studying but their understanding of their importance is weak. Almost all pupils understand by Year 9 that the past is more complex than they believed it to be at the start of Year 7. The most able pupils are working more independently now than were seen at the time of the last inspection but the majority of pupils are still heavily dependent on the guidance of teachers.
114. At the end of Year 11, pupils are achieving below the national average, although results for the small number of GCSE pupils are above national average, which is an improvement since the last full inspection in 1996. The pupils' attainment in history is above their average results in all subjects. Pupils taking the Certificate of Achievement are also working at levels which are above the standards expected for their ability.
115. There is a very wide spread of attainment in Years 10 and 11, with the pupils entered for the GCSE examination working at high levels in relation to the national average. By Year 11, the most able can use historical evidence to explain the causes and results of events and attitudes. They use relevant detail to support their statements. They understand the place of individual issues in the whole of a topic. The majority of pupils know about the topics and issues they are studying and can talk about the events or people they have studied, but have difficulty finding links between circumstances and events. Most of them understand that people in the past often had varying points of view, but have difficulty linking these disagreements to different circumstances. Pupils with special educational needs and those

who are beginning to learn English need and receive considerable help in their study of the sources of historical evidence. Some pupils have a high level of historical understanding but because of late entry to the school, or absence of considerable length, are unable to gain sufficient knowledge of the content of units of work that they have missed. The greatest improvement is therefore in the performance of the most able since the time of the last inspection in 1996.

116. All pupils achieve well in their study of history, making good progress in their knowledge and understanding and performing well in relation to their other subjects. The more able pupils also develop their skill in evaluating historical evidence.
117. Throughout the school teaching of history is good, and often very good. Teachers have good knowledge of the periods and topics that they are covering, combined with expert knowledge of the best means of developing the pupils' learning. As at the time of the last inspection, they use a wide range of strategies to maintain pupils' interest, including group and whole-class discussion, role play and very effective use of cartoons and video. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in that all instructions seen were clear. Teachers plan lessons deliberately to maintain pupils' interest by varying the activities and setting a series of short tasks that succeed together in developing pupils' understanding. Their relationship with all pupils is good, and often very good, so that they can impart enthusiasm for a topic to almost all of the class. Resources are well chosen to match the literacy and understanding of the pupils and to appeal to their interests. The support staff who work in the history department work closely along with the teachers to improve the learning of their pupils. Teachers make pupils aware of the aims of the lesson. They ensure that pupils know how well they have attained and what they need to do in terms of history in order to improve. They have developed further the good practice in feedback to pupils on their performance. The classwork and homework that they set work together to develop the pupils' historical knowledge. The department organises relevant visits to support learning in the Key Stage 4 course.
118. The department is well led with a good team who work in close co-operation to ensure that the pupils' experience is consistently positive. The scheme of work is well designed to be relevant to the pupils while both widening their perspectives and celebrating their culture and beliefs. Over-long double lessons criticised in the last inspection have been phased out. Lessons in history make a strong contribution to the development of literacy but are not developing numeracy to the same extent. There is occasional informal use of ICT in a few history lessons but the department is not meeting its obligation to use ICT to enhance the learning of all pupils. In every respect, the teaching of history is maintaining the high standards seen at the last inspection and has improved in trying to develop the independence of the more able pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

119. When they enter the school, pupils' understanding is well below average and their skills are undeveloped. Pupils' overall attainment in ICT throughout the school is below the national average, but is improving. By the end of Year 9, pupils work below national expectations with insufficient sense of the intended audience when they make presentations about themselves. They have, nevertheless, made satisfactory gains in ICT capability since Year 7, as their work on entry to the school was also below national expectations.
120. At the end of Year 11 the standard of ICT capability is below the national average. In 2000, results in the GCSE examinations were well below the national average in both the full and short courses. In the short course, however, pupils performed well in relation to their ability in other subjects. The majority of pupils taking external examinations in ICT this year have been entered for the Certificate of Achievement, in which they are performing at levels appropriate to their ability. The attainment of some more able pupils in Year 11 is lower than expected as they experience ICT only through its use in other subjects, which is inadequate,

except for English, mathematics and science in which coverage meets statutory requirements.

121. Attainment in ICT is improving throughout the school. For example, standards in the present Year 10 are higher than in Year 11 because of the improved access to ICT that has become possible recently. The range of such experience is still narrow, mainly in use of the Internet and word-processing, although pupils do show a wider range of skills in mathematics and science where they use a spreadsheet to explore models and data-loggers to measure and record physical variables. Year 10 pupils, however, all follow at least a basic course that provides them with skills and understanding needed for the application of ICT in other contexts. They are therefore more confident and independent in their use of ICT. The most able Year 11 pupils who study ICT at GCSE are working at levels above those of last year's examination results. They can select and use appropriate software for particular purposes, giving clear and logical explanations for their choice of one and rejection of others. As part of the same pattern throughout the school, pupils in Year 7 are now entering the school with a higher level of basic knowledge and capability than that of the present Year 9, with the majority able to create and amend a poster with a range of fonts and imported visual effects.
122. Pupils throughout the school are now familiar with the use of the Internet to retrieve information, using it at nationally expected levels both independently and when directed to do so for a variety of purposes. They have satisfactory basic skills in communicating ideas in a variety of forms, using visual images retrieved from Internet to enhance the appearance of their work. When they design a presentation, however, the majority make decisions at random rather than thinking out valid reasons, sometimes to the extent that further learning is hindered by aimless amendment of their designs. They are also impeded by poor keyboard skills that slow the rate at which they can record information in writing. Year 8 pupils creating procedures to draw shapes on screen had difficulty in remembering the format of commands and were unable to repeat them without retyping them. Some pupils with special educational needs experience problems understanding the principles underpinning the procedures in most ICT applications and pupils for whom English is an additional language need help other than written guidelines. Although more able boys have flair in the use of computers, the best performance is that of able girls, who concentrate on learning and enhancing the issues being taught.
123. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in almost all lessons throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They give a clear indication of the purpose of the lesson, with easily understood instructions enhanced by well produced task sheets and guides. They have established good procedures for behaviour in the computer rooms to ensure both effective learning and safety. As a result, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in almost all lessons. Year 11 teachers effectively manage the very wide range of demands that arise from teaching three different courses to pupils of different abilities in one lesson. All teachers work well in co-operation with support staff who maintain their pupils' learning. As a result, pupils with special educational needs or those whose English is not yet fluent, achieve well when support staff are present, and often when they are not. Teachers now set regular homework that is relevant to the courses followed. They give particular attention to the development of pupils' literacy, in particular by ensuring that pupils understand and can use important terms and that they always read and amend materials that they take from the Internet. They use databases, spreadsheets and control software to improve pupils' knowledge and skill with number. Almost all pupils enjoy ICT lessons and a large number come back to the computer club provided by the co-ordinator for after-school sessions. More able pupils, especially girls, are eager to help others in class. Most pupils want to produce the best possible work.
124. In the minority of classes where there are problems, teachers have not given sufficient attention to the capability of the pupils, for example using inappropriate software for less able pupils at that stage in the course, or giving insufficient guidelines to enable the majority of the class to proceed without individual help. In such instances pupils having to wait for

some time to receive necessary help lose interest and concentration, with the result that behaviour is poor.

125. New arrangements for pupils in Year 10 this year have led the department to design a course that meets the needs of the majority of these pupils. Such adaptations have not, however, been as successfully implemented in Years 7-9 where many lessons are pitched below the capability of many of the pupils, with insufficient specific challenge and pace for the most able.
126. Since the time of the last inspection the school, under the guidance of the co-ordinator of ICT, has almost achieved the statutory requirement to use ICT to enhance learning across the National Curriculum. Requirements are met in English, mathematics and science, with some use of ICT in most other subjects and the potential for all to be using it next year. Pupils therefore show more capability in their use of ICT since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that all teachers have sufficient expertise in basic ICT. Although their training is still under way almost all teachers can now use ICT with confidence in their lessons. Teachers are made more confident in ICT classrooms because of the expert assistance of the technician who ensures that learning is not disrupted by computer failure. The school has purchased sufficient high quality new equipment to make it possible for staff to book and use computers either for groups or whole classes. Although the ratio of computers to pupils is still below national average, it is improving and the equipment is now reliable. At the time of the inspection, there were still some issues in that the equipment's electrical testing was out of date and so needed to be attended to as a matter of urgency. There was also no clear written policy or guidelines for the use of the Internet by pupils.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

127. The main focus in modern languages is on French as there was no Urdu specialist on the inspection team. Attainment in the 2000 GCSE French examinations was well below average. Only 13 pupils, about one in eight of the year group, were entered for the short course. Fifteen per cent attained A*-C and 77 per cent attained A*-G which was a slight improvement on recent years. These results reflect a consistent pattern of poor continuity of teaching and learning in French. Long-term absences, a fluctuating provision of supply teachers, an insufficient number of lessons in the curriculum and a lack of specialist teaching in French have all contributed to this unsatisfactory situation.
128. In Urdu, two teachers provide uninterrupted instruction from Year 7 through to GCSE for well over half of the year group. Their time allocation is appropriate. The results at A*-C are considerably better than in most other subjects in the school but still remain below the national average. However, the trend over time is upward. In 2000, about one third of the entry performed well by attaining the top grades of A*/A.
129. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 is well below average in French. The curriculum provides only one hour per week in Year 7 which makes progress over time difficult to sustain. French becomes an option in Years 8 and 9, but because the pupils are not grouped on the basis of ability they require regular and especially skilled specialist teaching if they are to make appropriate headway. This has not been provided in recent years. The unsatisfactory outcomes are clearly evident in all years except in Year 7. Here the French groups have benefited since last September from uninterrupted specialist tuition. Pupils near the end of Year 9 have glaring weaknesses in listening, speaking, reading and writing. One group had not been taught any French in Year 8 and it is common for all groups to have missed substantial amounts of teaching time throughout their school career. Therefore, the great majority of pupils underachieve, irrespective of their abilities. Although progress in class can be satisfactory, progress over time is severely hampered by the lack of continuity and/or lack of sufficient teaching time. This frequently leads to frustration and disaffection as many pupils have not progressed beyond the recognition of single words. They do not know the patterns and structures of French and thus lack the means to express themselves

coherently. They frequently forget most of what they had previously learnt through lack of practice.

130. Attainment near the end of Year 11 is also well below average in French. All the comments already made on poor continuity in earlier years are equally applicable. Indeed, in the current Year 10, no French is taught at all which represents a breach of statutory regulations. The small group of pupils aiming at GCSE in Year 11 are only allocated one timetable hour. This would be insufficient within the standard context; given the recent history of French in this school and the current Year 10 non-provision, it is quite inadequate.
131. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that only a tiny proportion of ambitious, well motivated Year 11 pupils approach the standards required for success in GCSE at higher level grades. They attend extra voluntary lessons after school to try and close the gaps in their knowledge. The great majority cannot understand French spoken at near native speed as their ears have never become attuned to the sounds of French. Speaking is usually limited to very short phrases or single word responses. Reading aloud is not practised and most writing is full of errors with poor progression in many books because lessons did not take place. French pronunciation is not a strong point.
132. With the recent arrival of a temporary specialist teacher, the quality of the teaching in French is now satisfactory, and on occasions, good. French is being established as the standard means of classroom communication although there is still some resistance from older pupils. Younger pupils are beginning to show improvement in comprehension skills. Pupils are encouraged to give full answers in French to build their oral confidence and to help them become familiar with French patterns and structures. Aims and objectives are made clear to pupils which improves teacher/pupil relationships and fosters a more co-operative spirit. Lessons frequently end with a brief discussion on the progress made so that pupils can recognise and measure their learning. Homework arising out of classwork is regularly set and marked quite carefully without undue delay. Thus a much needed continuity is emerging. However, one well-prepared French lesson turned out to be unsatisfactory despite considerable effort by the teacher. A disaffected minority could not stay concentrated and work productively thus distracting the whole class and slowing its progress.
133. Inspectors observed two lessons in Urdu. One was unsatisfactory because the tasks did not match pupil abilities and progress was unnecessarily slow. The other was good because real pace and challenge led to rapid but thorough coverage of the learning materials. Pupils were fluent in Urdu and were keen to be actively involved in the proceedings.
134. The quality of teaching and learning, which was singled out for criticism in both the previous reports, is now showing improvement as is the response of the pupils. A significant majority now participate readily and show more interest. French has long been neglected in this school. The time dedicated to French is not consistent nor adequate over time, there are no regular trips to France, the e-mail contact with a French school is in its infancy and the staffing has lacked stability. Teaching must receive wholehearted school support in all aspects of the work, so that teachers feel confident in being fully accountable and responsible for the subject, both academically and administratively.

MUSIC

135. *There is no curriculum provision for music. Despite advertising for a teacher, the school has been unable to make an appointment. The local education authority has not been able to help the school with class music or instrumental tuition. There are adequate keyboards and orchestral and percussion instruments together with a computer and multi-track recorder, although a new incumbent will need to review and supplement this provision.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Overall standards of pupil attainment in physical education are below average at both key stages and remain similar to the standards observed at the time of the 1996 inspection. The attainment of boys is generally higher than that of girls, particularly by the end of Year 11. At both key stages some individual pupils achieve above average standards. One boy was recently invited to take part in a cricket tour with Warwickshire County Cricket Club. Another pupil was identified as having made an outstanding contribution in outdoor and adventurous activities whilst on a recent residential course. The school offered physical education as a short course (games) at GCSE level for the first time last year. Eight of the eleven boys who were entered obtained pass grades between C and G.
137. The achievement of pupils at both key stages is at least satisfactory. Starting from a very low level of ability, pupils make progress as they move through the school. For example, progress was good in a boys' gymnastics lesson in Year 7. A group of Year 10 boys also progressed well in an introductory judo lesson taught by a visiting instructor. Pupils generally have a good understanding of the need to warm-up correctly and of the safety aspects associated with the various activities. Pupils handle mats and other items of equipment with care. In Year 7 most pupils are able to perform simple balances on the floor showing good body tension. Year 10 pupils are able to break their falls correctly and to perform a basic throw and hold in judo. Basketball skills among girls are variable by the end of Year 9. The more able can pass accurately over a short distance and dribble the ball with control during practice sessions. They are less effective when trying to apply these skills in competitive situations.
138. Teaching in physical education is at least satisfactory and in some lessons teaching is good. The more challenging lessons are well organised and are conducted at a good pace. Class management is effective and relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive. In one Year 7 class, all the boys improved their skills because the lesson was well structured and it was delivered with good humour. Girls in Year 7, who were experiencing some difficulties in a lesson involving ball skills, were helped and supported effectively by their teacher and so gained encouragement and confidence. Most pupils clearly enjoy physical education. Levels of participation are generally good and pupils behave well. Whilst they are invited to plan aspects of their own work in some lessons, there are currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to undertake constructive and guided evaluation.
139. Both members of the department are committed to providing a good range of extra-curricular activities at lunch-times and after school. These activities also include visits to various matches as well as a range of fixtures in football, netball, rounders, cricket and basketball. The extent to which pupils support the activities that are held in school is unpredictable. During the inspection three of the planned clubs did not take place because pupils did not attend. Boys are generally more responsive than girls to the provision offered.
140. The curriculum, which includes swimming for pupils in Year 7, meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils in Year 10 have an opportunity to attend an outdoor activities residential course at Ogwen Cottage in Wales. The amount of time allocated for physical education is not consistent across all year groups. In Years 7 and 9, pupils have two periods per week but this is reduced to just one in Years 8, 10 and 11. This has a detrimental effect on the standards that pupils attain. Although an assessment system is now in place, it does not take into account the new level descriptors at Key Stage 3, nor is it currently used to modify curriculum planning. Curriculum links with the feeder primary schools are poor.
141. Since the last inspection, the GCSE short course has been introduced and links with local sports clubs have been considerably strengthened. As a result, a number of specialist coaches visit the school during the course of the year. The school plays a number of football and rounders matches against other schools but the lack of a suitable field means that all

games have to be played away from home. The delivery of athletics is also impeded by inadequate outdoor provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. Overall, the attainment of pupils is below national expectations. However, there are variations at both key stages. By the end of Year 9, the overall attainment of pupils is below average. Attainment of pupils in Years 7 and 8 is close to national expectations but there is a dip in the attainment of pupils in Year 9 due to the significant reduction in time given to the study of religious education. In particular, most pupils lack the skills and understanding to evaluate the teachings of religion on issues of belief and value, such as attitudes to violence.
143. By the end of Year 11, overall attainment is in line with expectations. Over half of the pupils were entered for Islamic Studies Short Course GCSE examinations last year and results were above national averages: 69 per cent of pupils entered gained A*-C grades and 94 per cent gained A*-G grades. Most pupils studying for GCSE in the current Key Stage 4 are reaching similar standards. Where pupils are not being entered for examination in religious education, standards are lower and motivation is weak. The school has plans to introduce the Certificate of Achievement for these pupils.
144. As pupils move up through the school, they achieve well and make progress in most lessons. The inconsistency in the Year 9 curriculum means that progress is restricted for pupils in some classes. Where religious education is provided, pupils show an increasing maturity and express their own ideas and opinions well. In a minority of classes at Key Stage 4, pupils do not make satisfactory progress in their ability to explain and reason.
145. The achievement of girls is generally better than that of boys at both key stages. Both higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their ability. The language development needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory overall and good in those lessons where specific support is given by the class teacher.
146. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory, but there are significant inconsistencies. Teaching ranges from poor to very good, although the majority of teaching is good or very good. Features of the best teaching include: well defined objectives for lessons; very good subject knowledge; interesting and varied activities that motivate pupils; very good relationships with and management of pupils and the regular setting of homework. A strong feature of the best lessons is the focus on speaking and listening skills. The main features of the weakest teaching include not meeting the lesson objectives, the use of inappropriate resources and difficulties with the management of pupils. Whilst pupils' books are marked regularly, there is not as yet in the department, a clear understanding of the standards required in the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus and how to assess pupils' progress in relation to them.
147. Pupils learn about a range of religious beliefs and practices in Key Stage 3. Their knowledge of key facts about religious leaders and sacred writings develops well in Years 7 and 8. They understand some reasons why people express their faith in the clothes they wear and in symbolic actions. They show respect for the beliefs and values of others. The break in continuity in Year 9 prevents their skills developing to a more mature level. For example, not all pupils get the opportunity to question and discuss issues related to personal belief and behaviour.
148. The curriculum has been developed recently so that it is more in line with the requirements of the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. It is broad and balanced whilst taking account of the religious backgrounds of the pupils. The department is investigating links with primary schools and the local education authority to ensure that pupils build on their learning at Key Stage 2.

149. The teacher newly appointed to be in charge of religious education has already made improvements to the work of the department. High standards are being set and the teacher has a clear vision for the future of religious education in the school. The school has not addressed the two major issues of inconsistency in religious education: the inadequate allocation of time in Year 9 and the use of non-specialist staff to teach the subject at both key stages. These two factors have a negative impact on standards and restrict the potential of the subject.
150. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are generally satisfactory but there is still only a narrow range of textbooks at Key Stage 3. The curriculum does not feature visits to places of worship and does not apply any use of information and communication technology. Religious education has improved since the last inspection and particularly in recent months. Most notable of the improvements are: the introduction of a more broad and balanced curriculum; the new methods of teaching that now address the different learning needs of pupils in most classes; the greater range of resources such as artefacts and CD-Roms and the standards being achieved at Key Stage 4 by the introduction of GCSE Islamic Studies.