

INSPECTION REPORT

CAMPION CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104707

Headteacher: Mr E. Wallace

Reporting inspector: Michael Merchant
27368

Dates of inspection: 10 – 15 September 2001

Inspection number: 10032

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of schools:	Catholic High School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 17 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Peter Sibert
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
27368	Michael Merchant	<i>Registered Inspector</i>		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The schools results and pupils' and students' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What the school should do to improve further.
9777	David Heath	<i>Lay Inspector</i>		How high are standards; Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4412	Eugene McGuigan	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Design and technology.	
30518	Michael Johnson	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Art.	
19056	Graham Leech	<i>Team Inspector</i>	English. Drama.	
13155	John Dixon	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages.	
30215	Helen Feasey	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Geography.	
22042	John Challands	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Physical education.	
24127	Jim Kidd	<i>Team Inspector</i>	History.	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
15948	David Evans	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Science.	
8806	Martin Flatman	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Music.	
23082	Graham Loach	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Mathematics.	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Campion High is a much smaller than average comprehensive school, with 574 pupils aged 11 to 17. At the time of the last inspection there were 622 pupils, but numbers have since fallen. Attainment on entry is very low compared to the national average. 74 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Two thirds of all pupils are on the schools' register of special education needs, which is also above the national average. The school draws its pupils from a wide geographic area, but mainly from two wards that are characterised by high density, overcrowded housing. The percentage of unemployment and single parent families is high, and the index of local deprivation places these wards amongst the lowest nationally. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of white UK heritage, though 4.5 per cent are black and 0.5 per cent Chinese. There is a very small number of refugees. The school is involved in a large number of nationally funded programmes to raise achievement and promote inclusion such as 'Schools in Exceptionally Challenging Circumstances'.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has many strengths and is well placed to move into its next phase of development. It is effective at meeting the needs of its pupils because it provides security, stability and wide ranging support, together with good teaching. Leadership and management are very good. Effective learning and good behaviour are achieved almost all the time. Standards are very low compared to national averages but they are slowly improving. They are better for those who attend regularly from Year 7. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their very low standards on entry. The school has laid the foundations for further academic success.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Very good leadership and management. The headteacher, deputy heads and senior teachers, supported by a supportive governing body all work effectively.
- Teaching is good in over two thirds of lessons, including a third that is very good or excellent. Staff are strongly committed to the school and pupils are well supported and cared for.
- The atmosphere is welcoming, friendly and supportive. Effective systems are in place to encourage good behaviour and high social standards.
- The school works very well with parents to support their children's education.
- Pupil's personal development is excellent and relationships are very good.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Results in national tests and GCSE examinations are very low compared with national averages.
- Attendance is well below average.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to help teachers plan lessons and identify pupils who are in danger of under achieving.
- A stronger emphasis is needed on academic success for all.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996. The school is doing a great deal to raise standards through its active involvement in national initiatives. It has made a priority of raising standards in speaking, reading and writing. This has been written into all subject policies as a target and made a major emphasis of teaching in classes, small groups, and additional summer schools.

Since the last inspection, the quality and styles of teaching have improved. This wider range of interesting and varied teaching has motivated pupils to learn and so the standard of work seen is better than test results indicate. Several new teachers are helping to raise standards, for example in drama. There are examples of excellent or very good teaching in English mathematics, science, French, geography, history, music, and physical education.

The school has developed very good arrangements to cater for the many pupils who have special educational needs. The school makes very good use of its classroom assistants and learning mentors. The senior management team is beginning to have a very positive impact in improving attainment. However, the additional responsibilities falling on some staff means that they are not always able to meet their other management duties in full.

The school produces much information about how well its' pupils are doing. This serves the school well when, for instance setting targets for attainment. There is still much to do, however, in using this information to allow subjects to judge their performance and hence to further improve.

The school does everything it can to get pupils into school and to keep them there. It has become fully involved in initiatives such as 'Excellence in Cities' and 'Schools in Exceptionally Challenging Circumstances'. Attendance though remains stubbornly well below the national average and is a serious barrier to raising attainment. These initiatives have spurred the school on to introduce a more interesting curriculum, for instance GNVQs, and this is helping to raise standards.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11, 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*	E*

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

The school's performance in external examinations has been in the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally for the last three years.

These results are very low when compared with schools nationally but are improving in line with the national trend. This improvement is faster at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. In 2000, the school did not meet its' very challenging targets for attaining five or more grade Cs at GCSE. Predictions made on the basis of tests taken when pupils join the school, show those gaining five or more higher GCSE grades was higher than expected. Pupils join the school with very low levels of attainment and all make satisfactory progress over time. Those who attend regularly often make good and very good progress. Work seen during the inspection indicates standards have improved over the last two years. Very good leadership, imaginative and stimulating teaching and the introduction of new subjects into the curriculum have contributed to this improvement.

In work seen during the inspection in English, standards of attainment by the age of 16 were below those expected nationally. In mathematics and science, standards are well below the national average at age 16.

In work seen in other subjects at the end of Key Stage 4, standards are in line with those expected in art and physical education. In all other subjects, standards are below those expected.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and those that attend regularly make good progress. Those with special education needs are well supported so that they too make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. Those with particular learning, attendance or behaviour problems respond well to the support given to help them cope.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils work hard In most lessons and are usually co-operative and kind to each other.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between all in the school reflect its Catholic ethos and shared sense of values.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance remains well below the national average even though the school works hard to improve it. Absence is holding back the school's drive to raise standards.

Pupils have continued to respond well to the school's attempts to improve behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good or very good in lessons, especially when the teaching is of high standard. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and the school is an orderly environment throughout the school day. Relationship between pupils and teachers are very strong. There were no instances of bullying witnessed during the inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teaching is satisfactory or better in the great majority of lessons. It is good or better in about one third of lessons and the amount of unsatisfactory teaching is very small. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

The quality of teaching of English is good at Key Stage 3 and 4 and so pupils' learn well. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They help boys to learn through their good planning and imaginative and varied activities. These invariably interest, stimulate and challenge pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well. Where support is provided in lessons teaching and learning is often very good. Good use is made of individual education plans in most lessons

Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory. Teachers prepare their lessons carefully and have good classroom management. Good teaching occurs where teachers expect much of the boys. Teaching is less successful where expectations are low and the level of work provided does not challenge them.

Teaching in science is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is good and they have good knowledge of science. Marking is not consistent enough and teachers sometimes set tasks that are not closely based on previous learning. As a result, lessons are sometimes too difficult and sometimes too easy for some pupils. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for investigative work.

Teaching is good at both key stages in art, history and physical education. It is very good in French in Key Stage 4. The teaching of drama is excellent. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects.

The overall quality of learning matches the quality of teaching. The poor attendance of a large minority of boys slows their progress. Teachers generally know their subjects well and the work in lessons is well matched to pupils' needs. Most teachers use a variety of interesting methods. Teachers know their pupils well and design activities that stimulate and challenge them to make an effort. This maintains pupils' interest and motivation. The quality of day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory.

In a few lessons, teachers' planning does not take into account how difficult the subject is, and there is a weak match between the work pupils are asked to do and national curriculum levels. There is a lack of challenge in some mathematics classes. On occasion, assessment is not well linked to national curriculum levels.

Pupils' standards in literacy are low but their level of achievement by age 16 is satisfactory given their low standards when they enter the school are satisfactory overall. The school has made good progress in ensuring that all subjects help boys to improve their reading, writing and speaking skills.

Standards of numeracy are also low. The mathematics department is providing whole school leadership in the development of the school numeracy policy, which although effective within mathematics, has yet to be fully embraced by other departments.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Despite strengths in careers and Personal, Health and Social Education, there has been too little vocational education
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. A very well organised team and many learning support assistants all work very well together to provide pupils with the right care and support
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Most pupils have a reasonable command of English and their needs are catered for appropriately in lessons and through targeted withdrawal work with specialist teachers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. The school's Catholic ethos permeates all of its' work. Of particular strength is the way in which spirituality is planned in nearly all subjects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for monitoring personal development are very good, but the school has yet to make full use of assessment information to move pupils on.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and the school is working hard to make its curriculum at Key Stage 4 more relevant to the needs of its pupils. The school cares very well for all its pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher, deputy heads and senior teachers, supported by an effective governing body all work hard to push the school forward.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors know exactly what needs to be improved and are very effective in helping the school to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning and the school produces much data, which is beginning to be used to help it see how well it is doing.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of the money available to it.

The head teacher provides inspirational leadership. There is a good match of teachers to the subjects they teach, and resources and accommodation overall are satisfactory. The very clear vision of the head and governors is shared by staff, and there is a genuine commitment by all to do the best for the school's pupils. The school takes good care to ensure that its efforts and funds are aimed at improving standards of education

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school encourages pupils to do their best.• It is approachable.• The school helps boys to become mature and responsible.• The school is well led.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents feel that homework is irregular and inconsistent.• Parents would like to better GCSE results

The inspection team agreed with all of the points raised by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 2000 were well below the national average in English and very low in mathematics and science. Taking all three core subjects together, results were very low compared to the national average for all schools. Direct observation of pupils' work shows a strong improvement in standards and achievement has been much better than expected. This is a result of the considerable work the school has done to change approaches to teaching and the investment it has made in raising standards of literacy. Improvement has been fastest in English. Comparisons with test results from when pupils enter the school show that the majority of pupils do at least as well as they should in Key Stage 3. Those who attend regularly gain results in excess of those predicted of them by tests taken when they enter school.

2. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, the proportions of pupils obtaining five or more grades in the A* to C range and five or more grades A* to G were very low compared to national averages. The school's average total GCSE points score per pupil has risen in line with the national average. The school has not met its own ambitious targets, but it has exceeded those based on tests taken by pupils when they enter school.

3. At grades A* to C in 2000, results were close to the national average in English Literature at nearly 52 per cent. French was just below the national average at 32 per cent. All other subjects were below the national average, and mathematics, science and design technology were very low. Results at A* to G were above average in English Literature and French. They were close to the national average in history but below average in art, science, geography and English language. In mathematics, results were well below average. They were very low in design and technology (DT).

4. Pupils' best overall results, compared to their attainment in other subjects, were in English literature, French and English language. Their poorest results were in science, mathematics and design technology.

5. In work seen during the inspection in English, standards attained by pupils by the age of fourteen were generally below those expected nationally. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are better than their skills in reading and writing. Pupils are uninhibited speakers who share ideas freely in pair work and contribute to class discussions. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 contributed articulately to the preparation of a newspaper story using some of the vocabulary of journalism. Though lower attaining pupils respond readily to teachers' questions, their responses are brief and often colloquial. Pupils' listening skills are generally less developed than their speaking skills, and they sometimes call out answers before considering questions fully.

6. Standards seen during the inspection in the work of pupils by the age of sixteen were below those expected nationally. Standards of speaking and listening are satisfactory overall. Pupils speak quite freely, though only those with higher attainment can move beyond the limitations of their everyday vocabulary. Many pupils have difficulty in maintaining their concentration and listening carefully, however, and useful class discussion comes about through good teacher control. Standards of reading overall are below national expectations. Pupils study a good range of quite demanding

texts but in general need the support of teachers and worksheets to help them understand.

7. Pupils' standards in literacy are low but their level of achievement by age 16 is satisfactory given their low standards when they enter the school are satisfactory overall. The school has made good progress in ensuring that all subjects help boys to improve their reading, writing and speaking skills. There has been a very good response to the Key Issue in the last inspection report to continue and enhance the reading development programme. A school literacy coordinator has been appointed, together with two classroom assistants with particular responsibility for literacy and the use of the resource centre. A home-school reading partnership has been established. Literacy practice in subjects across the curriculum has been carefully tracked. In art, the study of art history significantly develops pupils' vocabulary. The school's reading test results show significant improvements in pupils' reading, confirmed by the steadily improving Key Stage 3 test results in English.

8. In work seen during the inspection in mathematics, attainment up to the age of 14 is well below national expectations, although higher than that indicated by the external examination results. Attainment at age 16 is also well below national averages. The introduction of the national numeracy strategy is having a positive effect in raising standards across Years 7, 8 and 9. Achievement within the key stage is satisfactory overall, with the majority of pupils demonstrating clear progress in lessons. There is a lack of progress where teachers' expectations are low and where low standards of presentation are accepted. This is particularly noticeable in some of the work completed by pupils with special educational needs.

9. Standards of numeracy are also low. The mathematics department is providing whole school leadership in the development of the school numeracy policy, which although effective within mathematics, has yet to be fully embraced by other departments. The summer numeracy school is well established, with associated materials and teaching strategies being incorporated into the departmental scheme of work. Display material in each of the mathematics rooms is attractive, with items such as the number line prominently displayed and clearly linked to the raising of numeracy levels. All mathematics lessons begin with a brief mental arithmetic session, as required by the numeracy strategy. These sessions are enthusiastically received by the majority of pupils. The numeracy coordinator consulted with other subject departments before producing a policy document and a series of workbooks designed to raise levels of numeracy. These workbooks are available for use by all departments but there has been very little take-up.

10. The application of numeracy skills is, however, evident within other subject areas. Although the science department has concerns regarding the low levels of numeracy, pupils are able to measure, weigh and evaluate results. In history, pupils compare income and expenditure during the reign of Louis XVI. In art, pupils display an understanding of scale and perspective, and in geography they are able to present and interpret statistical diagrams. Pupils' ability to use mathematics to help solve scientific problems is unsatisfactory. Few can insert data into formulae to find physical quantities or use correct units in their answers. The construction of graphs is underdeveloped. The teachers are aware that improved teaching of numeracy will help pupils achieve higher standards.

11. Attainment in science is well below average in lessons seen in Key Stage 3. Pupils are developing understanding of the movement of planets around the Sun. They can describe the appearance of rocks and the properties that show how they are formed. They are aware of the functions of the lungs and the effects of smoking. Work in exercise books shows that pupils achieve less well than expected. The challenge provided is not high enough, particularly in the area of scientific enquiry. This below average work contributes to the unsatisfactory performance in the national tests at age 14. Much of the work observed in lessons in Years 10 and 11 and in pupils' written work is well below average. The good work by teachers to help develop literacy skills enables pupils to read, learn and know about the difficult words they will encounter. Pupils find it difficult to use what they know to solve problems or answer questions. For example, whilst they are aware of the words 'enzymes' and 'particles', they cannot explain what they do in a reaction. This lack of understanding contributes to their low standards at GCSE. Attainment is undermined by pupils' absences, lateness to lessons and, in the case of those studying double award science, insufficient time on the curriculum to fully cover the syllabus.

12. In work seen during the inspection in the remaining subjects, standards achieved by pupils at age 14 are well below the level expected in design technology. It is below in geography, history, information technology, and French. In physical education, standards are in line with those expected. By age 16, standards are in line with those expected in art and French, physical education and music. In design technology they are well below average. In information technology, history, geography and art, standards seen in lessons are close to those expected.

13. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Their progress is often good or very good when supported in class by teaching assistants or by the special educational needs co-ordinator special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Progress is also often very good when they are withdrawn from lessons to receive extra support for literacy. The success of the literacy initiative in school has made a significant impact on the progress of pupils with special educational needs.

14. The school does well for its boys. They enter the school with very low standards of attainment. 74 per cent are eligible for free school meals and two thirds are on the register of special education needs. Many of them join the school mid-way through their secondary education and leave before completing it. This is an important factor in explaining the low level of attainment seen in tests and examination results. By the end of Key Stage 3, as a result of good teaching, most have made satisfactory progress. Careful analysis of the test results of individual pupils by the school in comparison to what they knew, understood and could do when they entered the school shows that those who attend regularly and stay in the school from year 7 to 11 make good and sometimes very good progress. This pattern of satisfactory achievement overall and good progress by those who attend well continues into Key Stage 4. Last years' results exceeded those predicted by the tests that pupils took when they entered the school. Very high rates of absenteeism and poor punctuality remain brakes on the further improvement of achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' behaviour is good. Since the last inspection, pupils have continued to respond well to the school's attempts to improve behaviour. A substantial majority of parents agree that their children like attending the school. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good or very good in lessons, especially when the teaching is of a high standard. The wide range of extra-curricular activities succeeds in increasing pupils' interest, and activities such as the drama productions make an important contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and the school is an orderly environment throughout the school day. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very strong, providing an important foundation for effective teaching and learning. There were no instances of bullying witnessed during the inspection, and pupils agree that the school takes effective action if there are any concerns. There were no permanent exclusions in the last school year, and the fixed period exclusions showed a substantial decrease from the previous years.

16. The overwhelming majority of pupils are pleasant, friendly and good-humoured as a consequence of good management. In mathematics, for example, relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and built upon trust, respect and good humour. Pupils respond well to the clear and consistent application of the code of conduct that is prominently displayed in classrooms.

17. Where expectations are high, pupils behave well, respond with enthusiasm and willingly contribute to a class discussion. Occasional poor behaviour arises when pupils are insufficiently challenged; work is repetitive or pitched at an inappropriate level.

18. Attendance at the school has shown a gradual improvement since the last inspection, but it is still low in comparison with other schools. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance and punctuality, but a number of pupils are late for lessons at the start of the day. Although attitudes to school are good, the long distance many pupils have to travel to school leads to them sometimes being late for lessons. Additionally, pressure from their peers and severe problems at home sometimes causes pupils to miss school. This interruption of learning causes these pupils to forget what was previously learned and slows their progress.

19. Most pupils with special educational needs are confident they will succeed. Their attitude to work is enthusiastic and they have good relationships with other pupils and with their teachers.

20. All boys valued the learning opportunities provided through the many after school extra-curricular activities. Boys interviewed in Years 8 and 9 enjoyed a variety of activities including art, drama, and music, PE, ICT. They liked to do lots of different and interesting activities that changed regularly. All positively enjoyed school and the majority of their lessons because the teachers made them interesting.

21. Boys interviewed in Year 10 praised the headteacher's vision, believing that he wanted them all to do well. They praised the rewards system and knew why and how it motivated them. The boys felt that teachers and classroom assistants kept them informed about their progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons. It is good in 35 per cent, very good in 29 per cent and excellent in 4 per cent. It is unsatisfactory in 6 per cent of lessons. Well-planned teaching that motivates pupils and stimulates learning is a key feature in the majority of lessons. Thorough planning identifies clearly the learning objectives of lessons, which are shared effectively with pupils so that they understand what is expected of them. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

23. At Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons. It is good in 37 per cent and very good in 25 per cent. 5 per cent of teaching is excellent. Teaching is less than satisfactory in 5 per cent of lessons and no poor teaching was seen. The quality of teaching is good in English, art, history, geography, and information technology, French, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. Teaching of drama is excellent.

24. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons; good in 31 per cent and very good in 33 per cent. The quality of teaching is less than satisfactory in 7 per cent of lessons and no poor teaching was seen. The quality of teaching is very good in French. It is satisfactory in mathematics, science, geography and information technology and good in all other subjects.

25. The 6 per cent of teaching that was unsatisfactory overall was limited to an occasional lesson in mathematics, science and geography across the school.

26. The overall quality of learning matches the quality of teaching, but pupils too often do not know clearly enough what they need to do to improve. The poor attendance of a large minority of boys limits their progress. However, pupils are making good progress in English, art and history, supported by good assessment practice. Departments across the school provide revision classes that enhance learning opportunities. In Key Stage 4, pupils are encouraged to develop independent learning skills, but pupils' lack of confidence in working with numbers is holding back progress in science. This is also true of other subjects that have a high number content, such as geography. The school is attempting to improve the situation through the introduction of a whole-school numeracy policy, but it is too early for this to have had a marked impact on standards of numeracy. There is consistency in the way that teachers tackle reading and writing in lessons. Opportunities for reading aloud are frequent in most subjects. Teachers pay full attention to the development of writing, with the result that standards of spelling and presentation are improving. For example, in science and French, good standards are achieved. Some teachers make effective use of information and communication technology to support learning on a regular basis, for example in history. In a Year 11 history lesson, the teachers' use of a computer programme to illustrate the effects of hyperinflation in Germany stunned the pupils and left a deep impression on them. In mathematics, the teachers' use of 'Powerpoint' and teacher-designed software greatly increased pupils' understanding of how to round numbers to any given decimal place.

27. Teachers know their subjects well. This results in a confident approach in the classroom, which helps to enthuse pupils and to involve them in their learning. This is a particular strength in English, art, drama, geography, history, ICT and physical education. In drama, for instance, pupils in Year 7 are already highly motivated by the

teacher, though they have only just arrived at the school. They are enthusiastic and willing to take part in school productions. In a Year 8 geography lesson, the knowledge and enthusiastic approach of the teacher meant that pupils rapidly understood how processes of erosion shape the landscape. Work and the pace of lessons are well matched to pupils' needs throughout the school, with the exception of mathematics where there is not enough challenge for lower attaining boys. In science, the lack of opportunities for routine investigation work holds back learning.

28. The great majority of teachers use a variety of interesting methods to ensure that pupils behave well and concentrate, so that they get the most out of lessons. Teachers know their pupils well. Relationships are good, which creates a positive approach to learning. Most teachers identify targets in each lesson and develop appropriate activities to meet them. These activities more often than not stimulate pupils and challenge them to make an effort. This was well seen in a Year 11 English lesson. Pupils' understanding of the play 'Julius Caesar' was enriched by watching a video, following a class task sheet, working in pairs to sequence the text, and participating in class discussion. There are occasional lapses of behaviour, usually when lesson planning does not provide sufficient variety to maintain pupils' interest and motivation, and learning is affected as a result. However, behaviour was good in most lessons seen during the inspection. In a minority of lessons, planning by teachers does not take into account the degree of difficulty of the subject matter, and there is a weak match between the work pupils are asked to do and national curriculum levels. This is particularly true of science.

29. The quality of day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. In art, well-constructed assessments make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. In English and science, however, assessment is not sufficiently well linked to national curriculum levels. Pupils do not always know their own standards of achievement and what they could do to improve.

30. The teaching of pupils with special education needs is good across the curriculum. In English, planning is very good and the curriculum has been modified for these pupils at both key stages. Special resources are used and texts abridged. Where support is provided in lessons, teaching and learning are often very good, as observed in several lessons including history, geography and science. Good use is made of individual education plans in most lessons and staff also receive a very useful summary of pupils' problems and requirements from the SENCO. Individual education plans provide a good general framework and an indication of pupils' problems. They can usually be found in pupils' exercise books where they are a useful focus for both staff and pupils. Staff are beginning to use these individual education plans to develop more subject specific targets, although some good classroom teaching with a range of teaching strategies and resources is still ensures good progress when more general targets are used. These plans are now being regularly reviewed, with increasing involvement of pupils and parents in the reviews.

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

31. There are many strengths in the curriculum and, to raise achievement, the school is taking part in a wide variety of initiatives, including several national strategies. There is an appropriate statutory curriculum in place. The range of learning experiences for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good and the school does its' best to prepare pupils for life

after the age of sixteen. However, the school recognises that it still has more to do to make the curriculum even more relevant for its' pupils and to prepare them better for the world of work.

32. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are offered a common curriculum, but extra literacy sessions affect the time allowance of several subjects. For example, French in Years 7 and 9 receive only 4 per cent of curriculum time, which is half the national average. Design and technology and information and communication technology (ITC) are not given enough teaching time.

33. The school has made a start in modifying the options system so that pupils can choose more relevant combinations of subjects. Drama, sports studies and nautical studies have been introduced. However, the limited time for science for both the single and the double award is having a negative impact on standards, while the time allowed for physical education in Years 10 and 11 leads to pupils being offered a limited range of activities. The school does not offer a second language.

34. The school's provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good, and comprises units of work based around social and moral issues, health and fitness, citizenship, careers and the recording of personal achievements. All members of staff teach within the programme, which has been planned by groups of teachers who have expressed an interest in a particular area. The work is relevant to the lives of pupils, is well delivered and covers sensitive topics such as terrorism with sensitivity and perception.

35. There is very good provision for pupils with special education needs at Key Stage 3 and good provision at Key Stage 4. All pupils receive their curriculum entitlement. At Key Stage 4, there are some opportunities for pupils to participate in vocational or work related courses, but there is no coherent arrangement that ensures continuity and progression. There is every encouragement in the curriculum to avoid a gender bias. All boys study food technology. In drama and English, through role-play and simulations, pupils gain an insight into the views and perspective of issues from the point of view of women and ethnic groups. Equality of access and opportunity in the curriculum is therefore good.

36. The school's provision for careers education is good. There are modules within the PSHE scheme and the teaching begins from Year 7. Strong features are the 'Real Game' in Year 9 when pupils consider careers within their own community and also the two-week work experience in Year 10. Pupils are prepared effectively for their placements and are also debriefed at the end of the experience. All pupils take part in careers interviews with careers staff, and are able to use both the school careers library and also a variety of relevant computer programmes. The growing numbers of pupils entering further education and local sixth forms shows how effective is the emphasis placed by teachers on further study and training. The school also organises revision courses in the study centre, and there are regular visits to local colleges and universities. Of those pupils who left school on 1999, four gained places at University.

37. Pupils benefit greatly from the very good provision of extra-curricular activities. There is a wide range of clubs and societies and the school is determined that as many pupils as possible should be involved. This is reflected in the good equal opportunities policy. There is a well attended breakfast club, and clubs for pets, drama, music, a wide variety of subject clubs and study sessions. There are also many out-of-hours activities in the countryside, sponsored walks and the annual activities week.

38. There are very good links with a variety of local educational establishments, such as Liverpool Hope University and Liverpool Community College.

39. The schools' strategies for teaching literacy skills are very good. A school literacy coordinator has been appointed, together with two classroom assistants with particular responsibility for literacy and the use of the resource centre. The library has been developed as a resource base and there is timetabled library use by all Year 7 classes. A home-school reading partnership has been established. Book and magazine boxes have been introduced for private reading during form tutor time. Very effective literacy summer schools have been held for the past four years.

40. Within the English curriculum, new setting arrangements have identified pupils who are following the new literacy progress units. Optional progress tests are taken in Years 7 and 8. Literacy practice in subjects across the curriculum has been carefully tracked. There is a strong commitment to literacy development, with subject schemes of work now required to incorporate language objectives. Very good practice is already established in subjects in the use of 'word walls', focus on key words and spelling lists in pupil planners. In art, the study of art history significantly develops pupils' vocabulary. In science and mathematics there is good emphasis on the use of key words, although more can be done to enhance pupils' reading development. Very good attention is paid to the understanding of terminology in history, though some pupils are not yet able to use the vocabulary of the subject in their own speaking. Family literacy development activities in the parents' centre give good support to the developments in the school. The school's reading test results show significant improvements in pupils' reading, confirmed by the steadily improving Key Stage 3 test results in English.

41. Strategies for teaching numeracy skills are satisfactory. The summer numeracy school is well established, with associated materials and teaching strategies being incorporated into the departmental scheme of work. Display material in each of the mathematics rooms is attractive, with items such as the number line prominently displayed and clearly linked to the raising of numeracy levels. All mathematics lessons begin with a brief mental arithmetic session, as required by the numeracy strategy. These sessions are enthusiastically received by the majority of pupils. The numeracy coordinator consulted with other subject departments before producing a policy document and a series of workbooks designed to raise levels of numeracy. These workbooks are available for use by all departments but there has been very little take-up.

42. All subjects apart from science and modern foreign languages have planned use of computers in their teaching. Most subjects make some use of a computer room, which is available on a booking system, although some departments have their own computers and software. The history department makes very effective use of computers in their teaching as well as making a major contribution to information on the school Intranet. Art and design make good use of the computers in their department, as well as technology such as digital cameras and scanners. In English, pupils make good use of word processing to produce a range of writing for display, formal letters, and newspapers and project research. The music department is well equipped with twenty-five electronic keyboards, and six computers that are used regularly by pupils for composing. In mathematics, teachers use 'Powerpoint' presentations, and pupils are able to use the Intranet for work sheets and support materials. There is some use of ICT in geography, where pupils use word processing and data handling packages, although classes have only one lesson per term. Although pupils make some use of ICT in modern foreign languages with word processing and desktop publishing, there is

insufficient planned use of ICT by the department. The science department makes some use of the Internet and a little use of CD-ROMs. However the department has no planned use of ICT and the lack equipment means that pupils are unable to work on sensing of information and data logging. This was an issue in the last inspection and has not yet been resolved.

43. The liaison between the school and its feeder primary establishments is very impressive and is the responsibility of a specialist head of Year 7. The school organises taster days for pupils in Year 5, and most subject departments send staff to teach in the feeder primary schools. Teachers in the school have also prepared a booklet, which considers how best to ease the transfer to secondary school, which can be often, be very traumatic. Summer schools which serve to improve literacy are well established and effective in easing pupils into the secondary school.

44. The school is a shining example of high quality provision for pupils' personal development. Its mission statement fully embraces the values expressed in the Gospels. The school enhances the quality of education in many ways through its emphasis on the creation of a community where respect for all underpins every activity. The school strives to create a society in which respect, love and hope enable all to fulfil their potential. The school lives out its Catholic theology in a variety of ways that emphasise its belief in, and commitment to, the principles that Jesus taught.

45. The school's spiritual provision is excellent and has improved since the last inspection. Relationships with the local parish and church are strong and the school is currently creating a chapel and advertising for a chaplain. The school successfully enables the boys to celebrate a daily act of worship and masses when appropriate. Times for spiritual reflection were particularly poignant in the week when the world looked on at the terrorist attacks on America. Year 9 pupils have an opportunity to prepare for and celebrate their confirmation. The school celebrates the major Christian festivals within and outside of the school. Many teachers, especially those in the religious education, art, music and drama departments, explain the relevance and importance of the festivals in creative, engaging and culturally relevant ways. During the inspection week spirituality was promoted in lessons in English literature, art, chemistry, geography and modern foreign language lessons. Since the previous inspection, some boys have had the privilege to listen to a Jewish survivor from the holocaust and were deeply moved by his experience and his willingness to share.

46. Moral education is excellent and has a very high priority. The school successfully promotes good behaviour and positive attitudes. During the week, inspectors saw boys respecting other boys' feelings, emotions and property. Particularly effective moral education was found in an art lesson, which embraced the Heart Stone project, and a history lesson, which celebrated pupils' class and homework successes. The school has recently revised and restructured the personal and social education programme. This emphasises the importance of appropriate personal as well as social behaviour in the ways that topics as diverse as health and fitness, careers and citizenship are sensitively taught. The teachers have a clear commitment to, and understanding of, the importance of trust and fairness. All rigorously oppose prejudice and ignorance. The school's code of conduct and its procedures for rewarding effort, achievement and behaviour are enthusiastically followed by the teachers. There are many rewards ranging from merits, subject prizes, annual subject awards, form prizes and sports prizes, all significantly contributing to a culture of affirmation and respect. All the teachers, including the form tutors, the pastoral staff and the senior management team are united in showing boys that they all have a personal responsibility to care for

one another and to create a slice of 'heaven on earth'.

47. The schools' promotion of social education is excellent. The school engages in many activities that enable boys to work together in class and to enjoy their leisure time activities. The school's numerous extra-curricular clubs, out-of-school holiday activities, school journeys and field trips all expand the boys' horizons. In lessons, boys often work well in pairs and in groups in order to share and expand their learning. The school is rich in drama and musical activities and promotes team games and very high standards of sportsmanship. School productions such as 'Grease' and 'Little Shop of Horrors' enable a large number of pupils to work together over a long period to create a production of high quality acting, singing and instrumental prowess. Pupils in history spent many hours making a high quality video on the death of Caesar. Pupils taking drama and music regularly work in pairs and small groups to present their knowledge, skills and understanding. The impressive number of extra curricular activities and the popular activities' weeks all bear testimony to the commitment of staff and to the enthusiasm of the pupils to spend time together after school and at weekends to engage in a wealth of worthwhile pursuits. The school understands clearly what it is to be a caring community, and gives the boys excellent opportunities to share their concerns through the school council.

48. The cultural provision is a strength of the school and is excellent. Above and beyond the school's well-embedded and affirming Christian ethos, boys are provided with many opportunities to develop an appreciation of their own and other cultures. In English language and literature lessons, pupils are regularly introduced to a variety of literature and poetry from across the world. Visits to the theatre provide boys with first hand knowledge and understanding of plays from many backgrounds and ethnic origins. In mathematics lessons, they consider Islamic design patterns as part of the National Curriculum. Through visits to local and regional art galleries and exhibitions, teachers introduce pupils to, for example, Celtic art and architecture. Local artists and musicians share in the teaching of the subjects. Pupils studying geography receive a good introduction to the contrasting life styles of people in Bangladesh, Brazil and Italy. In history, pupils have benefited from studying Greek pottery, Roman architecture and have been to the production of Black Peoples of America. Some food technology lessons introduce pupils to various recipes of peoples throughout the world. Music and drama lessons and their extra-curricular provision fully cover a range of world plays, playwrights, music and musicians. In one lesson observed, boys were taught how to sing Frere Jacques in four languages. The physical education department provides boys with a wide range of games activities, and promotes a strong worldwide perspective during the residential activities. The boys are provided with a wealth of wholesome experiences that extend their appreciation of life far beyond Liverpool's boundaries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The school has good systems to care for pupils and help them learn in a calm, relaxed and purposeful environment. Good procedures are established for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The standards noted in the previous report have been maintained. The senior teacher responsible for child protection is known to all staff. Teachers, support and administrative staff and technicians understand child protection issues and are alert to mental or physical abuse. The staff handbook contains a forceful statement on child protection. Since the last inspection, the school has been very successful in attracting funding that has helped to further improve pupil support.

Three learning mentors have been appointed to provide academic and pastoral support to the pupils. A pastoral secretary has been appointed to make first day contact with the parents of absentees and latecomers. An education welfare officer has been allocated to the school on a full-time basis, and this has resulted in improved contact with the parents of absentees. The school has set up a breakfast club and a student support centre, both of which are well used by the pupils. The school also runs a summer school for its own pupils and those from local primary schools.

50. There are good arrangements to make sure that pupils are safe and secure. The school has adopted the local authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and out of school visits. Established health and safety practices are supplemented by annual risk assessments for specific activities. Several members of staff are qualified first aiders and all staff are sensitive to the needs of all pupils. The site is generally free of vandalism and graffiti and the school buildings are clean and well maintained.

51. Good procedures are established for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development. Form tutors and heads of year know all the boys individually and develop close and personal relationships with them. Additional support and guidance is offered by the head teacher and deputy head who are accessible, genial and reassuring. Boys' personal development is monitored through a system of rewards, which are clearly understood by pupils and fairly administered by teachers. A number of pupils are nominated to receive individual care and support from the schools' learning support unit, professional mentors; special education needs unit or other appropriate source. A very good induction programme prepares primary school children for transfer, and supports them fully until settled in Year 7. Those who participate in the summer school sat Campion benefit from extra contact with the school. Year heads ensure that their teams of form tutors, working closely with outside agencies, ensure that very good personal support and guidance is provided for pupils.

52. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Subject teachers call lesson registers and challenge suspicious absences. Attendance inducements and rewards include certificates and gift vouchers. Unexplained absences are rigorously investigated. Parents appreciate the first-day-absence telephone call and co-operate well with the school in its' efforts to get pupils to school and keep them there. However, the school still has too many pupils whose education is interrupted by unauthorised absence. These pupils face very severe social problems and many live long distances from school. The school recognises that a greater focus and effort will be needed to break this pattern of absenteeism, which is holding back the progress of so many boys. The planned use of learning mentors is to visit homes of persistent truants will help.

53. A very good policy for behaviour and discipline emphasises the importance of consistency and routines and contains much useful advice for teachers, which they put into practice. Most teachers are adept at using commendations, threats and sanctions to maintain standards of behaviour. Exceptional single incidents of disruption are countered with isolation in a separate classroom. The number of formal exclusions is below average for similar schools. All pupils are aware of the consequences of poor behaviour. The school functions as a happy and orderly community.

54. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. The school has a clear assessment policy with guidance for teachers on how the policy should be applied. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for assessing and recording pupils' attainment when they enter the school. Boys are tested to determine entry levels

in reading, mathematics, verbal and non-verbal reasoning. Scores from these tests are recorded alongside the results of national tests at age 11. A full analysis of the data, linked to predictions for future attainment, is issued to each teacher. Teachers are expected to track pupil progress and maintain appropriate records. Attainment levels recorded in national tests at age 14, together with results recorded in tests administered by Durham University, are also issued to teachers as boys progress through the school.

55. All subject departments have procedures in place for the regular assessment of attainment and progress. Good practice exists within English, where there is a common marking policy, and pupil progress is monitored and compared with individual pupil targets. The use of national curriculum levels to describe attainment is not yet fully developed, although good practice exists within music and from Year 9 onwards in geography. Marking policies are not always adhered to; within mathematics poor presentation of work by lower attaining pupils is linked to a lack of marking.

56. The use of assessment information to guide future curricular planning and set appropriate targets is unsatisfactory. There is good practice in history, where assessment in one lesson resulted in changes to future plans. However such practice is not totally reflected elsewhere. A minority of departments make formal use of available information about pupils' attainment and progress to plan the next stages of learning. The school recognises that regular monitoring and evaluation of progress towards agreed performance targets is an area for future development.

57. Arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting the progress of pupils with special education needs are good. Statements are thoroughly reviewed and appropriate targets set. Procedures for identifying pupils are in place and are very thorough. Recently established and formalised links between all departments and the special needs department have begun to assist in the development of these procedures and to raise the level of understanding of all staff regarding the specific needs of these pupils. Individual education plans do not identify subject-specific targets, but support staff often liaise with subject staff so they know how to plan suitable work. There are good links with primary schools. Pupils are assessed thoroughly on entry and in subsequent years. This provides relevant information to assist the school in making decisions about the level of support necessary for all pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. Parents' views of the school are very favourable. Most comments were positive at a pre-inspection meeting for all parents and in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The inspectors endorse the parents' favourable view of the school. During the years since the last inspection, the school has continued to maintain very good links with parents. A school centre for parents and neighbours has been set up, and it is used well by parents for activities such as hairdressing, flower arranging, computer skills, literacy and numeracy. Parents now regularly come to school to learn in their own right. This has done much to create a positive approach to learning outside school and encourage parents to be more active at ensuring their children take advantage of what the school is offering them. In this way, the centre has increased parental involvement in their children's learning.

59. Although at the pre-inspection meeting and in replies to the questionnaire, parents were very supportive of the school, a significant minority of parents do not feel

that levels of homework are consistent. In mathematics and science for instance, homework is regularly set to reinforce learning. However, not all teachers follow the guidelines as published in the school marking policy, and work is sometimes unmarked. Pupils do receive praise for good work but there is a lack of constructive written advice that pupils could act upon to raise their standard of attainment. All teachers set homework frequently and mark this and classwork regularly. Nevertheless, standards of marking in are not consistent.

60. The quality of information to parents is good. Parents are well informed by means of newsletters, the annual governors' report, the school prospectus, the handbook for new parents, induction evenings and regular meetings of the parent-teacher association. Pupil planners are also very useful to parents in monitoring their children's progress. The majority of parents have responded to the home school agreement. Parents are invited into school to discuss progress at suitable times. Annual reports on pupils' achievement are well detailed in showing progress and target areas for improvement. The school is very effective in maintaining and improving the links with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The quality of leadership and management in the school is very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is fully committed to raising standards through a clearly defined review process, linked to staff development and training. He has established a very clear direction for the work of the school and, by example and consultation, has brought together a staff that shares a common sense of purpose and good relationships. This has resulted in a shared commitment to improvement and a very good capacity to succeed. The school's shared aims and Catholic values are central to its work, making a positive contribution to the development of good attitudes among pupils. The contributions of all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are recognised and valued. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly understood because the process of self-review is well developed; the long-term effects of decisions are evaluated and action is taken to secure improvement. The members of the senior management team provide the headteacher with very effective support and have a key role in monitoring standards and maintaining the very positive ethos of achievement in the school. Their individual strengths complement those of their colleagues. An outstanding ethos permeates the school, which is akin to an oasis in the desert. The ethos stems from the school's strong and effective leadership team, who preach and practise Gospel values, built upon respect for all pupils regardless of age, sex, status, ability, race or creed. Staff and pupil relationships are very positive. The boys value the school council because they recognise that the head, who chairs it, listens to their points.

62. It is just as significant that the headteacher has generated and maintained a most positive atmosphere in the school. He is held in high regard by staff, pupils and many members of the local community. A recent OFSTED publication about improving city schools describes the importance of 'safe and supportive schools which create belief in the possibility of success'. Pupils at Campion know they are cared for well at the school. Those who receive particular support, for example from learning mentors or the special education needs department, can articulate how much they have benefited from such encouragement. The equal opportunities policy is a living document, not merely on paper.

63. The overall quality of leadership at middle management level is good. Most middle managers have established clear educational direction for the work of their departments and monitor standards effectively. Outstandingly good leadership in English is reflected in the improving standards achieved by pupils. Good management is an important factor in rising standards in art, history, information technology and French. Although there is some developing good practice, for example in history, assessment is not used effectively across the school to monitor standards, to set targets for improvement or to support the planning of teaching.

64. The commitment of the school to supporting pupils with special educational needs is reflected in the very good management of the learning support department. There is a clear policy and a good range of information for staff. Teaching and support staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, and support staff are very effectively deployed using clear criteria. The team of support staff has increased considerably over the past year and is critical to the success experienced by the pupils they support. The coordinator for special needs has organised and led several very successful in-service training sessions for staff and receives good support from the senior management team of which he is a member. Accommodation for special needs pupils is rather small given the number of pupils, but it is very well organised and provides areas for different types of activities. Resources are very good and include a well stocked library and good information technology provision. Governors are appropriately involved and the success of the school policy is identified in the governors' annual report to parents. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides clear educational direction, promotes high standards and ensures that daily routines run smoothly. The school meets statutory requirements in respect of pupils with special educational needs and makes effective use of available resources.

65. The governing body has a very good working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Frequent informal contacts, together with a programme of more formal subject reviews and presentations, ensure that governors understand clearly the challenges that face the school. They play an active role in monitoring its work. They provide direction by working closely with the senior management team to identify areas for development and to set targets for improvement. The professional strengths and experience of governors contribute significantly to high quality strategic planning, based on a clear long-term view.

66. Development planning is very good. Carefully identified priorities are linked to the targets associated with the school vision. It shows commitment to raising standards and improving the quality of education provided. One of the most noteworthy results of this approach is the high quality of staff development.

67. Financial planning is very good. The school manages its enhanced budget, additional funds and grants, outstandingly well, particularly to secure improvement in premises and resources for learning and to support development priorities. Very good procedures are in place to monitor the effectiveness of spending. Strategic and contingency planning are closely related to available and projected finances. This planning benefits from the contribution of governors' expertise to the financial management of the school.

68. Routine administration of the school's budget is good, but the school is rapidly outgrowing its administrative support and is in need of additional help. The school makes effective use of new technology to monitor spending against the budget and to provide

accurate up-to-date information. There are well-defined procedures to ensure best value purchasing. Routine administration is very efficient and ensures that the school runs smoothly.

69. There is a good match between the number, qualifications and experience of teachers and technical support staff and the demands of the curriculum, except in music, where there is a case for some additional staffing. The improvements in staffing in mathematics and science recommended in the previous report have been made. There is a good balance of age and experience in the staff, and a good balance of male and female staff, though the senior management team is entirely male. There is a very good match of teachers' qualifications to the subjects taught. Three quarters of the staff are graduate qualified. There is no detrimental effect on pupils' learning in the very small number of lessons where teachers are required to teach outside their specialisms. The provision of technical support staff is adequate, though the level of technical support in science is below the minimum recommended. There is good provision of learning support assistants who give good support to pupils with special educational needs, including an assistant specifically to support literacy in the school, and one to support the library/resource centre.

70. All staff have job descriptions. There is well-established and well-managed policy and practice on induction of newly qualified and newly appointed staff. The school buys into the local authority's induction programme for newly qualified teachers, and supplements it very effectively with a comprehensive in-school programme in the charge of a senior teacher. This includes good arrangements for monitoring, mentoring and regular meetings to give them support. There is a well-established and clear policy on staff professional development. The school began the formal process of performance management at the beginning of the year 2000 and, to date, three quarters of the staff have had their interview and review. Staff training and professional development needs are well managed by a senior teacher, who uses the training budget judiciously to meet the training needs of teaching and non-teaching staff. Training takes account both of school development targets and personal and professional targets identified in the performance management reviews. Training is a standard agenda item in the meetings of subject departments. Good use is made of a variety of training opportunities provided by outside agencies together with school in-service training days, with the stated object of raising standards.

71. The quality of the school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is good in French, ICT, music and geography where well-maintained rooms and interesting displays of pupils' work create a stimulating learning environment. The accommodation for English and history is satisfactory. Accommodation for drama is in a carpeted classroom which is too small. There is good indoor accommodation for physical education but it is unsatisfactory for outside activities and limits standards in that area. The accommodation for science is unsatisfactory in that both some of the laboratory space and preparation rooms are too small.

72. There are enough resources overall for most subjects. Much of the shortage of textbooks reported in the last inspection has now been addressed, with the exception of music, which requires a national music scheme to support learning. Music also requires extra percussion instruments to provide a better multicultural dimension to the learning. Resources in science are barely adequate to support the day-to-day work of the department. There are not enough funds to replace large and expensive equipment, and this dictates how the curriculum is taught. At present the Geiger-Müller is broken, which means that an important part of the curriculum cannot be taught and the safety of

pupils ensured. The provision of computers at 7.5 pupils per machine is below the national recommendation. Whilst the proportion of library books has improved since the last inspection, it is only just at the figure recommended by the School Library Association. The resources available and the use of the Resource Centre have improved since last. A number of factors have led to the improving use of computers in teaching in most subjects. The installation of new computers and the availability of an additional computer room have enabled many departments to make effective use of this technology in their teaching. With 80 percent of teaching staff having completed their subject-specific training using the New Opportunities Funding, teachers have a growing confidence in using new technology.

73. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the head teacher is good. All staff are monitored as statutorily required by the performance management legislation. The school has set realistic, challenging and achievable targets to raise the attainment of boys at the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11 in GCSE results. The school has set up further professional development in the coming term so that all staff can reconsider strategies that are effective in motivating and sustaining boys' learning. The school has not, as yet, carried out an audit of the specific strategies that each department adopts to make learning attractive and effective for boys. Nevertheless the school is fully aware of the pockets of very good practice and the value of disseminating good practice across the school. It is open to suggestions from the wider community.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and senior management team should:

- Continue to focus energies on raising results in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations. These are very low when compared to the national average.
- Bring the attendance rate closer to the national average. Attendance is well below average.
- Review the school's curriculum, to ensure that it is relevant to the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching is monitored systematically to identify where improvements are needed and to share good practice.
- Ensure that assessment information is used to help teachers plan work that matches the needs of all pupils, and to identify pupils who are in danger of under-achieving.
- Improve pupils' knowledge of their own standards of achievement and what they need to do to improve.

EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES TO RAISE BOYS ACHIEVEMENT

76. The school is to be highly commended for its commitment to raising standards of

boys' attainments and in providing a secure framework for the boys' later lives. The head teacher, the senior management and the teachers have thought deeply about the quality of education they provide, and work very hard to fulfil the school's mission statement.

77. The school is fully aware that many of the boys are young inner city males with specific learning difficulties but also with varied aspirations. The school is aware of the factors that result in the underachievement amongst the boys such as lack of concentration, arrogance in learning, macho competitive nature, an anti-achievement culture, peer pressures, learned sexist behaviour, risk-taking behaviour and disaffection. To this end, the school has established a range of practices aimed at short-term gains in some respects, but adding up to a long-term shift in boys' attitudes and culture.

78. The school has placed a high emphasis on learning, and has therefore participated in a range of programmes. For instance, the under achievement of the most able is being addressed through the Gifted and Talented programme that expands into a generalised approach which exposes all pupils to more effective learning opportunities. To this end, lessons are planned around a three-part structure, which gives a clear organisation to learning that the boys understand.

79. Some senior staff have attended workshops on Raising Boy's Attainment and have disseminated their findings to all the staff. Teachers have been challenged to trial some of the activities and to report back to departmental meetings and to the wider staff.

- The school wide strategies include:
 - * An emphasis on learning and high expectations.
 - * The celebration of success, for instance in whole-class activities, in newsletters, through prize nights and in using past pupils as role models.
 - * The creation of a climate where intellect is not second to sport.
 - * The greater promotion of the study centre, revision classes, residential activities and the recognition of gifted and talented pupils as well as those with special educational needs.
 - * A sharper emphasis on monitoring and mentoring, with opportunities for boys to catch up and benefit from a learning mentor.
 - * A greater emphasis by all departments on the development of language skills.
 - * The development of positive marking strategies that praise effort, set personal targets and reward the completion of homework.
 - * A greater emphasis on the teaching of study skills. Within this category, teachers have been challenged to look at the benefits of accelerated learning, liaison with universities, the pros and cons of setting arrangements and the importance and value of independent learning.

- In the classrooms, inspectors observed strategies that underpinned the school wide philosophy such as:

- * An emphasis on high expectations and learning rather than just behaviour management.
- * The clear communication by teachers of the aims, purposes and objectives of lessons.
- * The communication of challenges, outlining the value of the work and the gains to be made.
- * The careful consideration of seating plans, group and paired work and role-play.
- * The benefits of quick fire, lively and varied questions.
- * The frequent use of rewards, praise and affirmation.
- * The use of writing frames, templates and discussion guidelines.
- * The increased use of ICT to promote and to sustain boys' learning.

80. The school provides numerous activities for its gifted and talented pupils in all year groups. The work is co-ordinated by one member of staff, who welcomes bids and suggestions from all departments. In the year preceding the inspection, the school ran twenty-four gifted and talented activities including five workshops in conjunction with Liverpool Hope University, covering mathematics, creative writing, French and GCSE revision. Gifted and talented pupils from all year groups attended workshops covering narrative and imagination, art, science, maths, sculpture, drama/ICT, and reading. A good number attended summer schools within the network or at universities, and some attended an outward-bound course in the Lake District. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 attended Cambridge and Liverpool Hope universities for a full day, attending lectures and meeting students. Some pupils from Year 11 attended Liverpool Hope for a residential week, with a further week of outdoor pursuits at Plas Caerdon (Barmouth).

81. The art departments of the school and Hope University have developed a junior fellowship, in an attempt to raise the boys' aspirations and awareness that further and higher education is an option open to the boys. The fellowship has been offered to boys who have been involved in an extra-curricular programme of activities, centred on the sharing of good practice. The art department runs clubs for Gifted and Talented and chooses projects such as sport and pop art and sculpture that appeal to boys.

82. The most successful department to raise attainment is the English department, which attains higher results than the other core subjects. They have employed a number of successful strategies leading to GCSE results in English literature and language that are better than the school average. For Key Stage 3 English, the school has acquired new stock that appeals to boys such as an abridged version of 'Frankenstein' (pre 1914 fiction) and contemporary drama. They have also developed their use of non-fiction material at Key Stage 3. Several resources are used that appeal specifically to boys' interests at Key Stage 4. The media assignment for example uses newspaper reports of the local football derby (Liverpool versus Everton). The school has invested in specific texts relevant to teenage boys' experiences, such as extracts from Nick Hornby's 'High Fidelity' and the abridged version of Philip Prowse' 'Bristol Murder.'

83. Science pupils are provided with texts to extend the more able. Saturday morning visits to places as diverse as Jodrell Bank and the Catalyst Museum are used to motivate the boys. The history department lays a great emphasis on the presentation of pupils' work. The Key Stage 4 curriculum covering modern international history significantly motivates the boys. Boys are given plenty of opportunities in history lessons to use computer programmes to research their work. The department makes

good use of the merit system to get rid of the 'street cred' syndrome.

84. Teaching styles have been adjusted in modern foreign language lessons to take account of boys' learning, with increased visual stimuli, use of overhead projectors rather than textbooks, reference to foreign culture through sport, especially football, and a growing use of computers. Teachers of geography promote different kinds of learning as a stimulus. The department's insistence on good presentation and pride in work motivates boys. ICT is well used in the presentation of boys' course fieldwork. Boys enjoy doing the local traffic flow comparisons in two local roads.

- The music department adopts various successful strategies to interest boys such as:
 - * Clear rewards and stamps, regular praise, good work and behaviour certificates, prizes for achievement, effort and improvement.
 - * Regular feedback on boys' musical performances.
 - * Set time limits for activities - presenting an extra competitive challenge.
 - * Structured use of video.
 - * Use of electronic keyboards and guitars.
 - * Use of computers.

85. Boys in guitar lessons respond well to their teachers' choice and repertoire, and boys in a lesson on sound and rhythm were highly motivated by playing their percussion instruments.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	113
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	134

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	30	36	27	7	0	0
Percentage	4	29	35	26	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y 7 – 11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	574
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	396

Special educational needs	Y 7 – 11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	21
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	369

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	15.3
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	117	N/A	117

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	45	41	25
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	45	41	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	38 (38)	35 (35)	21 (17)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	8 (3)	8 (6)	3 (0)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	46	34	26
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	46	34	26
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	39 (47)	29 (39)	22 (36)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	9 (19)	8 (9)	3 (1)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	140	N/A	140

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	11	83	113
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	11	83	113
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	8 (12)	59 (75)	81 (87)
	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	16
	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	0
	National	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	17
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	570
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	33	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	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)	42
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.4

Education support staff:

Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	446

Deployment of teachers:

Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	71.3
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Average teaching group size:

Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	27.5
Key Stage 4	28.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2147076.00
Total expenditure	220000.00
Expenditure per pupil	3832.75.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	-30524.00
Balance carried forward to next year	69621.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	574
Number of questionnaires returned	221

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	5	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	59	35	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	47	5	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	44	17	5	1
The teaching is good.	67	30	0	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	29	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	19	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	32	4	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	75	21	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	61	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	26	4	0	4

CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching at both key stages.
- The quality of arrangements for literacy development.
- The quality of leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement:

- The procedures for assessment and monitoring pupil progress.
- Using computers to help boys learn.

86. The proportion of pupils at the age of 14 achieving the expected level (Level 5) and above in English in the national tests in 2000 was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 6 and above was well below the national average. Results were close to the average for similar schools, however, although there are few schools with pupils in similar social and economic circumstances and such very low levels of prior attainment on entry. There has been an upward trend in the attainment of pupils since the last inspection, above the national trend. At the age of 14, pupils achieved above the expectation of their levels of prior attainment at the age of 11, and they made significant progress towards national expectations. Pupils did better in English than in mathematics and science.

87. The proportion of pupils at the age of 16 achieving grades A* to C in the GCSE examination in 2000 in English was well below the national average. However, the proportion achieving grades A* to G was below, but much closer to, the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in the GCSE examination in 2000 in English literature was below the national average. It was, however, much closer to the average than in English. The proportion achieving grades A* to G was above the national average, and all pupils who were entered achieved a grade. There has been an upward trend in the results in both subjects since the last inspection. Most pupils are entered for English and an increasing proportion is entered for English literature. Results in GCSE English were close to the average for similar schools. At the age of 16, pupils achieved broadly as expected compared with their attainment at the age of 14. Pupils did significantly better in English than in mathematics and science, and the results in English literature were the best of all subjects in the school.

88. Standards seen during the inspection were below those expected nationally at age 14, but through good teaching, above that indicated by national tests. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are better than their skills in reading and writing. Pupils are uninhibited speakers who share ideas freely in pair work and contribute to class discussion. Pupils of higher levels of prior attainment in Year 9 contributed articulately to the preparation of a newspaper story, using some of the vocabulary of journalism. Though pupils of lower levels of prior attainment respond readily to teachers' questions, their responses are brief and often colloquial. Pupils' listening skills are generally less developed than their speaking skills, and they sometimes call out answers before considering questions fully. Careful selection of oral tasks and good class management of pupils with special educational needs, however, enable these pupils to participate briefly but effectively in oral work. This was seen in a Year 8 class where pupils were

able to read aloud and discuss 'Frank Bruno's school report'.

89. There is a good level of interest in reading. Pupils in Year 7 listened actively to the presentation of the school-home reading partnership (SHARP) scheme and were enthusiastic in their selection of their first library books. Generally, pupils' reading skills are equal to the demands of the carefully selected texts they study, though their vocabulary is limited and pupils of lower levels of prior attainment need teacher help to understand the implications of their reading. With such help, pupils with special educational needs in Year 9 were able to scan the story of 'Spring Heeled Jack' and identify descriptive words. In a Year 8 class exploring autobiographical writing, pupils responded to the 'big book' presentation of 'The Diary of Ann Frank' and, with help, identified key words to use in their own writing. The timetabled use of the library in English in Year 7 and the use of book boxes for private reading in tutor time throughout Key Stage 3, contribute to pupils' literacy development. Displays of key words in other subject areas help pupils develop their vocabulary. Work in other subjects, such as religious education and history, contributes to pupils' reading and writing development.

90. Pupils' writing skills are generally below national expectations. Good use is made of writing frameworks to enable pupils to organise their writing in a range of forms appropriate to different tasks, and their writing skills are systematically developed. Pupils of lower levels of prior attainment in Year 7 developed their understanding of structures through identifying paragraphs and paragraph markers. Pupils in Year 9 sequenced the paragraphs of a story, identifying signal words. Writing is generally well presented and legible, though in many cases affected by a limited range of vocabulary and problems with spelling. Pupils of higher levels of prior attainment can produce extended pieces of writing. Pupils of the lowest levels of prior attainment and with special educational needs are able only to produce brief responses but these nevertheless convey meaning. All pupils have opportunities to use information and communication technology to present their work, which is used to good effect in classroom display.

91. Standards seen during the inspection in the work of pupils by the age of sixteen were below those expected nationally but above those indicated by national examination results.

92. Standards of speaking and listening are satisfactory overall. Pupils speak quite freely, though only those of higher levels of prior attainment can move beyond the limitations of their colloquial vocabulary. Pupils in Year 11 can read aloud the text of 'Julius Caesar' and discuss it with some understanding of the use of sarcasm and rhetorical questions. Many pupils have difficulty in maintaining their concentration and listening carefully, however, and useful class discussion comes about through good teacher control. Standards of reading overall are below national expectations. Pupils study a good range of demanding texts but need the support of teachers and the worksheets they provide to help them understand. Pupils in Year 10 were able correctly to sequence the events of the first act of 'A Taste of Honey' and identify the qualities of the characters through the patience and persistence of the teacher's questioning. Pupils of low levels of prior attainment and with special educational needs were able to respond well to the story of 'Macbeth' through a very well judged combination of the use of video, class discussion and writing. Though the standards of writing are, overall, below national expectations, pupils produce a good range of writing to meet the requirements of the GCSE. They are helped in the development of extended pieces by the provision of frameworks to enable them to organise their written answers. They benefit from the practice of drafting and re-drafting. Careful preparation with relevant discussion helps pupils write more effectively. Pupils in Year 10 undertaking a

coursework piece, on the diary entry of a soldier, were prepared by class discussion to produce a spider diagram for their writing. Pupils in Year 11 were able to make useful notes on the text of a story in the GCSE anthology in preparation for an examination answer, following the guidelines of a worksheet. Pupils express themselves clearly and at some length, though in many cases only as a result of support from teachers. A small number of pupils write vividly and, in literature essays, can support their ideas with relevant quotation. The vocabulary of the majority is limited, however, and many have an insecure grasp of spelling. Many pupils make good use of information and communication technology in the presentation of their work. Handwriting is mostly satisfactory and, even when work is not word-processed, presentation is generally tidy.

93. The quality of teaching is good, and as a consequence the quality of pupils' learning is good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject, so that they teach the basic skills of English well, enabling pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills and develop their understanding systematically. Teachers identify learning targets and plan appropriate and varied activities to interest and engage pupils, who are stimulated and challenged to make an effort. Good examples of such variety were seen in a Year 11 lesson on 'Julius Caesar', where pupils followed a task sheet, worked in pairs to sequence the text, participated in class discussion and watched a video. There is good use of oral activities in all lessons and pupils are encouraged to participate because of the friendly relationships established by teachers. Very occasional difficulties in management occur when a friendly and familiar relationship has not yet been established. As a result, pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. Teachers develop good relationships in the classroom, which encourage pupils to be polite, cooperative and responsive. When pupils are unable to maintain the conventions of taking turns to speak and not shouting out, teachers are mostly able to manage their behaviour. Individuals who give difficulty accept the school sanctions. Pupils are well motivated by an interesting range of lesson activities, which maintains their attention. This is reflected in the good quality of presentation of their written work and the pride and care shown in it. Pupils are mostly pleasant, friendly and good-humoured as a consequence of good management.

94. The learning needs of all pupils are met, irrespective of their levels of prior attainment, through lesson content and presentation appropriate to their needs. Talented and gifted pupils are identified and their need provided for with extension activities in the scheme of work. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well, with a judicious blend of good pace, challenge, praise and encouragement, which enables them to make good progress. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, the very appropriate manner and presentation of carefully selected activities enabled pupils with special educational needs to develop their understanding of the use of punctuation and improve their spelling of selected words. In lessons where there is support from classroom assistants, the support is well managed to enable pupils to take maximum advantage of individual attention, as for example in a Year 7 class undertaking the Key Stage 3 Writing Organisation Progress Unit.

95. The quality of day-to-day assessment of pupils' written work is good. Teachers' comments are detailed and constructive, identifying points for improvement. The system of assessment used in Key Stage 3 is consistent across the English Department, but it is not directly related to National Curriculum levels. As a result of the good teaching they receive, pupils who attend regularly make good progress in Key Stage 3 in relation to their prior attainment. At the age of 14, pupils achieve above the expectation of their levels of prior attainment at the age of 11 and make significant progress towards national expectations. At Key Stage 4, progress is satisfactory overall and good for

those who have been at the school from Year 7. At age 16, pupils achieve broadly in line with the expectation of their levels of attainment at age 14. A significant factor that contributes to the relatively slower progress in Key Stage 4, in spite of the good teaching, is the absence rate and the high turnover of pupils. This prevents a significant number of pupils from building on the achievement at Key Stage 3, developing a secure grasp of the requirements of the GCSE and producing sufficient coursework of a consistent standard.

96. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department provides very clear and energetic direction for colleagues, informed by a very good grasp of the developments in English and a receptiveness to new ideas. There is good delegation of responsibility, and the head of department is ably supported by a second in department, who contributes to the development of the scheme of work, has responsibility for the library and is the school's literacy coordinator. As a consequence of formal and informal meetings, the members of the department work well together as a team, share good practice, create work units and contribute to school development planning. The arrangements for monitoring teaching and the delivery of the curriculum are, as yet, relatively informal and need to be developed through a programme of formal documented observations and work sampling. Day to day assessment practices are good in terms of giving support and guidance to pupils, but the process of monitoring pupil performance against national criteria needs development.

97. Progress since the last inspection is good. The good quality of teaching noted in the last report has been maintained, and attention has been paid to the needs of the highest attainers, which were judged to be neglected. Pupils' progress has improved, as has pupil attainment; the standards achieved by pupils by the ages of 14 and 16 have risen. An increasing proportion of pupils is entered for both GCSE English and English literature. Good attention has been paid to the key issue in the last report, of continuing and enhancing the reading development programme.

MATHEMATICS

Overall the quality of provision is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- The implementation of the national numeracy strategy is having a positive effect on the raising of standards.
- Teachers willingly find time to support pupils outside of the normal school day.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.

Areas for improvement:

- There is a lack of consistency in the marking of pupils' work.
- Within some teaching groups levels of expectation are too low.
- Systems for the monitoring of progress towards agreed targets are not fully established.

98. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very low in comparison with national averages. At age 14, standards of attainment in the year 2000 National Curriculum test in mathematics were very low in comparison with the average for all schools. These results are also below those achieved in similar schools. Within the school, the

standards achieved in mathematics are below those achieved in English but higher than those in science. The overall trend in recent years is broadly in line with the national trend.

99. The GCSE results for 2000 are well below the average when compared with all schools and well below those achieved in similar schools. Standards achieved in mathematics are significantly below those achieved in English but higher than those achieved in science. Performance is consistent with earlier performance in National Curriculum tests at age 14 and follows the same upward trend.

100. In work seen during the inspection, attainment up to the age of 14 is well below national expectations although higher than that indicated by the external examination results. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive effect on raising standards across Years 7, 8 and 9. Higher and middle ability pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of basic number work, recognise symmetry and can apply and interpret statistical methods. The attainment of lower ability boys is adversely affected by a lack of challenge, with some work observed being excessively repetitive. Achievement within the key stage is satisfactory overall, with the majority of pupils demonstrating clear progress in lessons. There is a lack of progress where teacher expectations are low and where low standards of presentation are accepted. This is particularly noticeable in some of the work completed by pupils with special educational needs.

101. Boys in Years 10 and 11 are producing work at a well level below national expectations, although higher than that suggested by their examination performance, which was affected by high levels of absence. The policy of entering some pupils for GCSE in Year 10 is having a positive motivational effect on the high ability group. The strategies for improving attendance and the expansion of after-school clubs are contributing to improved standards in class. Achievement across this key stage is satisfactory. Higher and middle attaining pupils are able to recognise number patterns and demonstrate an understanding of algebraic technique. Boys within the lower attaining groups are confident in the use of basic statistical methods and can interpret and comment upon correlation of data.

102. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and built upon trust, respect and good humour. Pupils respond well to the clear and consistent application of the code of conduct that is prominently displayed in classrooms. Where expectations are high, pupils behave well, respond with enthusiasm and willingly contribute to class discussion. Occasional poor behaviour arises when pupils are insufficiently challenged; work is repetitive or pitched at an inappropriate level.

103. Teaching within the department is satisfactory. There are very few unsatisfactory lessons and a significant proportion are good or very good. Most lessons are well prepared and teachers demonstrate good classroom management skills, as a result of which pupils behave well and acquire new skills and knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the effective use of learning support staff and the department makes good use of the school's ICT resources. Good teaching occurs where teachers have high expectations, activities are well planned and prepared and interactions between teacher and pupils are of high quality. For example, the effective use of individual whiteboards enabled Year 7 boys to respond instantly to mental arithmetic questions. In Year 11, very good teacher-led discussion enabled lower attaining pupils to interpret and comment upon statistical diagrams. Teaching is less successful where expectations are low and the level of work provides insufficient

challenge for many of the pupils. Most pupils at all levels are motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers and willingly contribute to class discussion and questioning. Pupils are enthusiastic when offered the opportunity to use information technology. Effective use of information technology was observed in a Year 9 class where the teacher input was enhanced by the use of 'Powerpoint', and pupils were able to use teacher designed software to increase their understanding of how to round numbers to any given number of decimal places.

104. The quality of learning and progress closely matches the quality of teaching and is satisfactory overall. Brisk oral mental work, good quality interaction and written work which consolidates learning all contribute to pupils' progress in well taught lessons. Higher and middle attaining pupils in both key stages demonstrate a sound understanding of mathematics, with the majority taking a pride in the appearance of their work. Pupils in the lower attaining groups do not have the same confidence and, in a number of cases, standards of presentation could be improved. Homework is regularly set to reinforce learning. However, not all teachers follow the guidelines as published in the school marking policy, and work is sometimes unmarked. Pupils do receive praise for good work but there is a lack of constructive written advice that pupils could act upon to raise their standard of attainment. More investigative work and opportunities for independent learning are needed so that pupils gain confidence in their own abilities and enhance their learning. The mathematics club provides an opportunity outside the normal school day for some investigative work and is popular with the pupils.

105. The head of department provides satisfactory leadership for a team of experienced teachers. The department has a clear commitment to the raising of standards and attainment is improving. Roles and responsibilities within the department are clearly defined, and there is a detailed policy document that is reviewed each year. Comments made in the previous inspection report have been acted upon, although issues regarding monitoring and evaluation have not been fully addressed. Further development will see the strengthening of target setting for individual pupils and teaching sets. The department is adequately resourced with books, materials and equipment. Information and communication technology resources are extensively used. The accommodation is satisfactory and conveniently suited to enable ease of communication. National Curriculum requirements are fully met. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- Teachers work hard to prepare interesting lessons and the majority of pupils are motivated enough to enjoy them.
- Teachers help pupils to understand some difficult ideas found in this subject, and there is a concerted effort to make sure that pupils understand the technical words used. In this respect there has been real progress since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement:

- Teachers do not make enough use of what they know about individual pupils' achievements to plan lessons that challenge each to give of their best.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to make routine predictions about the outcomes of experiments and devise ways to test that they are fair.

- The school does not have the appropriate equipment to ensure that pupils can develop and improve their abilities to use computers in science lessons.
- Leadership of the department needs to ensure better teaching and higher standards.

106. Pupils enter the school at age 11 with standards that are very low compared to the averages of schools nationally and other schools in similar circumstances. Few pupils have attained the highest level in the national tests at age 11.

107. For each of the past four years, the achievement of pupils aged 14 has been very low when compared with national standards. Very few pupils attained the expected level (Level 5) and above; none gained Level 7. Even when compared with schools in similar circumstances, standards are below average. Results were better in the most recent tests, but pupils have still made little progress since age 11.

108. At age 16, the proportion gaining the higher grades A*C at GCSE is very low compared to the expected standards. In both double and single award science, results are very low when compared with all schools nationally, similar schools and other schools in Liverpool. Pupils gain about one grade less in science than in all the other subjects they take at GCSE. There has been some improvement in the 2001 results, but overall standards are still low.

109. The work observed in lessons at Key Stage 3 is well below average and is higher than external tests suggests. This is due to high rates of absenteeism in 2000, which interrupted learning and depressed attainment. In Year 7 pupils are developing understanding of the movement of planets around the Sun. Year 8 can describe the appearance of rocks and the properties that show how they are formed. Year 9 are aware of the functions of the lungs and explore the effects of smoking. From the work in exercise books, pupils achieve less well than expected. The challenge provided is not high enough, particularly in the area of scientific enquiry. This well below average work contributes to the unsatisfactory performance in the tests at age 14.

110. Some work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 lessons, such as using the ways metals reacts to predict further reactions or beginning to use the word equation for the respiration of yeast, is at or above expected standards. Most of the work observed in lessons and in pupils' written work is well below average. The good work by teachers to help develop literacy skills enables pupils to read, learn and know about the difficult words they will encounter. Pupils find it difficult to use what they know to solve problems or answer questions. For example, they are aware of the words 'enzymes' and 'particles', but they cannot explain what they do in a reaction. This lack of understanding contributes to their low standards at GCSE. Attainment is undermined by pupils' absences, lateness to lessons and, in the case of those studying double award science, insufficient time on the curriculum to fully cover the syllabus.

111. At both key stages, pupils know how to use computers to find information from CD-ROMs or the Internet. However, their ability to use sensors for collecting data and to present it in a form that can be used to look for patterns is underdeveloped. There has been no improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' ability to use mathematics to help solve scientific problems is also unsatisfactory. Few can insert data into formulae to find physical quantities or use correct units in their answers. The construction of graphs is underdeveloped. The teachers are aware that improved teaching of numeracy will help pupils achieve higher standards.

112. Pupils are usually interested in, enjoy and make progress in science lessons. Most behave well and participate fully. They enjoy good relationships with their teachers and work well with each other. Some Year 11 pupils constructing parachutes to explore forces and friction were so keen to learn that they sustained concentration throughout the lesson. In this lesson, pupils with special educational needs were suitably challenged and made very good progress. A group of gifted and talented pupils in Year 10 was so enthusiastic about their work on chemical reactivity that they achieved highly in the lesson. Pupils generally enjoy practical work and take part sensibly. They are developing experimental skills at a suitable pace, as seen in a Year 11 lesson where pupils experimented with the effects of particle size on the rate that a reaction will proceed. Many pupils have the confidence to try and answer the questions that teachers ask, though few have the scientific curiosity to ask questions of their own. In one Year 7 lesson about exploring body parts, so many pupils enjoyed the activity that many of them bombarded the teacher with questions about the functions of these organs. In a significant minority of lessons, pupils are not interested in the work and their behaviour becomes more challenging. Their disruptions affect their own learning and that of others in the class. This is particularly true where the subject matter of lessons is too demanding or pupils have carried out the work previously or they are not fully occupied for the whole lesson.

113. Teaching is overall is satisfactory. There is a significant amount of good and very good teaching, but also a significant amount that is unsatisfactory. Teachers are well qualified; confident in the subject matter they teach and work hard to prepare interesting lessons. They plan a range of successful strategies to help pupils learn. Clear instructions help pupils understand exactly what they have to do, for example when a Year 7 class explored the changes that take place when substances are mixed. Well thought out demonstrations, such as the effects of smoking cigarettes on a model of the lungs, motivate pupils to take an interest in the lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge and so are able to help pupils come to grips with difficult ideas in science. For instance, in a geology lesson in Year 8, the teacher gave a simple explanation about the movements inside the Earth so that pupils began to understand the changes taking place within it. Well organised discussions and good use of videos ensure that pupils sustain interest and gain knowledge at a good pace, as in a Year 11 lesson on the effects of alcohol on the body. A hard working laboratory technician provides very good support to teachers and pupils.

114. All teachers set homework frequently and mark this and classwork regularly. Nevertheless, standards of marking are not consistent; not all teachers correct misspelled scientific words or ensure that missing work is completed or provide pupils with informative comments to help them know what they have to do to succeed. When planning lessons, teachers do not pay enough attention to the degree of difficulty of the subject matter, as described by national curriculum levels, or match it accurately to assessment data about their pupils. As a result, lessons are sometimes too difficult for some pupils whilst other lessons fail to challenge them enough. This affects the progress made by pupils who do not build solidly on their previous learning. Teachers do however make good use of the individual education plans of pupils with special needs, and this aspect of the work is well supported by classroom learning assistants.

115. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for routine investigative work. As a result, pupils lack experience in making predictions about the outcomes of experiments, considering how these can be tested fairly and drawing conclusions that involve the use of emerging knowledge. Teachers are very good at helping to develop pupils' literacy skills. In all lessons, lists of words are provided to help with spelling; in

some, pupils are invited to read aloud; some are encouraged to use writing frames so they can write at greater length. These initiatives are supportive of the school literacy strategy.

116. Teachers are confident in the use of computers but they cannot securely plan this aspect of their work because there is no specialist equipment. Teachers make suitable use of the resource centre to let pupils access the Internet. The majority of teachers enjoy secure relationships, though in some lessons, particularly with older pupils, there are weaknesses in controlling behaviour and learning suffers.

117. The department is well managed on a day-to-day level. The head of science, together with the senior management team, effectively monitors lessons to evaluate the consistency of classroom practice. Leadership of the department is not good enough in ensuring that teachers improve their teaching so that pupils are inspired to attain higher standards. There are policies and schemes of work to show the intentions of the department, but not enough guidance to show how these can be realised in classroom practice. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths:

- Good teaching.
- The use of information and communication technology.
- Extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement:

- Further development of three-dimensional skills.
- A more individual approach to media choice in Key Stage 4.
- The use of sketch books for research and direct observational development.

118. Teacher assessments show that pupils' standards of attainment at the age of 14 are average. The proportion of pupils aged 16 gaining grades A* to C in GCSE examinations in 2000 was below the national average. Over the past year, the trend in results has been rising.

119. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards of attainment by the time pupils are 14 are in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. Year 9 pupils are able to use line, tone and texture effectively in their drawings. They observe natural forms quite well and understand three-dimensional concepts. Pupils in Year 7 made effective use of their study of the work of Roy Lichtenstein to build up an understanding of composition and the use of primary colours. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils used information and communication technology skills effectively for researching Henri Rousseau, paying attention to line, shape and pattern. By the time the pupils are 14, they are able to explore ideas and assess visual information, including images and artefacts from different historical and cultural contexts. In a Year 9 lesson, William Morris's work was used as a design example and pupils showed the ability to simplify images and consider textural surfaces. Pupils show greater perceptual depth when they use first-hand observation as a basis for their work. Those with special needs do well in relation to their ability and benefit from individual attention.

120. The work seen at Key Stage 4 is at the standard expected. By the time pupils

are 16, they can experiment and make good observational drawings and paintings. They demonstrate personal interests, ideas and responses to their own and other cultures through the work they produce. Good use is made of combining observation with a range of secondary sources, and they often show the influence of different cultures, important movements in art, or particular artists. They are able to develop and sustain a chosen theme in their work. Sketchbooks are used effectively and there is consideration for the development of language and vocabulary in lessons. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils were able to speak confidently about their work and they demonstrated good knowledge and understanding.

121. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in both key stages. This is a direct result of the high expectations and enthusiasm that the subject specialist teachers bring to their work and the high standards they set. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and apply themselves purposefully to their work. They want to improve and do well, and are eager to explain their work to classmates and visitors alike. There is an effective working ethos within the department, and pupils are expected to behave and do their best.

122. The quality of teaching is good and closely linked to learning. Teachers use their knowledge and expertise to good effect within the classroom, and lesson preparation is very good at all stages. Teachers know pupils well and plan their lessons to meet individual requirements. This is seen to be most effective in the preparation and delivery of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

123. Lessons always start with the teacher identifying what the class will learn and with revision of previous learning. In a Year 9 lesson on composition the teacher showed the class space filling and layout, and, with the use of good resources, proportion and scale were understood. There is emphasis on procedure, methods and care of equipment. Careful, clear explanations and good intervention at key points in pupils' learning enable pupils at both key stages to make good progress. In a Year 11 lesson on coursework for the GCSE examinations, pupils were developing ideas from various resources and making personal choices. They demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the connection made with artists who had influenced their work.

124. Pupils are kept busy and purposeful, and time is used efficiently. Teachers' time management is very good. They have good presentation skills and vary their strategies to meet the needs of their pupils. There is, for example, a good use of open-ended questioning techniques to encourage pupils to think. Homework in Key Stage 4 is good and used well to support ongoing project work. Well-constructed assessments make a significant contribution to the development and progress of pupils' work. A more structured approach to homework is now in place in Key Stage 3, but pupils need to be more aware of their levels of work.

125. The subject is well led and managed. Teaching schemes and departmental policies are now clear and provide good guidance for staff. The head of department monitors the work of the department through classroom observations and work sampling. Assessment procedures across both key stages are effective and inform curriculum planning adequately. There is now access to computers within the department and an involvement in the artist-in-residence programme gives experience of a range of media activities. Extra-curricular activities and visits to galleries and museums have a positive effect upon the quality and range of pupils' work. However, the teaching of claywork is not supported by technical help, and storage and preparation spaces are still inadequate. There are not enough good quality reference books and visual aids to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding across a wide cultural base.

The demands of a successful department require a continuous review of these resources.

126. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. Standards of attainment have improved, as have the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the department. Information and communication technology is now integrated within the art programme. Written aims and objectives are now established, linking programmes of study with teaching approaches.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The quality of provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- Relationships between teachers and pupils.
- The quality of teaching of older pupils.

Areas for improvement:

- The curriculum, to ensure a closer match between what pupils do in class and what they are capable of doing.

127. By age 14, attainment is below average, although there has been a small increase in the number of pupils gaining the higher levels expected nationally. The shortage of time for teaching is holding back standards. This means that pupils with average attainment or lower do not get enough opportunity to practice skills and consolidate what they learn. This can be seen in the poor quality of finish on products and the limited range of design activities. There are also shortcomings in their understanding of technical language. For example in the mechanical toy project, pupils could not identify and name the different mechanical motions.

128. Attainment at age 16 is very low. Work seen during the inspection indicates that there will be a further improvement in standards. However, not all of the more able pupils take a design and technology course so the improvement will not be as good as it could be. The quality of design work is enhanced in GCSE coursework where pupils use ICT to carry out research on the Internet. The quality of their graphic and design work improves significantly in Key Stage 4. This improvement is largely due to the increased time allocation, pairs of teachers who are team teaching and extra-curricular opportunities provided for pupils.

129. In both key stages, teachers include planning for literacy and numeracy in lessons. In all lessons, teachers have a focus on key words for that lesson. This is necessary as pupils' understanding of technical terms is weak. There is some evidence of the use of ICT in programmes for both key stages but this is in the early stages of development. It does not include a computer-aided design or graphics package as yet although there are plans to incorporate this in the near future. Pupils with special education needs make satisfactory progress in both key stages. This is largely because of the individual support from teachers. They could improve more in Key Stage 3 if they had more time and opportunities to practice and consolidate skills.

130. Generally pupils have a good attitude to their work and are willing to make an effort. Given the opportunity, however, they let someone else, including the teacher, do the work for them. The work seen shows that pupils will get on with tasks and complete

them when they are given clear directions and very specific instructions. They are not good at managing their own learning or taking initiative. This should be a priority in the future design of course programmes. During the inspection there was no evidence of poor behaviour. In the practical lessons, for example when pupils were cooking, they helped and supported each other throughout the task.

131. Teachers foster good relationships between pupils and lead by example. This is a strength in their teaching. Pupils respond well to this positive relationship. The school needs to move to the next step to encourage pupils to be more actively involved in their work and to take greater responsibility for their own learning. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. They plan lessons well and their efforts are showing results. They have broken the course down into small manageable portions to provide short-term achievable goals for pupils. This is particularly appropriate for boys and is having an impact on raising achievement. Teachers also put a lot of effort into the way they help pupils to select and manage their major project. This is helping pupils to achieve their potential. They now need to develop more ownership and responsibility for their work amongst the boys. The latter is more evident in the work of the more able boys who are learning self-management skills well.

132. This is an improving department with the capacity to improve further now that most of the facilities have been improved. The improved quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 is having an impact on raising standards. There is a need to improve the quality of resources for activities. Many textbooks seen were for previous courses, such as CDT or home economics. Now that the facilities in the department have been improved, the staff can concentrate on improving the quality and range of the curriculum. There is a good team spirit in the department and a willingness to take advice. The lack of time and range of curricular activity at Key Stage 3 is having an impact on standards. Pupils have to rush their work within the 12-hour modules, which means that they do not have time to practice their design and drawing skills. This has an impact on the quality of the finish on their practical work.

133. There has been some improvement since the last report in significant areas, and these have taken time to implement. The most significant and the most recent has been the addition to the teaching staff, which has improved the quality of teaching. The quality of the accommodation has also taken time to refurbish and upgrade. The department is well placed to take the next steps to improve the curriculum and raise standards.

DRAMA

The overall provision in Drama is excellent.

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching.
- The attainment of pupils at Key Stage 3.

Areas for improvement:

- Specialist accommodation for the subject.

134. After a period when there was no specialist teaching of drama in the school, it is now re-established as a very successful subject in the curriculum. All pupils take it in Key Stage 3 and it is an optional GCSE subject at Key Stage 4.

135. Pupils do not take a national test in drama at age 14, but standards of attainment are above national expectations. This year, pupils were entered for GCSE for the first time since the re-establishment of the subject. The proportion of pupils aged 16 achieving grades A* to C was below the national average, but the proportion achieving grades A* to G was above, with all pupils entered achieving a grade. At age 14, pupils achieved significantly above that expected compared with their attainment at age 11. At age 16, pupils achieved broadly what would be predicted from their attainment at age 14.

136. The standards of pupils aged 14 are above national expectations in work seen during the inspection. Pupils in Year 7 quickly understand the importance of concentration, communication, cooperation and teamwork. They shed their inhibitions in the rapid changes of activity, and their responses show a higher than average level of concentration. In Year 8, many already understand the concept of mime, and all can perform individually. They can plan and perform a well-controlled group slapstick sequence. In Year 9, pupils show familiarity with improvisation and are not self-conscious when they perform pair character pieces. They are able to sustain their characterisation, with relevant gestures and movement and some attempts at appropriate dialogue. All pupils are able to respond to the stimulus of the lessons, irrespective of their levels of prior attainment, and the contributions of pupils with special educational needs are as valued as those of other pupils.

137. Standards seen during the inspection in the work of pupils by aged sixteen were generally in line with those expected nationally. They represent a wide range of prior attainment, but all work together cooperatively and are able to discuss and evaluate their performance in a sensible manner. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils were able to work well in pairs and groups to produce an improvisation, which established character, status and relationship through the use of positioning, movement and dialogue. Their language is still to an extent limited to their ordinary speech, but they were able to recognise the effect of changes in positioning and emphasis on the nature of feelings and relationships. Differences between pupils in levels of prior attainment are not a barrier to all participating fully and contributing effectively to the group and class activities. All have made good progress in the development of drama skills.

138. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good. Pupils' behaviour is very good because they are totally involved in the activities. They are stimulated and engaged by excellent teaching and respond very positively. They are friendly and cooperative with the teacher and each other, eager to participate and do well. They appreciate each other's efforts and are totally involved, showing their enjoyment.

139. The quality of teaching is excellent. Very good knowledge and understanding of the subject informs the planning of well-structured lessons, which enable pupils to develop their skills systematically. Pupils are stimulated and inspired to make very good creative efforts by very lively and skilful presentation which, with great energy, communicates interest and enjoyment. The management of pupils through a range of very well paced activities is excellent. Pupils' learning is excellent as a consequence of the quality of the teaching, and they make very good progress. Pupils in Year 7, having only just arrived in the school, are already engaged by the teaching. Older pupils are enthusiastic in their willingness to take part in school productions. A measure of the quality and success of the teaching is the increased take up of the subject in Key Stage 4, with 2 classes in Year 10 now studying for GCSE drama. Since these pupils are building on drama skills developed for two years in Key Stage 3, it is possible that the

present high level of attainment at Key Stage 3 will be reflected in improved GCSE results.

140. Drama is well managed and organised with the same very high level of knowledge, commitment and energy as it is taught. It makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school and pupils' development through school productions, two drama clubs, the arrangement of visits to theatre performances and visits to the school by theatre companies. The scheme of work is very well organised, and there is good practice in assessment, which includes pupil self-assessment. There is particular recognition of the value of drama for pupils of lower levels of prior attainment and with special educational needs, and the conscious employment of strategies to raise boys' achievement. The only weakness in the provision is the accommodation for drama, which is a dedicated classroom with not enough space to allow full freedom of movement.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths:

- The department's commitment to improving attainment for all pupils.
- The relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Good teaching at Key Stage 3.

Areas for improvement:

- Further development and use of assessment procedures.
- The consistency of lesson planning, particularly in relation to the needs of all pupils.
- Monitoring and evaluating of teaching.

141. At age 14, standards of work are below the national average. However, assessment of work by teachers shows that the proportion of pupils reaching the national average is increasing. During the first three years at this school, pupils make sound gains in their knowledge and understanding. At age 16, pupils' achievements are as expected when compared with their prior attainment. In the GCSE examination in 2000, the proportion of passes at grades A* to C was well below the national average. During the last three years, this pass rate has fluctuated but it is gradually improving. The pass rate at grades A* to G has approached, and sometimes exceeded, the national average during this time.

142. The work seen during this inspection shows that attainment at the ages of 14 and 16 is below average. This situation has not changed since the last inspection. Many pupils enter the school with very low levels of geographical awareness and have great difficulty in writing and in using numbers. At the age of 14, higher attaining pupils can describe briefly how earthquakes and volcanoes are formed, sometimes presenting their work well with good illustrations. They understand how aspects of the physical world affect climatic patterns. Not all lessons are planned with sufficiently challenging activities for these pupils, however, particularly for those who are gifted and talented. As a consequence, they do not extend their understanding to see the links and relationships between places. Lower attaining pupils, when encouraged by very good teaching, show that they can use data from maps and statistics, for example in their studies of population and aspects of development. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in lessons, sometimes with work that is adapted for them,

so that they can contribute well to discussions and write some ideas down. Most pupils lack confidence in their ability to explain ideas in detail, and their written records are brief. Although they can usually understand the special vocabulary associated with the subject, they find it very difficult to record information in logical sequences. Pupils occasionally use information and communications technology (ICT) successfully. For example, they process data collected during fieldwork exercises and then use the results to explain traffic patterns, and they extend their understanding of environmental issues through research.

143. The work seen during this inspection shows that attainment at age 16 is below average. Higher attaining pupils have a good grasp of essential numerical and statistical skills and can write extended paragraphs, for example on the impact of floods in Bangladesh. They produce accurate course work folders, sometimes using computers, in which they process data to show the impact of visitors in a National Park. Lower attaining pupils have great difficulty in writing and in displaying information clearly. Therefore they do not include enough detailed information or accurate explanation of geographical processes in their answers. Some struggle to complete simple graphs and do not understand the patterns that they show. These problems are compounded for pupils who do not attend regularly and who therefore miss work.

144. Pupils usually show enthusiasm for their work and are keen to answer questions. The very good relationships that exist between the teachers and their pupils mean that pupils try hard and are anxious to please. They often find independent activity difficult during practical tasks, and seek constant reassurance from their teachers. They behave well in lessons where a variety of stimulating resources and activities has been planned. However, pupils' concentration wanes rapidly when tasks are not fully understood and their behaviour deteriorates. A small proportion of older pupils are unwilling to co-operate in lessons and disrupt their own and others' learning.

145. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9, satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, and good overall. Over half the lessons seen were good or very good. Where teaching is very good, pupils achieve highly and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 8, the teacher's excellent subject knowledge, enthusiastic approach and very good resources meant that pupils rapidly understood how processes of erosion shaped the landscape. They extended their vocabulary quickly because key words were built into the discussion and recorded for future use. Writing tasks specifically planned and adapted to the needs of different groups enabled higher attaining pupils to work well. Lower attaining pupils gained in confidence as they completed sentences with the new words they had learnt.

146. In lessons where classroom assistants are available, pupils with special educational needs make good, and sometimes very good, progress. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 7, pupils built up their understanding of symbols on maps very rapidly. The constant efforts of the teacher, working in close partnership with a colleague, meant that a great deal of individual attention was given to those who needed extra help and they achieved very well. The practice of planning for the needs of all pupils in lessons is not consistent across the department, so that some learning opportunities are missed. In the one unsatisfactory lesson observed, the same tasks were set for all pupils but were too difficult for most. They did not understand how to proceed and so their learning was restricted. Occasionally, some older pupils display resistant attitudes in lessons. Their learning is therefore too slow, despite the best efforts of the teacher to encourage and engage them in activities.

147. The leadership and management of the department are good and it runs smoothly, with good relationships between teachers and a commitment to raising the attainment and achievement of all pupils. However, opportunities are not always taken to share very good classroom practice and expertise between teachers, and through this to eliminate the small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. New strategies for marking and assessing pupils' work are now in place, with an emphasis on frequent written comments to show pupils how well they are achieving. However, in Years 7 to 9, these comments do not yet relate to the levels described in the National Curriculum, and so pupils do not know how to improve their performance in relation to national standards. Although there are now more lessons planned using ICT activities, they are still infrequent. Pupils therefore have limited opportunities to extend their geographical understanding in this way. In Years 10 and 11, the department provides generous support to pupils outside lessons, particularly in the completion of their course work. This is helping to raise standards.

148. The department has made good progress in tackling the issues raised at the time of the last inspection. There is now some very good teaching within the department, and this is increasing the quality of pupils' learning. The school now provides much more information on pupils' prior attainment. The department is using this to generate a greater awareness of the requirements of all pupils.

HISTORY

The quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths:

- The high quality of teaching.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers.
- The opportunities which teachers offer their pupils to improve their skills in information technology.
- The emphasis which teachers place on literacy and presentation.

Areas for improvement:

- There should be more opportunities for paired and group work during lessons.
- Teachers should provide their pupils with more extensive comments in exercise books on what they need to do to make better progress.
- Pupils are not fully aware of the grades or levels at which they are working.

149. At the end of Year 9, standards are below average. Pupils enter school with very low attainment levels, but they make good progress in their first three years, including those who often find the work difficult. The accurate use of technical terms is a developing strength, and pupils are beginning to evaluate different kinds of sources. GCSE results in 2000 were well below the national average, but they compare favourably with the results in other subjects, and there has been a steady improvement since the last inspection. Numbers opting for the subject are increasing. Pupils also make good progress in Years 10 and 11. They draw convincing conclusions from a wide variety of evidence and are beginning to approach essay writing with real skill.

150. Standards of work seen during the inspection were much better than examination results indicate, mainly because of the improved quality of teaching and the use of thought-provoking resources. Year 7 pupils have made a good start to their secondary history course and can deduce aspects of ancient history

by studying a Greek vase. In Year 8, for example, pupils can use several texts, pictures and cartoons to make reasoned decisions on whether Henry VII was a devout Catholic. Moreover, a large minority can use their findings to write a short yet well argued essay. Pupils in Year 9 have a good knowledge of the background to the French Revolution and talk about the problems facing Louis XVI with confidence. In Years 10 and 11, pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the long-term causes of the First World War, and they are well aware of the problems facing the Weimar Republic after 1919. Although they understand the key words associated with the topics they are studying and can answer quite searching questions correctly, the majority of pupils still find extended writing difficult and this prevents them reaching the highest grades.

151. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall and, because their teachers treat them with dignity, they respond positively to what is on offer. Their behaviour leaves nothing to be desired, they work well with their classmates and they are often desperate to answer questions during lessons. Moreover, they present their written work neatly and demonstrate a real pride in what they do. They like to show visitors, whom they treat with the utmost respect, their assignments displayed in the history area.

152. Teaching overall is good and a major strength of the department. It ensures that pupils are given opportunities to learn in the ways that suit them best. It is characterised by pace, high expectations of what pupils can do, support for all, an emphasis on literacy and extensive use of information technology to motivate pupils and to allow them to work at their own speed. During the inspection, teaching was never less than satisfactory, and in half of the lessons it was very good or excellent. Very good teaching was seen in both key stages. Teachers encourage rather than demand and pupils, therefore, have the utmost confidence in them and are not afraid to make mistakes. Pupils respond well to the high levels of challenge. In a Year 10 group for example, studying the underlying causes of World War One, higher-attaining pupils taught each other and encouraged their peers to think more deeply about the topics under consideration. In a Year 11 lesson, the use of a computer programme to illustrate hyper-inflation in Germany in 1923 led to a gasp of amazement and is probably a session that pupils will remember for a long time to come. There is praise, humour and support in every lesson. No pupils are excluded from the curriculum, and the teachers' skilled methods of questioning mean that pupils of all attainment levels play an active part in the lessons. In addition, pupils are happy when their classmates succeed, and thoroughly enjoyed the Year 8 lesson on the start of the Tudor dynasty when the teacher read out good examples of pupils' work to the whole class. All teachers in the department have real presence, know their subject well, and are concerned to recognise the industry, efforts and skills of their pupils. To this end, the displays of pupils' work in the classrooms are used not only as a teaching resource but are also designed to celebrate success.

153. The department is led well, and the mix of experience and talents of the teachers operating within the area enriches the quality of management. All members of staff share a vision for the teaching of history and they work hard to provide resources to motivate, interest and challenge their pupils. They care deeply for the welfare of the youngsters in their charge and are now looking at ways of meeting their learning needs even more exactly.

154. The department has made good improvements since the last inspection. GCSE results are slightly higher and the quality of teaching is better. The provision for

information technology within the department is excellent and documentation produced by the teachers is of high quality. The department is, therefore, well placed for future development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall the quality of provision of ICT is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and give clear explanations that help pupils to learn.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils.
- Pupils are interested in the subject and behave well in lessons.
- Good use is made of support staff in lessons.
- The introduction of ICT GNVQ option.

Areas for improvement:

- More work aimed at higher attaining pupils
- Sufficient time for the subject in Key Stage 3 to fully cover the scheme of work.
- Better use of National Curriculum attainment targets in Key Stage 3 to help pupils to set their own targets for improvement.
- A range of certificated courses in Key Stage 4 for pupils of all attainment levels.

155. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2001 indicate that the majority of pupils are working below the nationally expected level, which was similar to results in 2000. The standards of work of pupils aged 14 and 16 seen during the inspection are below the level expected nationally. However pupils following the GNVQ course in Year 10 are working at the expected level for their age.

156. In Year 7, pupils can log on to the network, and know the importance of the confidentiality of their password. They show basic word processing skills, whilst higher attaining pupils are able to use a range of font styles to make their presentation more attractive. Pupils in Year 8 understand the concept of cells in spreadsheets and cell location. They are able to enter data, highlight sections of spreadsheets and create a variety of graphs. In Year 9, pupils understand how to write commands in logo, but need help sheets. Higher attaining pupils show a good grasp of the subject. Pupils in Year 10 are able to use a search engine to find information on the Internet. However, many pupils lack the ability to make sophisticated searches, and over half the class are working below the level expected for this age group. In Year 11, pupils can access images from the Internet, and make use of these to enhance written documents, although this type of work is more appropriate for pupils in Key Stage 3.

157. There is satisfactory achievement by pupils in the subject. Results in 2001 indicate that pupils' achievement is better in Years 8 and 9 than in Year 10, where three

quarters of the pupils were still working at National Curriculum Level 5, which is below that expected for this age group.

158. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about the subject. They stay focussed on tasks set. They can work independently when given the opportunity and also co-operate well when working in pairs. They are responsive in question and answer sessions. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and respond well to teachers, with whom they have good relationships. Many pupils attend computer clubs at lunchtime and after school, and those pupils who have opted for GNVQ have made a commitment to attend one lesson after school each week.

159. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but it is good at Key Stage 3. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to give clear explanations that help pupils to learn. The good relationships between pupils and teachers mean that pupils respond well to teachers' instructions. Teachers make good use of the new technology, such as interactive white boards and data projectors, which maintains pupils' motivation for the subject, as well as giving pupils clear information about tasks they are required to do. Lessons are well planned and generally tasks selected are appropriate to pupils' attainment levels. However, there is sometimes insufficient challenge for some higher attaining pupils, who could complete more extended tasks. Although there are comprehensive records of pupils' attainment, little use is made of national curriculum levels to help pupils understand how well they are doing, and how they might improve in the subject.

160. In all lessons, pupils make progress as they learn new skills and reinforce existing ones. Gains in knowledge and understanding are faster at Key Stage 3. In Year 7, pupils learn how to log on to the network. In Year 8, pupils learn how to create a variety of graphs from data, and how this conveys information visually. Pupils in Year 9, who have little experience of using logo, make good progress as they quickly learn how to produce commands to move the pointer in desired directions. In GNVQ in Year 10, pupils make good progress as they learn about agendas and minutes and show confident use of multimedia software. Progress over longer periods of time is more limited because pupils only have ICT lessons for half a term before changing to another subject for the next half term. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have only eighteen hours of ICT each year, which is half that needed to complete the ICT schemes of work.

161. The department is well managed. Staff and resources are well deployed, and considerable efforts are made to provide quality equipment for pupils and teachers. The well-planned and monitored New Opportunities Fund training has enabled eighty percent of the staff to complete ICT training specific to their subject.

162. There has been a satisfactory response to the last inspection. Pupils continue to be interested in the subject and make at least satisfactory progress in lessons although they do not reach the levels expected for their age. Teaching is always satisfactory and often good. New computers have recently been installed, giving pupils the opportunity to use up-to-date technology. The increased availability of computers, more powerful software and recent training has helped many departments to make better use of ICT in their teaching. The school Intranet allows pupils to access information in a number of subjects. The teaching of history using ICT is excellent and a model to be followed by other subjects.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is very good.

Strengths:

- French is well taught at Campion RC School.
- Lessons are characterised by clear planning.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils, and boys develop good spoken French.

Areas for improvement:

- Extending and formalising the use of ICT to support language learning.
- Giving all pupils, but particularly older pupils more opportunities to direct their own learning through more open-ended work.

163. Attainment in French, the only language taught at Campion, is below the national average at age 14, although the attainment of higher attaining pupils is at least in line with the national average. All pupils can talk about a range of simple activities that they did during the holidays. Higher attaining pupils are quite confident in using the past tense. Speaking is the strongest skill for all pupils. The highest attainers can write extended passages with reasonable accuracy. Average and lower-attaining pupils and those with special needs achieve success in writing with various levels of guidance and support from their teacher. For all pupils, the skill of reading is the least well developed, but the department has plans to develop reading at all levels. Given the boys' low attainment on entry, all make satisfactory progress and higher attaining boys make good progress.

164. Results in external examinations are amongst the best in the school, although still below the national average at GCSE grades A* to C. Most pupils who choose to continue to study French in Years 10 and 11 make good progress. Older pupils and those approaching the GCSE examination engage in extended speaking and write at greater length and with increased accuracy about a range of topics. GCSE results in French were approaching the national average for boys in 2000 and have shown a marked improvement in each of the past three years to 2001. Older pupils currently in the school show levels of performance that suggest that this trend is set to continue.

165. A major contributor to the success of language learning in the school is the positive attitude of the pupils towards their learning. This is due to the precise planning and clear objectives set for French lessons, which are geared to ensuring that all pupils

irrespective of their level of attainment can achieve some success. Teaching is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4. Teaching is a major strength of the languages department: nearly three-quarters of the lessons seen during the inspection were good or very good. Most lessons proceed with pace and ensure that all pupils have ample opportunity to develop language knowledge and practise oral skills. Marking of written work is conscientious and helpful, and pupils' progress is efficiently tracked. Older pupils know clearly the targets that they have to meet to achieve examination success. A characteristic of the teaching of French is the way in which the work has been planned to concentrate on a narrow range of topics and activities. This ensures that what pupils know, they know well and so they use their language with confidence. Nevertheless, lesson content is closely controlled by the teacher, and because of this there are insufficient opportunities, particularly for older pupils, to pursue their own language interests or to engage in more open-ended work.

166. The languages department is very well led by a dedicated and experienced teacher, and both teachers of French collaborate well. This contributes well to the success of the department, as does the helpful scheme of work, which promotes effective lesson planning. Nevertheless, the use of ICT and a systematised reading plan to develop and support work in French are not adequately built into the scheme of work. There is a clear and realistic development plan for languages, which focuses on raising boys' achievement. However, the modern languages curriculum that the school offers is unsatisfactory in that there are no opportunities for pupils to study two languages and that insufficient time is given to the teaching of French in Years 7 and 9.

167. The school has worked hard to address the issues raised by the last inspection. The accuracy of pupils' writing has been much improved, and both higher and lower attainers now make satisfactory progress because work is planned to match the needs of all pupils. Reading, however, remains a weakness. Teaching, an issue at the last inspection because of staff absence is good throughout.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

Strengths:

- Good teaching.

Areas for improvement:

- Raise attainment at Key Stage 4.

168. By the age of 14, pupils attain standards in line with pupils nationally. By the age of 16, those taking the GCSE examination in music attain results well below the national average. Bearing in mind that few pupils enter the school from a background of flourishing musical activities, pupils' achievements from Year 7 through to Year 9 are good and some make very good progress. Progress through Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory in relation to their gains in knowledge and skills in Key Stage 3. The music teacher works hard to raise standards and responds to the learning needs of all pupils under 14 by actively encouraging practical music making. The GCSE results have been improving since the last inspection. Although the GCSE results are well below the national average, they are very good compared to results in many other subjects in the school. In 2001, grades in the A* to C range were attained by about one third, and all pupils gained grades in the A* to G range. Since the previous inspection, three relatively large cohorts have gained 100% A* to G grades, and this figure is above the national average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall and often do better than their peers. Gifted and talented pupils make sound progress but there is room for them to make more rapid progress.

169. In work seen during the inspection, by the age of 14 pupils have developed their musicianship in line with national expectations. In the work observed in lessons, in work scrutiny and in discussion, pupils demonstrated a secure knowledge of musical notation, melodic variation, intonation and dynamics. Most pupils are able to use a simple computer programme to assist them in composing. Their literary skills are enhanced by their knowledge of musical words, such as riff, hook and sequence. Pupils have under developed skills at performing confidently on melodic musical instruments or singing with expression or feeling in class.

170. By the age of 16, despite the teacher's hard work, the boys do not reach national expectations at GCSE. Although it was evident that the syllabus is well covered, the boys have not as yet spent sufficient time on homework, examination revision and private instrumental practice to reach national standards. In lessons, boys demonstrated sound knowledge of the major differences in styles of Chabrier, Elgar and Berg, but there was little evidence to show that they listened to any of this music outside lessons. In a Year 11 group guitar lesson, the boys progressed well but most were only beginners and therefore had much to do before their GCSE practical exams. Boys are using ICT well in their GCSE lessons but need now to move on to more advanced and sophisticated programmes in order to enhance their compositional skills. Boys with special educational needs make average progress in GCSE music lessons but do not have the support of classroom assistants.

171. The boys' behaviour and attitudes in all lessons observed were predominantly positive, and they were very good in a third of lessons seen. Boys in all year groups respond well to the teacher and appreciate all the help, understanding and encouragement that they regularly receive. The good uptake of extra activities indicates that the boys enjoy making music together, particularly the rock bands and school productions.

172. The teaching of music is good. It particularly meets the needs of those up to the age of 14 with special educational needs. The teacher maximises the generous resource of two teaching areas, and actively promotes keyboard work in one room and computer work and percussion work in the other. The teacher uses these good quality resources well and provides a good variety of activities for all pupils. The teacher demonstrates musical styles and techniques well and provides good quality handouts for both the older and younger pupils. Teaching is more effective with pupils up to the age of 14. With this age group the teacher taught variation form using Frere Jacques in four languages, taught composition very competently using percussion instruments and simple computer programming using the new computers. The boys' learning is progressing well because they are actively involved, keen and enthusiastic. They therefore acquire new skills of composing, performing and appraising.

173. The teaching of the GCSE pupils is effective in that all boys gain an A* to G grade in most years but it is less effective in that few of the higher grades (A*, A and B) are attained. The teacher engages the boys' attention but does not always provide or monitor extension activities for the more able by providing individual learning programmes. The teacher works hard to provide interesting learning materials and enjoys the respect of the majority of the boys. The GCSE pupils' productivity and pace of working is not as effective as that of younger pupils because they do not devote enough time outside lessons to the improvement of their performance skills. The teacher gives generously to after-school activities and tries to choose activities that the boys will enjoy. Free instrumental teaching is of a good quality and adds much to the boys' musical education, irrespective of their learning abilities.

174. The department is well led and managed by a committed and conscientious teacher. He manages the resources and the visiting instrumental teachers well. He devotes many hours to extra-curricular work and liaises well with feeder schools. The annual musical productions, rock band, and other ensembles contribute much to the boys' social and cultural development. The department's contribution to the spiritual and religious life of the school is positive and very much appreciated. The department needs

now to work on assessment procedures and the use of assessment information to promote individual learning programmes for all boys. The department is fully aware that its focus needs to be on raising GCSE attainment levels. The ICT aspects of the GCSE course should be developed so that all boys have regular access to a more complex computer programme than the one used during inspection week.

175. Since the previous inspection, progress has been good and well sustained. The department works well with the drama department and promotes high quality productions. The computer equipment has much improved. The accommodation is generous and used well. The peripatetic instrumentalists enjoy teaching at the school. The school promotes a clear understanding of the boys' own cultures and the rich diversity of other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The quality of the teaching.
- The positive relationships between staff and pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The balance and range of activities provided for pupils aged 14 to 16.
- The time allocated to physical education for pupils aged 14 to 16.

176. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 and evidence from lesson observations indicate that overall standards meet national expectations in all areas of physical education. Most pupils are able to apply the techniques, skills and competition rules to several aspects of the curriculum, including basketball and football. Basic skills are sound for a majority of the pupils and provide a platform for future development. In basketball, many Year 8 boys are able to pass accurately and use space effectively. Many Year 9 boys in football have very good basic control and passing skills and a significant minority have refined these skills to become exceptional footballers. The ability of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 to observe and analyse performance is still developing, but where it does occur, it is contributing to their improvement in performance.

177. GCSE results for 2000 were significantly below the national expectation for A* to C grades, although they were considerably better than the school average. The attainment of other pupils by the end of Key Stage 4 conforms to the national average. Pupils in a Year 10 GCSE practical lesson had good tracking and general racquet skills and were able to successfully execute a good range of shots with considerable accuracy. In a lesson on health-related fitness, Year 10 pupils were beginning to develop a sound understanding of how preparation, training and fitness relate to and affect performance.

178. The achievement of pupils in most lessons at both key stages is good and is never less than satisfactory. In Key Stage 3, progress was good in the majority of lessons and very good in one lesson. Pupils are encouraged to develop not only skills but also some understanding of the techniques and rules. In most Key Stage 3 lessons, pupils demonstrated increasing control and levels of accuracy in a range of skills. An example of very good progress was observed in a Year 9 football lesson, where pupils

developed good passing and highly sophisticated control skills, which they applied to a controlled game situation. At Key Stage 4, progress and learning is also good. In a Year 10 badminton lesson, all pupils developed accurate racquet skills and were able to apply these to a series of long rallies where they significantly improved their movement around court and their tactical awareness.

179. An impressive number of staff help to provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities and fixtures with other schools. As a result, pupils have many opportunities to extend and develop their skills. School teams compete very successfully with other schools in a range of sports, achieving outstanding success in football. Many pupils achieve representative honours.

180. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive at both key stages. Most are enthusiastic, well behaved, and co-operative, demonstrating a real enjoyment of the subject. They are attentive and able to sustain concentration. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Opportunities for pupils to work independently at Key Stage 3 are developing. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and undertake different roles, such as coach or official, are limited to Key Stage 4.

181. The quality of teaching is good in most lessons at both key stages and was never less than satisfactory. Very good teaching was seen in both key stages, and in these lessons a secure knowledge of the subject is regularly conveyed to pupils through perceptive observation of performance, appropriate intervention and good teacher directed question and answer sessions. Thorough planning, incorporating varied teaching strategies and an appropriate sequence of activities involving both individual and collaborative learning are also a feature of these lessons. However, GCSE theory work is constrained by use of the text book and there is little evidence of extended work for the most able or of any individual research and use of information technology. Class management is very good. Assessment of performance during lessons by teachers is regularly used to enhance teaching and learning, although evaluation by pupils is still developing and is not consistently applied. The recording of assessment using specific criteria linked to schemes of work and involving pupils to set their own targets is not being used consistently. Nevertheless, a very good example of this was seen in a Year 11 GCSE practical lesson on badminton. Here pupils were given a clear indication of the level at which they were working and what was specifically required for them to improve in a range of shots. Progress in this lesson was very good. Although the assessment of GCSE theory work is providing the appropriate information for pupils to make the necessary improvements to their work, the quantity and breadth of this work does not reflect the amount of time spent on it.

182. The curriculum meets statutory requirements at both key stages. However, the range of activities at Key Stage 4 does not provide a sound preparation for post-16 leisure activities. The time allocated to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is not adequate to fulfil the requirements of the national curriculum. Schemes of work for Key Stage 3 are good working documents, but they do not provide specific guidance on developing the potential of the more able pupils. Schemes of work for Key Stage 4 are still developing.

183. A new head of department has worked extremely hard over the last year. The organisation and leadership of the department is good, and day-to-day organisation and communication within the department is very good. The head of department articulates a clear educational direction for the department and a good departmental handbook

clearly identifies policies and procedures. Both staff are good role models, are committed and give generously of their time. Although the department has appropriate and clearly identified targets, development planning lacks the necessary detail to ensure that effective progress is made to meet these targets, and there are no clear long term targets.

184. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory and many issues raised in the last inspection report have been successfully addressed. However, the time allocated to pupils in Year 11 is still unsatisfactory and this now extends to Year 10 and to some pupils in Year 9. Non-participants are now fully engaged in lessons. There are now many more opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance and the performance of others, but opportunities for planning are still restricted. A formal system of assessment now exists but is still developing and does not yet provide pupils with individual targets. Indoor facilities have improved considerably, but outdoor facilities are still woefully inadequate and limit the range of activities offered, especially at Key Stage 4.