

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CHARLES READ HIGH SCHOOL

Corby Glen, Grantham

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120638

Headteacher: Mr G Bett

Reporting inspector: Terence Parish

15465

Dates of inspection: 19th - 21st May 2003

Inspection number: 249217

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bourne Road
Corby Glen
Grantham
Lincolnshire

Postcode: NG33 4NT

Telephone number: 01476 550333

Fax number: 01476 550776

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Lady Willoughby d'Eresby

Date of previous inspection: 21st September 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15465	T Parish	Registered inspector	Design and technology	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12775	J Goodchild	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30702	P Bowyer	Team inspector	Mathematics	
30825	K Hayton	Team inspector	Science	
6642	P T Hill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design	
3943	D Innes	Team inspector	Physical education	
18967	B Loydell	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs The work of the special educational needs unit Assessment of pupils' special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31332	J Marshall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
18950	C Rodney	Team inspector	English Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
30072	J Skivington	Team inspector	Citizenship Music Religious education Educational inclusion	
20497	V H Williams	Team inspector	Geography History	

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 4XA

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Charles Read is a secondary modern school for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years. With 186 pupils it is very much smaller than average. Almost three-quarters of pupils are boys. The number of pupils starting in Year 7 is increasing and the school is now more often a first choice with parents than it has been in recent years. Pupils' attainment when they start in Year 7 is typically well below average, but is better in the current Year 7; it is below average. The proportions of pupils having special educational needs and statements of special educational need are well above average. The nature of special educational needs is diverse; learning difficulties and emotional difficulties predominate. Pupils come from a wide area. Few are from the local village. Typically around 40 pupils leave and start at the school at times other than the start and end of school years; pupil mobility is high. Very few pupils may use a language other than English at home; almost all pupils are white English. Staffing the school has been a problem, particularly for art and design, French and music, though teachers are currently in place.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Though standards of work are below average and GCSE results are well below average, pupils do better than might be expected due to good teaching and very good care. The relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good. Their attitudes and behaviour are good overall and their attendance satisfactory. Very good leadership and very good management have enabled the school to improve very significantly over recent years and new developments, such as GNVQ ICT are also proving very successful. Each pupil in the school costs far more to educate than is average due to the nature of the school – it is small. Consequently, despite all the good and better features it has, the school does not give value for money. The only way it can is to have significantly more pupils.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well
- Leadership and management are very good and have enabled the school to make excellent progress over the last five years
- Provision for special educational needs is very good
- Pupils receive very good pastoral and academic care
- GNVQ information and communication technology (ICT) is a success; very good teaching means pupils achieve very well and attain standards above average

What could be improved

- The most able pupils need to be challenged further so that they attain high grades at GCSE
- Pupils' standard of writing – accuracy and construction - is unsatisfactory across the school
- Support for single person departments, particularly art and design and French needs to improve further
- Teachers knowledge and understanding of the religious education curriculum

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last full inspection was in September 1998, just after the current head teacher took up his post. Improvement since then has been excellent; academic standards have risen, attitudes and behaviour are very much improved and attendance is better. Another inspection in 2001 recognised the progress that had been made and identified areas for further development. Since then overall GCSE results have gone down and up, depending upon the

nature of the pupils in Year 11 and whether the school has been fully staffed. The trend in results over several years is upwards. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved. Pupils' oracy, their ability to speak to adults, each other, and out loud to the class, has improved following the school's work to foster confidence in talking. There is now more good or better teaching than at the time of the 2001 report. The number of exclusions for unsatisfactory behaviour is falling. Improvement since 2001 has been good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2002	
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The comparison of this school's GCSE results is made with other schools where pupils' abilities are similar when they start in Year 7. This school is unique in many ways, for example its small size and the high proportion of pupils who start and leave during the school year, so the comparison with other schools has to be treated with caution. Small class sizes and a high number of learning support assistants do help the school overcome obstacles to learning to a significant extent. Typically, standards of work are well below average across Years 7-8 but are better in the current Year 7; they are below average. Standards are below average across Years 9-11. Pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 9, well between then and the end of Year 11 and well overall. Pupils are doing better than might be expected in most subjects though recent staffing problems have adversely affected their progress in French, music, and art and design. These difficulties have been resolved but it will take time for pupils to achieve appropriately in these subjects. No subject specialist for religious education is an ongoing situation which restricts progress pupils might make if they did have a specialist teacher. GCSE design and technology is a success; from Year 7 to GCSE, pupils achieve very well and leave with results in line with the national average. GNVQ ICT is a rising star; standards of work are above average. GCSE standards overall have risen faster than the national trend of improvement over the last four years. There are fluctuations, results were better in 2000 and 2001 than 2002, but the results of two or three pupils affect such comparisons, so the trend is more important. There are very few grade B or better grades at GCSE except in design and technology and in ICT.

Pupils take National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9. The overall standard and standards in English and science tests were well below the national average in 2002; mathematics test results were below average. However, overall test results in 2002 were good compared to the standards pupils had when they started at the school. Mathematics results were very much higher than might have been expected; the other two were as expected. From 1999, results in English and in mathematics have improved rapidly. Results in science followed suit from 2000. In 2002, improvement in all three slowed and the four-year school trend is now in line with the national trend of improvement.

The school's statutory targets for GCSE were not quite met in 2002 but, again, the weaker than expected results of just two or three pupils caused that. Targets are appropriate and closely follow forecasts from the very good assessment procedures used in the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like the school and settle down to work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall – an appropriate number are excluded from time to time – often very good in lessons, corridors, at lunchtime and at play.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good between pupils and pupils and teachers. Pupils' personal development in the sense of taking on responsibilities, including getting down to learning on their own, is satisfactory.
Attendance	Average for a secondary school. Given most come in on buses and some pupils did not attend well at their previous secondary schools, attendance is better than might be expected.

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.

Teaching and learning in English and in mathematics are good in all years and in science they are satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning of ICT are very good. Teaching and learning in French is still developing following recent staff training; planning and methods of working have yet to be consolidated and are currently unsatisfactory in Years 7-9. Planning of work is also a weakness in religious education as there is no specialist teacher and teachers' knowledge about the subject is limited. Teachers' very good relationships with pupils aid both teaching and learning and have benefited pupils' oracy; they talk well in class and explain their work to each other and the teacher. In the main teachers also plan lessons well and manage pupils so that any potential problems are minimised. Teachers are becoming familiar with new technology such as 'interactive' boards connected to computers. The use of these is sharpening up how lessons start, bringing up to date subject information to pupils through Internet links, and stimulating interest amongst pupils.

Literacy is taught satisfactorily overall. The focus on oracy since the 2001 report has raised standards of oracy; many pupils are confident speakers. However, writing is not taught well enough now and pupils are not learning how to put together sentences to form longer pieces of writing adequately. Skills of numeracy are taught well in mathematics and generally satisfactorily elsewhere, though this varies considerably from subject to subject.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs are met very well both when withdrawn from classes for specialist teaching and support and when supported in classes by learning support assistants. Pupils who are relatively more able are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons or in homework to make them do as well as they can. GNVQ ICT is a notable exception to this – relatively more able pupils are well challenged.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Statutory requirements are met. The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11 where GNVQ ICT is contributing very well to pupils' achievement. Art and design, modern languages and music are now in a position to develop appropriately.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. A high number of learning support assistants are allocated successfully to subjects. There is very good monitoring of pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Good spiritual, moral and social development. Satisfactory cultural development; more needs to be done to reflect the diversity of cultures in Britain and art and design, music and drama have yet to develop sufficiently.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good, both pastorally and academically. Small numbers of pupils means each pupil is well known to teachers and other adults in the school. Academic assessment is very good and enabling the progress of pupils to be tracked and supported though more has yet to be done for the most able. The school works satisfactorily with parents. The distance of the school from homes, coupled with limited transport and shift work, makes frequent contact difficult.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff. Good management overall by teachers in charge of subjects. The school has been moved on from not providing a satisfactory standard of education to one providing good learning experiences. Weaker subjects are making progress; stronger ones are meeting, sometimes exceeding national expectations. Finances are secure and enabling resources to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. They too have shifted the school from serious difficulties, including a deficit, to its present position. They are also knowledgeable about how different subjects are getting on. They are clear about how the school must now move on to ensure value for money is improved. Statutory duties are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school's self evaluation of test and examination performance, teaching, attendance and pupils' and parents' views is very good. The response of all teachers to such evaluation is good overall.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing is satisfactory and opportunities to improve it, including extensive training on the job, are regularly taken. Money is very well allocated to planning and specific funds, such as those for special educational needs, used very well. Best value criteria are applied well to significant purchases and through the school's extensive self evaluation procedures. Learning resources are good, accommodation satisfactory; indoor sports facilities could be better and some specialist areas lack space.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school• Their children make good progress• Teaching is good• They are well informed about progress• The school has high expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few parents think behaviour is not good enough• The amount of homework• The range of activities available outside lessons

Few parents replied to the questionnaire and only eight attended the parents' meeting. The team supports parents' positive comments, though relatively more able pupils need to be challenged more. Behaviour is good. Homework varies in quality but is satisfactory overall. The range of activities outside lessons is more limited than in a large school but many teachers give up most of their time to pupils at lunchtime and there is quite a lot of sport for boys after school (small numbers of girls make team games for them difficult). Pupils catching buses make after school activities harder to run. The relatively small numbers of teachers also mean there are fewer available to run activities than there are in a larger school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Due to a fifth of pupils joining and leaving the school throughout the year and almost a third of pupils having special educational needs, which may change during the year as the pupils do, statistical analysis of results does not confirm anything. It is true that pupils in 2002 achieved satisfactorily overall in their GCSE examinations and pupils are currently making good progress in their lessons. Impediments to them doing better in examinations include disruptions to learning through changing schools, poor retention of facts, and weaknesses in writing. They do better when they have more control of their work and they have opportunities to improve on it, for example the making side of resistant materials technology, the folio aspect of food technology and GNVQ ICT units of work. Otherwise they do very well in the D-G range of GCSE grades but find the A*-C grades, which do require better knowledge and written responses, more elusive.

2. Standards of work until the end of Year 8 are broadly well below average. They then pick up due to good teaching and pupils' achieve satisfactorily overall by the end of Year 9. From then on progress continues, pupils achieve well, and standards by the end of Year 11 are broadly below average. From when they start in Year 7 to the end of Year 11 pupils achieve well overall.

3. Pupils enter the school with low reading ages but they make good progress from Year 7 through to Year 11 because of the emphasis on using words and books. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in increasing pupils' oracy skills. This is leading to pupils having the confidence to organise and sustain spoken contributions on work and to talk at length to visitors. Pupils use good oral skills in geography, art and design, design and technology, and history. In art and design they give presentations on their work, while in history they discuss work together. However, there is limited use of these skills in subjects such as mathematics and religious education. Overall, pupils are not yet managing to adapt their speech for different situations. In mathematics pupils read and interpret questions accurately and in art and design they can use written information for research. Overall, pupils' standards in writing are below average with weaknesses in spelling, sentence structure, punctuation and organisation; they have difficulty producing coherent paragraphs. More work needs to be done on constructing sentences, with attention to planning, editing and proof-reading to ensure greater coherence and precision.

4. Standards in numeracy are variable, from well below average to average; standards are better, overall, amongst younger pupils than older ones due to the positive effect of the National Numeracy strategy.

5. Many pupils with special educational needs enter the school with attainment well below the national average. Pupils with general or specific learning difficulties in particular have low levels of literacy, their reading and spelling ages are often well below their chronological ages. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties also have low attainment on entry to the school combined with low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in their own abilities. Intensive programmes by withdrawal from normal lessons for short periods help those with specific learning difficulties develop strategies to improve spelling and reading. Those with general learning difficulties rarely have their reading ages raised beyond 9 years, but otherwise make good progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants are particularly successful at improving pupils' confidence and self-esteem, which enables them to succeed in many areas. Overall, pupils with special

educational needs make good progress, although the standards they reach depends on their particular difficulties and starting point.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils have good attitudes towards school. They demonstrate a good work ethic and determination to succeed. The school aims to raise pupils' aspirations and enable them to make informed choices about their work and future options. Links with Trent University, for example, encourage pupils to consider entering higher education. When given the opportunity pupils are willing to take part in concerts and represent the school in sporting competitions. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the school community.

7. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. Staff respect and value pupils and help them to achieve their potential. Girls, a minority, are well integrated into the school; neither girls nor boys feel as if they are treated differently because of the difference in numbers. The only issue is sports teams – it is not often possible to field a girls' team for inter school sports. Pupils respond positively to the attitudes of staff and develop during their time in school into confident and articulate young people. They are happy to approach members of staff if experiencing difficulties with their work or have personal problems. There are many opportunities for collaborative or group work to further develop pupils' social skills and they willingly share and support each other in their learning. Pupils listen with sensitivity to the views and opinions of their peer group that may differ from their own.

8. Behaviour within the school is good. Behaviour in lessons was rarely less than satisfactory, sometimes very good and, on occasions, excellent. Outside lessons, there is a sense of purpose and order. The school has to accept pupils from other schools who are being given a fresh start often because of behavioural difficulties. The majority of these have responded positively to the opportunities this school provides and their behaviour has improved. The high quality behaviour management skills of teaching assistants contribute significantly to this. However, a significant number of pupils excluded for a fixed term, or permanently, during the year 2001 to 2002 are from this group. The number of fixed term exclusions has reduced significantly this year compared with the previous academic year. This is evidence of the effectiveness of the school's work to improve the standard of acceptable behaviour of this group of pupils. Bullying is not an issue in this school. Pupils state that when incidents occur staff usually deal effectively with them.

9. The development of pupils' initiative and personal responsibility is satisfactory. Prefects play an important role in supporting teaching staff in the day to day running of the school. Pupils organise themselves with minimal supervision during break and lunchtimes. The School Council is active and provides a forum for pupils to express their views. Fund raising events for charities such as Cancer Research are organised by pupils in their lunchtimes and a few act as librarians. The development of independent study and research skills are encouraged in many subjects as pupils' progress through the school.

10. Attendance levels were broadly in line with the national average during the last academic year. Unauthorised absence was below the national average. The school has on its roll several pupils who failed to attend previous schools. A high level of support and commitment by staff has encouraged these pupils to attend school on a more regular basis and continue their education. Unfortunately their level of attendance undermines the overall attendance of the school. The majority of pupils are punctual arriving at school. The school meets requirements for the registration of pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11. Teaching in all years is of a similar standard, not surprising given the small number of teachers. The total number of lessons seen was well below 100 but scrutiny of pupils' work is also taken into account when judging teaching. Almost three-quarters of lessons were good or better and almost a fifth very good or better. Two lessons were unsatisfactory where inexperience led to inadequate planning or management. Three lessons were excellent. This is a very much better profile than at the time of the last full inspection and better than two years ago. Teaching is good overall as pupils are managed very well, assessment practice – judging how well pupils are doing and what to do next - is good and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs is enabled to learn well. Teachers are very good at ensuring girls are fully integrated into lessons where they might be the only one without making it obvious. Girls said they had no difficulty in classes and learnt appropriately alongside boys or with them in groups. Difficulties in staff recruitment and retention means the quality of teaching changes quickly from time to time and the school provides very good support for new and unqualified teachers. Low standards when pupils start school, and a significant proportion of pupils starting and leaving during the school year, detract from pupils' achievement and good teaching enables it to be satisfactory by the end of Year 9. Good teaching consolidates this success in Years 10 and 11 and pupils focus more on learning for their GCSE examinations; consequently they are making good progress over these years. There is a minority of more able pupils across the school. Teaching needs to adapt to enable these pupils to be challenged more and learn faster. This is more significant in Year 7 as a higher proportion of these pupils are entering the school by choice.

12. Teachers' marking does not always give clear direction to pupils on what they need to do to improve their written work. Marking is particularly good in English and in ICT. English and special educational needs teachers regularly test reading and set pupils appropriate tests. Most teachers encourage pupils to read aloud thereby lessening pupils' inhibitions and increasing their self-esteem. Teachers encourage pupils to write for various purposes across the curriculum but standards of writing are still much too low. Pupils make good use of writing guides in science, design and technology and French. In science teachers, to help pupils improve their writing, use the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. In design and technology, teachers require pupils to write meaningful annotations on their design ideas and use technical words correctly. There are few opportunities for longer pieces of writing in religious education and music.

13. Within the mathematics department the teaching of numeracy is good with the national strategy for improving numeracy implemented well. The school has appreciated the need for a common policy in teaching numeracy across the curriculum. There has been some in-service training provided by the mathematics department for other teachers and this has had a positive effect in some. In geography, for example, the practice of teaching numeracy is generally good, especially in Years 8 and 9. Here pupils analyse data and show good understanding in work on population pyramids and population density charts. However, there is a need to extend this good practice to Year 7 where pupils need to do more work on data presentation. In science pupils can plot various types of appropriate graphs including those used in statistics. In this department the practice is sound. In ICT there is significant work in the use of databases and spreadsheets, leading on to data display and analysis. In design technology there is some calculation work such as percentages but there is less numerical based work here than in many schools. Overall, the teaching of numeracy is being tackled appropriately and there is some good practice, which needs further development.

14. Overall, the use of ICT within subjects to support teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school has made a significant financial commitment to providing hardware for the development of ICT across all the areas of the curriculum. Besides an overall pupil to computer ratio that is far better than is the national average, many teaching areas of the

school are being equipped with interactive whiteboards to enhance and support teaching and learning. The use of interactive whiteboards is enhancing lessons for example in English and science, where 'PowerPoint' is used as an influential presentation tool. Teachers make good use of ICT in science and in design technology, while insufficient use is made in art and design and in mathematics. In mathematics, computers are now in place and await setting up and connection to the whole school network.

15. Pupils with special educational needs are taught in ordinary classrooms, along with all other pupils. The small classes enable teachers to know pupils well and to give individual attention to pupils needing extra help. It is not always possible to sort classes by ability in such a small school, and so classes are mixed ability in other than English, mathematics and science. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that pupils with special learning needs who are otherwise able are placed in appropriate groups. The eight teaching assistants support pupils learning very well, knowing their particular needs and strategies to help individuals. Where pupils have emotional or behavioural problems the assistants intervene to prevent danger or upsetting situations. All teaching assistants are linked to curriculum areas in which they have an interest and some understanding of the subject and this facilitates joint planning. The quality of learning support varies with the assistants' own qualifications, training and experience, and with the variable response of teachers and departments. Teaching assistants usually keep detailed records of lessons and individual pupils supported. The individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs are well structured and give teachers information about the specific needs, what pupils should be aiming to do, and useful teaching strategies. All teachers have copies of these, and are invited to contribute to the regular termly reviews. Most teachers use the individual education plans well, and respond to the reviews, enabling the special educational needs co-ordinator to devise new or adjusted targets for pupils to aspire to. Some teaching assistants also take pupils for short withdrawal intensive sessions, such as the multi-sensory programme for dyslexia and OWL, a ten week reading recovery programme. Teaching and learning is good in all these one to one or small group sessions.

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

16. The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11 where the National curriculum is enhanced by a GNVQ ICT for all pupils. It is notable that such a small school has managed to provide pupils with their full curriculum entitlement despite staffing difficulties. There are equal access and opportunities for all pupils, of either gender or with special educational needs. A few pupils with special educational needs are disapplied from French and follow a good 'Basic Skills' course with the special educational needs co-ordinator. Religious education, citizenship, careers and personal, health and social education are combined into the 'CPC' course for two periods per week, which limits time for each but conforms to statutory requirements. As this is a small school there is little choice of additional subjects in Years 10 and 11. The GNVQ ICT course is a successful new course, which has developed pupils' computer knowledge and skills to a high level, and provides work-related education for all. The advantage of being a small school is the individual attention that teachers can give to all pupils in the small classes. A disadvantage is that grouping pupils by ability is difficult, with two groups in each year for English, mathematics and science, whilst all other subjects are mixed ability throughout; this contributes to teachers' insufficient focus on relatively more able pupils. Eight experienced and trained teaching assistants support learning of all pupils in many classes, not only of those with special educational needs, but such pupils benefit very much from their work.

17. The National Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy is written into the school development plan; however, all teachers have not yet followed the school's literacy policy and the

effectiveness of literacy work is satisfactory rather than better. Various strategies are in place to improve the teaching of literacy across the curriculum. These include English teachers promoting reading across all year groups, the literacy summer school, and setting 'progress units' of work for pupils working at Level 3 (well below average).

18. There is a good range of educational visits for all year groups throughout the year. Many of these are annual events, such as the geography field trips, history visits, English, religious education and art and design outings. Visitors to the school are also plentiful, particularly for careers or assemblies. Teachers give generously of their time to extend pupils' experiences, not least in lunchtime activities such as sports, music, and art and design. Many teachers also open their rooms at lunchtime for pupils to continue work, or for English, mathematics or science clubs and revision sessions. Activities after school are limited because of the transport problems of pupils living some distance away needing to catch school buses. Few parents have cars and many work shifts. Overall, extra-curricular activities are satisfactory. Links with the local community are good, and the school acts as host for many local events.

19. Relationships with the main feeder primary schools are good, with combined training and other events. A summer school for literacy has been organised by the special educational needs co-ordinator in the last two years for pupils transferring from primary schools. There is a very good partnership with a local Technology college, good relationships with other local secondary schools, and links with Trent University and a language college, which have helped staff and pupils. The careers service works well with the school, and work experience is successfully organised for all Year 10 pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

20. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection and contributes to the good relationships, behaviour and attitude seen in this inspection.

21. Weekly whole school and Year assemblies have a religious and spiritual content supported by regular visits from a vicar and the 'Thought for the Week' provides an alternative daily reflection during registration, thus fulfilling the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship. Assemblies observed, however, lacked the stimulus of music, visual colour and the active participation of more than one or two readers. A number of subjects do much to promote pupils' spiritual development in lessons. Religious education makes a good contribution, challenging pupils to explore, evaluate and make a personal response to the insights of other faiths, as well as reflecting on beauty and symbolism, for instance, as in the stained glass in Lincoln Cathedral and the wall paintings in the local church. English offers opportunities to explore beliefs and feelings, for example, in suffering and pain. In science teachers emphasise the wonder of creation in the planets and the mystery of life at birth.

22. The school makes good provision for the moral development of pupils. It has clear values, based on respect and caring for the individual, that inform all aspects of its daily life and work.

23. Pupils treat property, for example, books and equipment in mathematics, instruments in music with respect. Moral views are discussed and formed in religious education and citizenship as well as in English debates on topics such as relationships and the morality of vivisection. Teachers provide excellent role models. Pupils know right from wrong and can exercise self-discipline.

24. There is likewise good provision for social development. Most subjects provide pupils with good opportunities to work well together. In science the social implications of diet, exercise, and drugs are discussed. Geography field trips provide the experience of working and living together as a team. Occasions when pupils take on responsibilities for others include charity fund raising such as the assembly run by Year 11 for Cancer Research or the Red Nose Day. Outreach to the local community is difficult given that the pupils are bussed in from outlying areas. Social issues are very well addressed through the CPC programme.

25. Cultural development is satisfactory. There are few opportunities for developing skills in the creative and expressive arts, for example, performance skills through school productions and concerts. Pupils explore the English literary heritage through various texts. There have been visits to the science museum, a conference on International Relations at Trent University and a drama workshop based on Macbeth. A successful 'music day and concert' was provided by an American folk singer. A number of clubs at lunchtime such as music, art and design and drama have yet to make a real impact. Few subjects have a strong multi-cultural dimension. Religious education explores the faith, customs and culture of Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other faiths. Subjects such as mathematics do not reflect on their multi-cultural dimension. There is a general lack of awareness and appreciation of the multicultural richness and diversity of British society and a lack of opportunities to promote this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

26. This is a caring school where the personal and academic needs of individuals are identified and result in appropriate support. The very good relationships between staff and pupils make a significant contribution towards the quality of support pupils receive.

27. Pupils receive very good educational and personal support and guidance. Care is given to the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school. The very good relationships that tutors establish with their group contribute to their ability to monitor the personal development of pupils. Year leaders have regular discussions with senior management about the progress of their year group and effective strategies are put in place to support and encourage any who are experiencing difficulties. Progress against their predicted target grades for external examinations is used as a basis for these discussions. This is a small school where pupils are well known by all staff and both personal and social problems are quickly identified. Appropriate careers guidance is given for option choice at the end of Year 9 and to help pupils decide what is the most appropriate course for them to follow, whether employment or further study, when they leave school.

28. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Registers are checked on a daily basis for absentees and phone calls are made to those homes that have not notified the school of absence. Of particular note is the high quality support given to those pupils who failed to attend other schools and have been given a fresh start here. A range of strategies is in place to meet the individual needs of these pupils to enable them to re-engage in education. The school has been successful with the majority of these pupils. Teaching assistants make home visits to pupils suffering with school phobia. Work is set by subject staff on a weekly basis, taught by a home tutor and collected for marking. Alternative

curriculum arrangements such as college placements and extended work experience are offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11.

29. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Pupils clearly understand what constitutes good behaviour and they respond well. The rewards system is used effectively to promote good behaviour. Pastoral staff monitor incidents of unacceptable behaviour and sanctions imposed, such as report cards, if appropriate. The majority of pupils respond to these. The school has been successful in reintegrating back into mainstream education several pupils who were in danger of being excluded from other schools and given them a fresh start. The non-confrontational approach enables pupils to confront their unacceptable behaviour and understand the effect it has on others.

30. The school has good procedures in place to check on any bullying and deal with it. Regular surveys of pupils' views are carried out and enable senior management to monitor any incidents within the school. There are clear guidelines for staff on handling bullying or racist incidents in their handbook. As part of the personal guidance programme oppressive behaviour is discussed and what actions pupils need to take if it occurs.

31. Child protection procedures and those for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The nominated person for child protection is fully trained and he ensures that staff receive regular awareness training. Appropriate arrangements are in place to meet the requirements for looked after children and close links with the relevant agencies have been established. Health and safety procedures are very good and the governing body is involved in monitoring standards on a regular basis.

Assessment

32. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. The results of external examinations are systematically analysed and discussed with subject leaders. National Curriculum test results from primary schools and data from the school's own assessment procedures are used to build up a profile of pupils' attainment when they enter the school. This forms a baseline for tracking pupils' progress over their time in school. Predicted grades for external examinations enable teachers to set related subject targets for pupils. Termly analysis of current performance against predicted grades by senior managers enables any underachievement to be identified and support strategies to be put in place.

33. There is good use of assessment to plan the curriculum. Subject targets are set against predictions of pupils' academic potential and monitored on a regular basis. Pupils are placed in ability sets in some subjects based on assessment data and this helps to ensure that the work they are expected to do meets their academic needs. However, more able pupils are not specifically recognised and set work that will provide them with more academic challenge.

34. The procedures for identifying pupils' special educational needs are good. The provision outlined in statements of need is implemented well. The Local Education Authority provides good guidance on administrative matters, and links with educational support staff are good, as also are the links with and use of the Connexions Advisers, who visit the school frequently. The Education Behaviour Support Services are well used to good effect, and there are good links with Social Services and the Education Welfare Officer. One of the teaching assistants has been trained to follow a speech therapy programme with those pupils with speech and language difficulties. The shortage of Educational Psychologist's time is a disadvantage, but the special educational needs co-ordinator manages the 'statementing' and annual review system very well. All statements and annual reviews, including the transition plans in which the careers service is involved, are effectively conducted and

produced. Pupils and their parents are involved in the discussions about progress and in the termly reviews of their individual education plans. All teachers have copies of the individual education plans, and are informed of changes to any pupil's needs or situation through the staff briefings, the special educational needs co-ordinator or the teaching assistants who support their lessons. All pupils with statements of special educational need, including those in the 'unit', are taught in ordinary classes and are fully integrated. Their academic progress is tracked through the same comprehensive system as other pupils, and the special educational needs co-ordinator, and often also a teaching assistant, attend pupils' progress interviews to discuss any problems associated with learning and revised academic targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. The parents' views of the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves are satisfactory. Only eight parents attended the meeting prior to the inspection; 30 parents completed the questionnaire on parents' views of the school.

36. Parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting felt their child liked coming to school, was making good progress and the school had high expectations. They felt that teaching is good and they were well informed about their child's progress. The concerns they expressed were about the amount of homework pupils received and the range of activities outside of lessons. Some parents thought that behaviour is not good enough. Inspectors agreed with parents' positive comments. Behaviour throughout the school is good and often very good, or excellent in lessons. The range of activities outside lessons is more limited than in a large school, there are fewer teachers available to run activities, but many teachers give up most of their time to pupils at lunchtime and there is a lot of sport for boys after school. The small number of girls in the school makes team games more difficult. Pupils catching buses at the end of the day make after school activities harder to organise. The amount of homework that pupils receive is satisfactory but the quality varies at times and more able pupils would benefit from more challenging work and better availability of text books. Some work set is completing work started in lessons and does not always extend the breadth or difficulty of classwork.

37. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about the progress of their child, is good. Annual progress reports are good and ensure that parents are clear about what their child has studied and how they are achieving against their target grades. Targets set for pupils are not all subject specific and do not help parents and pupils identify clearly how work can be improved to raise standards. There are meetings for parents twice yearly that provide opportunities to discuss progress with both tutors and subject staff. A regular newsletter keeps parents informed about the successes and activities of the school. The school also has a website.

38. The school works hard to involve parents in the education of their child. However, transport difficulties and work commitments reduce the opportunities for some parents to visit the school. Parents are contacted when problems arise and are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to resolve them. Teaching assistants often undertake home visits and play an important role in maintaining links between home and school. The school has tried unsuccessfully to establish a parent teacher organisation. There are a few parents who do not ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good and have resulted in the school improving very significantly from the time of the last full inspection and the first HMI inspection. Attitudes and behaviour have greatly improved, partly because of improved teaching but also due to the high expectations held by the school. Examination standards have risen overall, though they rise and fall from year to year, reflecting the effect of a handful of pupils on this small school and also staffing difficulties – often losing a single teacher effectively means significant disruption to work in a subject. Management has aggressively tackled teacher recruitment by using the graduate teacher training programme to produce teachers ‘in-house’ and by recruiting older, experienced, staff requiring part time work. Consequently all subjects are now covered though there are no specialists for religious education causing standards in this to be lower than they might otherwise be. All aspects of the school’s work are very thoroughly monitored and evaluated. The standard of pupils work is linked to prior attainment through very substantial assessment procedures. Teaching, including the marking of written work, is evaluated regularly and the results of this are used to help teaching and learning improve. Pupils’ and parents’ opinions on such topics as homework are sought and policies adapted accordingly.

40. The school receives a lot more money per pupil than is typical. This is due to the financial support provided to small schools by the local authority. This did not prevent a debt arising around the time of the last full inspection. The current head teacher rapidly dealt with this deficit and finances are now healthy and used well to provide teaching assistants, computers, and teaching aids such as interactive whiteboards. Resources are provided intelligently when there is a teacher to make best use of them, for example musical instruments have been purchased now there is a music teacher. Best value principles are applied to major purchases and to significant curriculum changes, such as adopting GNVQ ICT to lift examination success and improve the vocational experiences of pupils.

41. The governing body has responded very well to the challenges heaped on the school in recent years and have stuck by it. Expertise and experience have helped appointments to be made and supported the use and development of new technology in the classroom and in the office. Governors are now involved in the opportunities for management a new assistant head teacher will bring, funded from a national initiative. They are also anticipating the local authority review which will take place, following the head teacher’s move to a post elsewhere, and are weighing up the alternative scenarios which may present themselves. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and keep up to date through locally provided training and their own efforts, including a significant training ‘event’ once each year. They also keep a close eye on the school through regular visits by some and review meetings with teachers.

42. Staffing is satisfactory overall though some teachers are just qualified and several are not yet. Such new staff are doing the job and just lack experience. Support they received in the past or are receiving now needs to continue for some time yet. Staffing for special educational needs is very good with learning support assistants ‘attached’ to many subjects. Accommodation is satisfactory; there appears to be plenty of it at first sight but this is illusory due to the large hall and adjacent dining area. Design and technology needs at least one other room and the gym is not adequate.

43. Some space is anticipated becoming available when the nursery / youth club initiative gets underway. This is a local development to provide better facilities for people in the village and is another facet of both the head teachers and governors’ work. They all want best use made of the school and the local community supported though few very local children attend the school. Resources are good overall and support teaching and learning. The book stock in the pleasant library needs to improve further in range and quantity.

44. The school has made excellent improvement over the last five years and the current very good ethos and interested teachers are a tribute to that. However, the school does face change and does have a very high cost. Given the current intake, academic standards will never be more than average and numbers will remain low for at least three or four years. Consequently, though the school 'adds-value' to pupils in its care it is unlikely ever to give value for money spent doing so. Staffing also remains an ongoing problem and one or two teachers leaving could slow or reverse positive trends. Therefore the capacity of the school to maintain and improve its standards, though good at present, is precarious.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order for the school to further improve the headteacher and governors should ensure that:

- (1) The most able pupils are sufficiently challenged in class and homework so that they are encouraged to aspire to high grades at GCSE.
(Paragraphs: 14, 36, 66, 69, 110)
- (2) Following the success of improving pupils' oracy, more attention is now given to improving pupils' accuracy in writing and their construction of sentences and longer pieces of writing.
(Paragraphs: 1,3, 12, 17, 51, 66, 85, 93, 98, 125)
- (3) Continue to provide professional development and support to teachers who are relatively new to the profession, or who have not been responsible for a subject before, to help them improve.
(Paragraphs: 11, 39, 42, 77, 110, 112, 114, 115)
- (4) Ensure that subject expertise for religious education is improved.
(Paragraphs: 39, 132, 134)

In addition to the significant issues above, the head teacher and governors may wish to include the following minor issues in their action plan.

- Ensuring all subjects take on developments in the use of ICT to help teaching and learning.
(Paragraphs: 14, 63, 74, 77, 98, 107, 134)
- Looking at subject schemes of work to see where citizenship can best be picked up or opportunities can be created for it.
(Paragraph: 80)

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT

46. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs is much higher than average, 31 per cent of the number on roll, while 10.2 per cent (nineteen pupils) have statements of special educational need. The local education authority has designated a unit for 18 pupils with general or specific learning needs, but these are fully integrated into the life of the school. Many pupils have been moved from other schools, often with emotional, social or behavioural as well as learning difficulties.

47. Lincolnshire local education authority fund pupils with statements of special educational need as a separate unit within the school but recommends that they be as fully integrated as possible. Pupils with statements and the pupils on school action and school action plus are taught in ordinary classrooms with pupils who do not have special educational needs. Teachers get to know pupils well and more easily give individual attention to those needing extra help because of the small class sizes. Eight teaching assistants help the special educational needs co-ordinator support the learning of all pupils with special educational needs. They are funded by the local education authority and supplemented by the school's own funds. The local education authority provides good guidance on administrative matters, and links with educational support staff are good, as also are the links with and use of the Connexions Advisers (employment advice), who visit the school frequently. The Education Behaviour Support Services are well used to good effect, and there are good links with Social Services and the Education Welfare Officer – attendance.

ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS' SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

48. The procedures for identifying pupils' special educational needs are good. The special educational needs co-ordinator closely monitors the progress of all pupils with special educational needs. The provision outlined in the statements of need is implemented well. Too little time from the Educational Psychologist is a disadvantage, but the special educational needs co-ordinator manages the statementing and annual review system very well. All statements and annual reviews, including the transition plans in which the careers service is involved, were effectively conducted and produced in 2002. Individual education plans are well structured with targets and achievement criteria and are regularly and comprehensively reviewed. Pupils and their parents are involved in the discussions about progress and in the termly reviews of their Individual education plans. All teachers have copies of the Individual education plans, are involved in their regular review, and are informed of changes to any pupils' needs or situation through staff briefings, the special educational needs co-ordinator or the teaching assistants who support their lessons. All pupils with statements of special educational need, including those in the 'unit', are taught in ordinary classes and are fully integrated in this inclusive school. Teaching assistants usually keep detailed records of lessons and individual pupils are supported.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	10	38	17	2	0	0
Percentage	4	14	54	24	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	183
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	26

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	61

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	7.8
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National comparative data	1.2
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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
	2002	18	9	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	16	14	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	59(57)	52 (71)	44 (55)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	0(4)	33 (38)	7 (5)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	16	16	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	59 (56)	59 (70)	52 (59)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	0 (7)	30 (34)	11 (5)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group are ten or fewer the individual results are not reported.

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
	2002	16	14	30

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	3	14	15
	Girls	3	14	14
	Total	6	28	29
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	20 (18)	93 (97)	97 (97)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	28.8 (26.4)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	176	22	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The 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)	14.76
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	252

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	16.6
Key Stage 4	14.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	941 972
Total expenditure	872 864
Expenditure per pupil	4 849
Balance brought forward from previous year	95 420
Balance carried forward to next year	69 108

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.76

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	186
Number of questionnaires returned	30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	63	3	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	30	63	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	40	20	10	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	43	30	7	3
The teaching is good.	20	60	3	0	17
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	63	7	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	47	10	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	50	7	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	27	60	10	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	33	43	13	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	47	10	3	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	33	23	17	10

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- The consistently good quality teaching, which engages pupils and contributes significantly to raising achievement from a modest base.
- The commitment of teachers to raising standards under the new leadership and management of the department.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy good relationships with their teachers

Areas for improvement

- Weak technical and grammatical skills continue to depress standards.
- The provision for more able pupils.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
National test results Year 9 GCSE results Year 11	Well below average	Well below average
Similar school comparisons	Average	Well below average
Overall achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

49. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were slightly lower than those in 2001. However, the school's target was exceeded and the trend over the last three years is one of gradual improvement and reflects the national trend. Results in 2002 do not reflect the current standard of work seen because pupils have done better this year. Evidence in exercise books and folders confirm that pupils make good progress from a low starting point. Nevertheless, they do not retain and transfer the skills they have been taught accurately under examination pressure which often means their achievement does not reflect the good quality teaching and learning in the classroom. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 agree with test results. Test results in 2002 were better than might have been expected because of the positive effect of the National Key Stage Strategy Framework for Years 7, 8 and 9.

50. In 2002, GCSE results were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grade in English and English literature was low, but overall, pupils do better in English than in English literature. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-G grade is not significantly different to the national average. When compared to pupils' prior attainment, GCSE results are better than might be expected. The English literature results were lower than expected because pupils, mostly boys, struggled with the selected texts. Careful analysis of results and the course has led to radical changes in texts and entry. Whereas in previous years two thirds of pupils were entered for the literature examination, all are now entered for both examinations. The 2002 English results were slightly better than those in 2001. The trend in results has been below average for sometime and is partly

accounted for by the massive gaps in pupils' knowledge on entry to school and the basic work that has to be covered to enable them to study GCSE work.

51. By the end of Year 9 pupils speak confidently and communicate their ideas clearly. They explain their ideas with clarity when talking to the class, often interrupting politely to ask questions and listen attentively to each other. Although oracy has improved significantly since the last inspection, pupils are not yet accustomed to adapting talk for different purposes. On entry, most pupils have low reading ages and the range of test results confirms this. Pupils make good progress in reading and interpreting texts as they move through the school but a significant number still have low reading ages by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. This impedes pupils' grasp and analysis of texts, often preventing them from giving a precise response. Nevertheless, they are not daunted about reading aloud in class and inspection evidence confirms that most pupils are developing a sound grasp of interrogating texts, moving from the explicit to the more implicit meaning. For instance, in an excellent lesson, lower attaining Year 8 pupils skilfully used evidence to explain the Prologue of *Romeo and Juliet* as a result of the emphasis the teacher placed on text and using words. This led to pupils to using evidence and giving precise written answers. By the end of Year 9 and 11, higher attaining pupils read competently and show particular strengths when making comparisons across texts. Standards in writing are weak. Whereas pupils can explain ideas clearly and answer questions about simple and complex texts relevantly, the quality of their written expression is flawed by many technical and grammatical mistakes. Higher attaining pupils mostly organise their work well and convey ideas clearly. However, virtually all pupils misspell words; there are frequent errors in punctuation, basic grammar, simple expression and vocabulary. Their written work does not convey their more sophisticated oral work. However, the work seen in books and folders confirms that the emphasis on using words and sentences is helping pupils to understand how language works.

52. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the high level of intensive support from teaching assistants, and the clear exposition and carefully selected learning materials which make a difference to these pupils being challenged to keep up with the rest of their peers. The most able pupils make progress as expected but there is scope to develop the provision for them.

53. The quality of teaching is consistently good. All lessons were good or better. There were two excellent lessons. Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour enable teachers to use their knowledge and expertise very well to excite and engage pupils in their learning. Lessons are carefully planned and what pupils have to do is clearly stated; high quality resources and teachers' subject knowledge are well used. For example, Year 10 lower attaining pupils made good gains in engaging and interpreting *Romeo and Juliet* because the teacher's inventive approach was 'magical'. These pupils with low reading ages had no inhibitions when reading aloud, contributing to oral work and making evaluative comments on different versions of the play. This was because the teacher worked with them, used expressive language to describe terms and employed theatrical approaches, which gave them the confidence to take an active part in the lesson. Similarly, in a very good lesson with Year 11 pupils, the teacher skilfully used a range of teaching worksheets to improve pupils' revision skills.

54. Teachers use the National Key Stage 3 Strategy Framework well by making sure that pupils are fully challenged in all lessons. Lessons proceed at a fast pace and pupils work at full stretch to keep up. Teachers use effective questioning techniques to increase pupils' independence and thinking skills. For example, in a very good lesson, which drew on life's experiences, lower attaining Year 8 pupils began asking perceptive and rhetorical questions about life and death after reading and sequencing Shakespeare's *'The Seven Ages of Man'*. In an excellent lesson the teacher's high expectations, exploitation of guided reading and modelling contributed to high attaining Year 8 pupils re-writing parts of *Romeo and Juliet* for a specific audience. Teachers make very good use of ICT in some lessons particularly when using the interactive board for annotation and the laptop for editing work. Marking is very constructive, identifying strengths and specific targets for improving work.

55. The new head of department provides good leadership and management and has introduced far reaching changes to raise standards of attainment. Some of these include a thorough review of the curriculum, the introduction of whole school reading and using new teaching styles such as modelling and partnership work with pupils. There are good systems in place for monitoring teaching and learning and these are being refined further. Assessment data is used to help teaching and learning be better. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' overall development but there is unevenness in the use of literature from other cultures.

56. Since the last inspection, the department has made good progress. Under the new management, teaching is now good. The curriculum fully reflects statutory requirements, oracy skills have improved, the Key Stage 3 Strategy is used to improve reading and writing skills and there is an upward trend in National Curriculum test results. Literacy in other areas of the curriculum is dealt with in the standards, teaching and curriculum sections of the report.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- Strong relationships between teachers and pupils allow good learning.
- The department is very well organised.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables good achievement.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computers in the subject is currently inadequate.
- Regular marking of work does not reflect National Curriculum levels of achievement.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
National test results Year 9 GCSE results Year 11	Below average	Below average
*Similar school comparisons	Very good	Satisfactory
Overall achievement	Very good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Very good	Very good

57. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were similar to those in 2001. The trend over the last three years is in line with the national trend of gradual improvement. Results in 2002 agree with the standard of pupils' work seen in the current Year 9. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 agree with test results. Test results in 2002 were much better than might have been expected, largely because teaching is good and has high expectations of pupils.

58. In 2002 GCSE results were below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was well below average. However, the proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was broadly average. When compared to pupils' prior

attainment, GCSE results were as good as might be expected. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades and the proportion gaining A*-G grades were both as might be expected. The attainments of boys and girls were broadly similar. With an imbalance of numbers of boys and girls, however, the statistics are largely meaningless. Results in 2002 were better than in 2001, but worse than in 2000. The trend in results over the last three years is erratic but this is largely due to the small size of the year groups where small changes in pupil numbers can create large changes in the examination results.

59. By Year 9 pupils can understand the relationships between decimals, fractions and percentages. They can solve equations and they can understand the angle properties of polygons. The work completed by the end of Year 9, given the attainment on entry to the school, shows that pupils have been effectively challenged and their achievement is very good. The effect of the national strategy for improving numeracy is noticeable in Years 7 and 8 where pupils show a greater confidence with numbers than do older pupils. By Year 11, pupils can construct both straight line and curved graphs and higher attaining pupils can apply the principles of Pythagoras' theorem. However, weak numeracy skills and poor literacy skills slow down pupils' learning. Pupils' poor retention of knowledge and skills means that some do not achieve as well in examinations and tests as might be expected.

60. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because there is a very good number of learning support assistants, who are effective in the classroom. The most able pupils make good progress because teachers ensure that the syllabus is covered in full, thus challenging and stretching them.

61. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection; almost all lessons were good. All lessons are well planned and organised and all follow a pattern where the session is split into three parts with a "starter" session designed to reinforce numeracy. In Year 7, for example, a good lesson on shape and space allowed pupils to build simple shapes with plastic cubes and then draw these shapes on isometric paper. The good pace of the lesson and the task itself involved all pupils in the task and meant that all pupils learnt well. The session was finished off with a good use of a commercial computer program on an interactive whiteboard where prior learning on nets of cubes was effectively reinforced.

62. In Year 10 a good lesson on percentages with low attaining pupils was well organised. Here, a clear set of learning objectives and strong teacher – pupil relationships allowed all pupils to concentrate on their work and make good progress. The process was helped by the very effective use of a learning support assistant whose good knowledge of pupils enabled them to ask questions and hence to learn well. In this class poor literacy skills and weak numeracy hindered progress.

63. The department is very well organised and staff work well together. The mathematics department is a strong team, ably led. Monitoring of staff is regular, supplemented by the good practice of all staff seeing each other teach. This allows for an efficient spread of good teaching practice, evident in the consistency of good teaching across the department. Work done in school and homework are thoroughly marked although comments on how pupils might improve their work are rare. Marking does not tell pupils what level of the National Curriculum they are working at. The use of computers is currently inadequate, with very few lessons making use of the school's computer facilities. This is largely due to a lack of access to the machines. The department has already acquired appropriate software and has planned well for future use of ICT. Since the previous report in 1998 the department has made good progress, both in terms of the quality of teaching and in terms of examination performance. Numeracy is referred to in the standards, teaching and curriculum sections of the report.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11; lessons are well prepared and well organised in all years.
- The use of ICT is good and integrated into the work of the department.
- Teachers are committed to the continued raising of standards.

Areas for improvement

- Higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged.
- There are not enough textbooks and none are issued for pupils to take home.
- The system for setting short-term academic targets needs further development.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
National test results Year 9 GCSE results Year 11	Well below average	Well below average
Similar school comparisons	Average	Average
Overall achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Teaching	Satisfactory	Good
Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

64. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were worse than those in 2001. The trend over the last three years, however, is one of gradual improvement. Results in 2002 do not agree with the standard of work seen because new teachers and new work schemes are just beginning to have a positive effect and standards are rising. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 agree with test results. Test results in 2002 were as good as might have been expected because of the low standard of attainment of these pupils on entry to the school.

65. In 2002, GCSE results were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was low. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was just below average. When compared to pupils' prior attainment, GCSE results are better than might be expected; the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades remained low but the proportion gaining A*-G grades was higher than might have been expected. Boys' results were similar to the girls' results but the small number of pupils, particularly girls, makes any statistical comparison invalid. Results in 2002 were better than in 2001.

66. By the end of Year 9 pupils can work safely and well in the laboratory. They understand the principle of fair testing and work with real interest. However, they find difficulty in presenting and organising their work with clarity. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is significantly below average and their achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. By Year 11, pupils can talk with some confidence about their work, have further developed their practical skills and their written work shows an ability to research a topic. However, they cannot develop and extend a scientific concept and the standard of their literacy skills means that the quality of their written work is still below average.

67. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by learning support assistants and teachers. Small teaching groups mean that individual help can be given regularly and this is further supported by the use of suitable handouts and writing guides. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress but opportunities are not always taken to challenge them and to extend and develop their work.

68. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and over half of the lessons seen were good. In Year 9, a good lesson introduced the idea of the turning effect of a force by using a simple but effective practical investigation of balancing a cardboard parrot. The pupils had a lot to do, were keen to get results and the lesson proceeded at a brisk pace with the youngsters fully occupied for the whole of the time. Consequently they learned a lot and were eager to continue. In contrast, in a satisfactory lesson in Year 7 on energy resources, a good idea to encourage pupils to discuss problems started very well but the activity went on too long and interest and pace were lost and the learning was not so effective for the whole lesson. In Year 10, a good lesson on revision for a module test saw pupils totally committed and learning for the whole lesson. Skilful use of an interactive whiteboard, coupled with the enthusiasm of the teacher and the generation of a competitive spirit, saw a potentially ordinary revision lesson positively bounce along with consequential good learning. In contrast a Year 10 lesson on course work investigations was initially too teacher focussed, pupils were slow to start on the practical work and some opportunities were lost to ask more challenging questions about the work. Pupils' learning is helped by the positive attitude they have towards the subject and the interest they show in their science lessons. Reading and speaking are encouraged in lessons and key words are emphasised in the laboratories. Numeracy development is supported by work done on tabulations, graphs and some statistics. ICT is used well; pupils use ICT for research using the Internet and CD-ROM, data log, use computer simulations of experiments, and present their work using word and graphics programs. Teachers make effective use of ICT for both teaching and administration. The interactive whiteboard is an invaluable asset to both teaching and learning.

69. Leadership and management are good. The new team this year is working well and the planning and hard work of the head of department are now coming to fruition. Work schemes are thorough and easy to use and the assessment of pupils' academic progress is good and well recorded. Regular communication of levels of performance to pupils enables monitoring of their achievement to be carried out efficiently. Pupils' work is marked regularly, often with helpful comments, but advice and indication of short-term academic targets for pupils are not always consistent and the department is developing a system to help this. Accommodation is good with nearly all science being taught in two well-maintained laboratories, brightened by good displays of posters and pupils' work. There is an adequate supply of equipment but no textbooks are issued to pupils. The lack of a textbook at home hinders the learning of all pupils, particularly the higher attaining ones, and would be an invaluable aid for both research and homework. There is a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils by work done, for example, on human reproduction, genetics, the environment and the solar system. This is supported by a programme of educational visits to local places of scientific interest.

70. The department has improved well since the last report and teaching and learning continue to improve.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching and management are committed to improving standards and provision.
- Pupils' achievement and progress, especially in relation to their prior artistic skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The good use of descriptive words and technical language to help pupils' literacy improve.
- Planning to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Very good relationships.

Areas for improvement

- Standards by the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- The development of teaching needs to continue apace.
- The use of ICT to help teaching and learning.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching	Satisfactory	Good
Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

71. Staffing has been a problem. The current teacher is unqualified but gaining in experience and standards of pupils' work are rising.

72. Boys achieve as well as girls by the end of Year 9 because attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good and the majority of pupils are interested in their work. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 agree with the standard of work seen because assessment has identified the development of basic art skills as being below the average for pupils of similar age.

73. In 2002, GCSE results were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was low as was the proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then pupils' results were satisfactory. Hence pupils' achievement is satisfactory despite the low results.

74. By the end of Year 9 pupils can confidently use a range of media in two and three dimensions to express their ideas. They have a sound and developing knowledge of a range of artists and their work. Skills in annotation and description are developing well and many pupils are able to describe colour and shape and form and are reasonably articulate when attempting to describe artists' work and intentions. However, they have limited skill in a number of areas including drawing and careful and skilful use of paint. Pupils' use of ICT in art and design is restricted and although they have experience of using drawing and painting software their skills in this area are underdeveloped.

75. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because work for them is planned in all lessons and teaching ensures that their needs are taken into account.

The most able pupils also make satisfactory progress in relation to their previous levels of attainment, although the development of higher levels of skill and presentation is not yet done.

76. Teaching is satisfactory overall although there was one unsatisfactory lesson. The remainder were good or better. In Year 8, a good lesson was well planned with an interesting introduction that motivated pupils. Good teacher description and questioning encouraged pupils to describe the work of Patrick Heron, the artist they were studying. Very good relationships between the teacher and the class were a significant factor in encouraging and securing good learning. In a less successful lesson pupils took a long time to settle after the lunch break; concentration was low and there was some inappropriate behaviour which adversely affected learning. In a Year 11 end of coursework session, the teacher was successful in encouraging the pupils to talk about their examination work and what they had attempted from preliminary studies to finished piece of work. Those pupils who made a presentation did so well, some being very articulate and going into some depth about feelings, emotions and what they had tried to achieve. There was some good use of descriptive language. Although the finished coursework is overall below the standard found nationally, the session showed a desire to improve which bodes well for the future. Again, the very good relationship between teacher and pupils was an important factor in the ensuring pupils' confidence in presenting to the rest of the class.

77. Organisation, planning and resourcing are improving. A scheme of work is in place, leadership and management are satisfactory and there are clear signs of improvement. The departmental and school management are clearly aware of the need to improve standards and resource provision, including the use of ICT, which is currently unsatisfactory, and to continue to support and develop teaching.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **good**.

Strengths

- The introduction of citizenship has been planned well and provides good learning opportunities.
- The subject is co-ordinated well and is largely taught within a scheme that includes personal and social education.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures need to reflect more the practical outcomes of this subject.
- There has been no formal audit and monitoring of other subjects' contribution to citizenship.

78. As this is a new subject there are no available national comparative measures for standards. In the small amount of work seen, pupils' work shows that they are taking an interest in the subject, developing an understanding of becoming informed citizens and recording their responses to important issues in line with expectations at this stage within a new scheme. Due to the arrangements of the school timetable no lessons were observed and there is insufficient evidence to form a judgement on teaching. However, work seen in pupils' folders show that many pupils are starting to develop an awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.

79. In Years 10 and 11 the emphasis is on information and discussion, but there have been some good practical responses in supporting various charities. For instance, Year 11 was moved to fund raise for Cancer Research and contributed to a school assembly to bring their work to the notice of others. In Years 7-9 topics covered include the environment and

our responsibilities to it, and a local council dispute over wheelie-bins, which entailed analysing local press comments and being involved in local discussions. Pupils of all year groups have the opportunity to experience democracy by participation in the school council, which is being revived as an ideal forum for practical involvement and responsibility.

80. The leadership and management of this subject are good. The citizenship co-ordinator has made a positive start in the development of this subject and provision meets statutory requirements. An assessment strategy has been developed which monitors pupils' performance after each unit; this contributes to the statutory end of Year 9 teacher assessment. Pupil assessment includes an opportunity for the pupils themselves to assess their own involvement, making a good contribution towards their understanding. However, there are too few practical outcomes of the work that can be assessed simply. There is understandable difficulty in providing opportunities given the location of the school. Some work remains to be done on planning and monitoring departments' contribution to the development of citizenship.

81. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and discussion in lessons develops pupils' speaking skills and their ability to form arguments. Resources in the department are satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and pupils make good progress in lessons.
- GCSE results are much better than might be expected; pupils achieve well between Year 9 and year 11; very well between Year 7 and Year 11.
- Making in resistant materials is of good quality.
- Folio work in food technology is often of a good standard.
- National schemes and guidance are being used well.

Areas for improvement

- The range of resistant materials in use needs to be broader - too much wood, too little plastic and metal.
- Graphic designing is not good enough.
- Written work is inconsistent in quality, sometimes poor.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Well below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Well below average	Below average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Good	Very Good

82. There are few girls compared to boys so comparisons of standards of their work are meaningless. However, both girls and boys do get 'stuck in' to the different types of technologies and girls are as adept as boys in manipulating machines and hand tools, whilst boys achieve equally well in food technology. Textiles technology was not seen in action but the work on display was of a similar standard for girls and boys. Textiles does not run as an option in Year 10 which suggests the more numerous boys do not take to this material as

well as they do to food. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 broadly agree with the standard of work seen though they are based on a limited range of workshop materials, principally wood, currently in use.

83. GCSE results in 2002 were below but close to the national average and, given almost all pupils took the examination (better than the national picture), the best in the school. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was a little below average; all pupils attained a grade between A* and G, which is above average. This represents very good achievement from when these pupils began at the school in Year 7 or continued at this school after leaving another; from the end of Year 9 to the end of Year 11 they achieved well. The 2002 results also underline the sea change in attitudes and behaviour of pupils in technology, acknowledged as poor several years ago by both staff and pupils. Both attitudes and behaviour are now very good and enable a good standard of practical work in resistant materials, food, and textiles. Pupils can be trusted to use tools and machines correctly and with due attention to health and safety.

84. Results in 2002 were better than in 2001 and better than the five-year average. The trend in results over the last three years is up because management is better, particularly in the resistant materials area. Assessment is rigorous and teachers clearly understand and communicate to pupils what they have to do to get marks in GCSE examinations. Hence weaker subject knowledge and low literacy levels are compensated for with good quality practical work in resistant materials and good design portfolios in food technology.

85. By the end of Year 9 pupils can use tools and equipment, as appropriate, to cut, join mix and modify textiles food and resistant materials. The latter is principally wood but plastic is used sometimes and a small electronic project is made. They can also make neat notes about, for example, sauce making and particle sizes in flour. However, their designs for wooden toys are limited in scope and presentation, though annotating drawings to explain details is sometimes good. Pupils can certainly talk about their ideas, a reflection of the success of the school's focus on oracy. Teachers help pupils get ideas from pictures and descriptions gleaned from books and the Internet. They also use very good exemplars of work produced in other classes; pupils like this as it shows them what they should be able to do. They appreciate the efforts made by their peers and are interested in who, exactly, has made something. Low literacy levels hinder pupils' personal research and writing which is predominantly of a low standard. Drawings and drawing technique, such as rendering, is also of a low standard. Projects are supported by teacher produced guides and templates to help pupils complete sentences, answer questions and draw appropriately. These still need to be persevered with.

86. By the end of Year 11, pupils' work has improved significantly though quite narrowly in resistant materials. Making is still much better than designing; the storage devices made by Year 11 are made accurately and generally finished well, though a few remain incomplete. The use of templates to aid construction, favoured by examination boards, reduces the need for accurate measurement, which might help pupils' numeracy; this is limited, for example Year 10 pupils cannot find the centre of a circle unless a compass has been used to draw it. In Year 10 food technology pupils can recall facts about salad dressing and mayonnaise, talking confidently about such things as binding agents. They can also use basic equipment quickly to measure and make their dressings

87. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because small classes enable teachers to help them and good support is also provided by learning support assistants when necessary. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress as projects are open enough for them to do as well as they might want to. However, this may not be as well as they can do; the recent establishment of how good pupils are at design and

technology shortly after they start in Year 7 may begin to address this. This puppet project using national schemes of work and requiring pupils to email information to their teachers (from home or the library) has been very well adapted and managed by both technology teachers

88. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and most were good or better. Teachers manage pupils very well and work at a good pace. Individuals are well supported, work is marked, and pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In resistant materials, where there is at least a second chance to do better pupils are keen to do so. Teachers use ICT well to support both their teaching and pupils' learning, with a range of software available to research, draw, and model with.

89. Overall, leadership and management are good. Though very good work has been done lifting GCSE standards, more still needs to be done to broaden the resistant material curriculum and improve designing. Both teachers work well together and the capacity to do even better is good. Improvement since the last full inspection, five years ago, is good because teaching is much better and pupils' attitudes and behaviour have also improved a lot. Overall standards at GCSE are similar but this does not give due regard to the improvement in resistant materials. Staff development is satisfactory; good use is made of national materials and some links with other schools are maintained by email. More could be done through personal contact and attending meetings of professional organisations. Resources are satisfactory but accommodation is not; a separate area for textiles and a clean area for design are needed if the status of both is to be lifted and standards of design improved. The subject contributes satisfactorily to social and moral development through small group work and the whole atmosphere of industry in the technology rooms. Work related to citizenship has yet to be developed; there is scope to link this with local culture.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is lively, enthusiastic and of good quality with relationships excellent.
- Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- Fieldwork is a great strength and stimulates pupils to produce good work.
- ICT has been well developed and integrated into the curriculum, especially in fieldwork.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9 are not high enough.
- Insufficient use of local maps and examples and atlases, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- More rigorous assessment of pupils' work against national standards and closer monitoring of GCSE coursework.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Well below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Well below average	Below average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Good.
Teaching	Good	Good.
Learning	Good.	Good.
Attitudes and behaviour	Very Good.	Very Good
Leadership and management	Good.	Good.

90. Boys achieve as well as girls by the end of Year 9. They are conscientious and their attitude to work is good. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 do not agree with the standard of work seen because assessment is over generous against national standards and needs to be more rigorous in Years 7 to 9.

91. Recent GCSE results have fluctuated and have been generally below average when compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade in 2002 was well below average. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was also well below average. The small number of pupils taking the GCSE examination makes direct comparison with national statistics unreliable. Results in 2002 were not as good as in 2001. The trend in results over the last three years is down because a small minority of pupils have underachieved. However, if pupils' overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to their likely performance indicated by end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then their results are good overall. Hence they achieved well.

92. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a satisfactory grounding in geographical skills. Most can use and interpret simple maps but far more practice is needed in the plotting, presentation and analyses of statistical data graphically in Years 7 and 8. Pupils' knowledge of location is sound except for low attainers. However, all pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding of spatial patterns and processes are weak. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. In some lessons, with specialist support, they progress well. Many pupils in Years 7 and 8 are hindered by their poor literacy and numeracy skills. Insufficient work is done to improve these skills in structured writing and graphical work in these years. By Year 11, pupils can describe the geographical processes in their course work quite well and many are beginning to identify linkages between them. The best individual project work, based on fieldwork on the river Witham, is of very high quality and analyses are good. This work indicates that these pupils have made substantial gains in their geographical studies over Years 10 and 11. A small minority do not show the same high motivation and their work is of unsatisfactory standard and needs even more rigorous monitoring.

93. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Almost all lessons were good or better. Teaching is strongly supportive of pupils; classroom management and control are built on very effective relationships with pupils that provide a very good foundation for learning. Lessons are well planned and the teacher's good knowledge underpins discussion and adds clarity and depth to explanations provided. Learning greatly benefits from good quality dialogue that extends pupils' knowledge and results in greater understanding of the topic taught. The best teaching develops very well geographical enquiry and investigatory skills. It is supported by a wide range of visual aids that have a very positive effect on the quality of learning. The use of the interactive computer projector has significantly improved the quality of presentation. Teaching is lively, enthusiastic, has brisk pace and appropriate expectations. Learning in Years 7 to 9 is restricted by insufficient use of local Ordnance Survey maps and atlases. Learning would be improved if main teaching points were consolidated visually to ensure that all the class understood what had previously been learnt before starting new work. Literacy and numeracy skills need developing even more purposefully in Years 7 and 8. They are much better developed in Years 9 to 11 and particularly well used in GCSE project work. ICT has been very well developed since the last inspection and is very well integrated into the course, particularly in relation to fieldwork undertaken.

94. A very experienced subject specialist leads the department conscientiously and well and management is good. Curriculum planning is sound but there is need to develop further the subject development plan. Fieldwork undertaken locally in Twyford Woods, Corby Glen village, and on the river Glen, the river Witham and at Hunstanton is of very high quality. It greatly enriches the subject curriculum and stimulates significant interest and understanding in geographical processes and is a real strength. A further element of human geography in Years 7 to 9 would provide better balance. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and citizenship is suitably built in to schemes of work. Accommodation is good. There has been good progress since the last inspection but standards in Years 7 to 9 are still not high enough. There is good capacity to meet the points raised in this report.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards of work including GCSE examination results are improving.
- Good teaching and learning results in good achievement.
- Pupils work hard, behave very well and relate exceptionally well to their teacher.

Areas for improvement

- Provide more local and regional visits to historical sites.
- Develop ICT to enhance the curriculum.
- Use documentary and pictorial sources more in teaching in Years 7 to 9.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Average
Achievement overall	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

95. Boys achieve as well as girls by the end of Year 9 as they are well motivated and work hard. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 agree with the standard of work seen.

96. Recent GCSE results have shown a trend of improvement. All three pupils taking the GCSE examination attained an A*-C grade in 2002 but due to the very small numbers of pupils involved comparisons with national statistics are invalid. Results in 2002 were better than in 2001. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the GCSE results are good. Hence pupils' achievement was good. Examination performance is very good when compared with these pupils' low attainment when they started at the school.

97. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a good grounding in historical skills. Most have a good understanding of the main events and people of the period studied. Knowledge of chronology is satisfactory but there is insufficient use of documentary and pictorial sources. Achievement over Years 7 to 9 is good for pupils of all attainment levels; standards improve from well below to below the national average. Many pupils including those with special educational needs have literacy problems but they are very well supported by Learning Support Assistants and class teachers so that they make good progress. By the end of Year 11, pupils' skills in using historical evidence are well developed with more emphases placed on the analyses of source material. Most pupils are fairly confident in undertaking historical enquiry and interpret historical events soundly. However, critical evaluation of events in a wider historical context is weak. Best course work for the GCSE examinations is of good quality and almost all pupils produce work appropriate to their ability. Attendance rates on the course are high.

98. Teaching and learning are good overall. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and half those observed were of good quality. Lessons are well planned and underpinned by the teachers' good knowledge of the topics taught. The question and answer technique is skilfully used to extend pupils' understanding of issues and events. Classroom management and control is exceptionally good and built on very good relationships and trust. Teaching is

presented in a structured and focused way so that pupils' understand what they are doing. Lessons are well paced and productive. Class learning would be improved with more regular consolidation and re-enforcement of teaching points visually on the board, more visual aids used in teaching and both more group work and independent study. Pupils rely too heavily on their teacher who does too much for them. Literacy skills are generally satisfactorily developed with historical terms well used but more writing in sentences and paragraphs is needed in Years 7 to 9. Numeracy skills are satisfactory but ICT is underdeveloped. There is need to plan a coherent programme of ICT skills linked to curriculum themes in Years 7 to 11.

99. The subject is well managed but the time available to develop the subject is curtailed by the head of subject having major responsibilities elsewhere within the school as deputy head teacher. Documentation is limited with curriculum planning the main priority. There are sound opportunities for historical visits but further development of fieldwork particularly in local and regional history would result in a greater first hand understanding of the subject. There is need to establish a longer-term development plan that is regularly reviewed and revised. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural and citizenship are well integrated into the taught curriculum and contribute significantly to pupils' very good relationships and very good behaviour in lessons and around the school. The work of the department is effectively monitored. Assessment overall is good. Marking is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11 where it is more detailed and helpful in informing pupils of how they can further improve standards. Targets are not sufficiently linked to what pupils should learn in any year. Accommodation and resources are good. There is however, need for more visual material such as film, video, photographs, maps charts, and artefacts. Good progress has been made since the last report with improved standards of work evident.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 11. Pupils make very good progress.
- Teaching is very good and results in very good learning.
- There are excellent systems and procedures for tracking pupils' progress and ensuring improvement.
- The subject is very well led and managed and has made very good progress since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- Although satisfactory overall, the use of ICT across all subjects of the curriculum needs further development.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Average	Above average
Boys' standard of work seen	Average	Above average
Achievement overall	Good	Good
Teaching	Very good	Very good
Learning	Very good	Very good
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good	Very good

100. Boys achieve as well as girls by the end of Year 9. Overall achievement is good and often very good with all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those who are higher attaining pupils, achieving equally well. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9

agree with the standard of work seen because there are excellent structures in place for assessing standards and progress.

101. Current GNVQ intermediate assessments are above average. The proportions of pupils likely to attain an A*-C or an A*-G grade are above average. GNVQ assessments in 2002 were also above average. This is the first year that pupils have been entered for this course. The trend in standards as shown in coursework and in assessment profiles is clearly upward as a result of the very good teaching and support pupils receive.

102. By the end of Year 9 pupils know the basics of logging on to the network, calling up programs, retrieving, printing and saving work. Keyboard skills are generally good. When word-processing, most pupils are very confident and write words and present text and illustrations attractively. Pupils competently search the Internet for information and use it well in a variety of contexts. Pupils' work on databases and spreadsheets is sound, and most can transfer collected information from paper to screen correctly and are beginning to understand how to manipulate results.

103. By the end of Year 11, pupils are very confident of almost all aspects of the GNVQ Intermediate coursework. In lessons seen during the inspection pupils competently configured parts of windows in Word and Excel, completed, with understanding, Macros in Excel, modifying where the macro didn't work as expected, Pupils have a good understanding of Web page writing language. Pupils' very mature attitudes contribute to an excellent working atmosphere, which results in a very good response to lessons and to good overall attainment. Pupils' understand how well they are doing, or not, very well and this significantly helps them make progress and reach good standards.

104. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are fully involved in lessons and have very good support from teaching assistants. Teamwork between teacher and teaching assistants is very good and is a significant factor in the progress that these pupils make. The most able pupils make good progress because they are challenged and, as a result of the excellent tracking and assessment procedures, know exactly where they are in relation to expected grades and what they need to do to improve.

105. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. All were good or better and there was one excellent lesson. In a very good Year 9 lesson, pupils set about their work in a very mature manner; an approach which would have been a credit to a Year 10 or 11 examination class. They listened intently to the teacher's very clear introduction on relational databases and showed, in response to very good questioning, that they understood the general principles and structure of a relational database. They then set about devising their own. In another very good lesson, this time for Year 7 pupils producing an advertising flyer, pupils quickly and confidently accessed the computer network and the correct software and then demonstrated good skills using software shortcuts and some of the more advanced features of the programme. When using clipart they grouped and ungrouped parts of the images so that they could be used more suitably in their flyer.

106. An excellent lesson in Year 10, where pupils were working on their coursework, was typified by exceptionally high expectations, high standards of work, and excellent relationships and mutual respect between pupils and teacher, all contributing to an excellent working atmosphere. The teacher had an excellent knowledge of each pupil's strengths and where they needed to improve.

107. Very close co-operation and teamwork between teachers and excellent organisation, for example in the assessment and tracking of pupils' work, contribute to very good leadership and management. This is clearly driving up standards and the profile of ICT

throughout the school. Use of computers across the curriculum is developing rapidly although a small number of subjects need to further improve their coverage and use. The provision of hardware is very good with a much better pupil to computer ratio than is the average nationally. Recent improvement has been very good. The use of ICT in other subjects is commented on in appropriate sections of the report, for example teaching and learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **unsatisfactory**.

French

Strengths

- Good classroom management and relations with pupils.
- Assessment procedures.
- The use of ICT to support teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are low and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory.
- The insufficient time allocation for French contributes to the low standards.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Well below average	N/A
Boys' standard of work seen	Well below average	N/A
Overall achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Teaching	Unsatisfactory	N/A
Learning	Unsatisfactory	N/A
Leadership and management	N/A	N/A

108. The proportion of pupils reaching expected standards by the end of Year 9 is well below average, even for similar schools. Expectations are not high enough. There are too few girls to make reliable comparisons with the performance of boys.

109. GCSE results are also poor. In the last four years, few pupils have gained Grades A* to C and none have done so in the last two years. However, the school enters a higher than average proportion of pupils for GCSE and most gain at least a Grade G. Pupils start from a low level of attainment in Year 10; they have insufficient time in lessons and teaching lacks expertise. Achievement for the least able and for those with special educational needs is satisfactory, but it is poor for higher-attaining pupils.

110. By the end of Year 9, pronunciation and intonation are inaccurate for most pupils, who are reluctant to speak and have difficulty in sustaining even a basic dialogue. They do not retain vocabulary easily and their grasp of French grammar is weak; few pupils have mastered the past tense. Pupils understand the teacher speaking French but have much more difficulty listening to a tape. Their ability to write French is very limited and they do not have enough opportunities to write about themselves and their lives. The presentation of the work of most pupils, and in particular the boys, is poor; work is not always completed even when the teacher makes a comment in their books. The purpose and nature of writing for some of the lower-attaining pupils should be reviewed, but in any event higher standards

should be insisted upon. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make relatively more progress than higher-attaining pupils because the demands on the latter are not high enough. There appears to be little difference in the progress made by boys and girls.

111. It was not possible to assess the attainment of pupils in Years 10 and 11, since only one revision lesson was seen in Year 11. The sample of written work seen indicated that standards may be higher than in recent years. Writing on topics such as personal life, school and holidays was limited in scope and vocabulary but reasonably accurate.

112. Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9; it was unsatisfactory in one of the three lessons seen. In the time available for inspection, it was not possible to make a judgement in respect of Years 10 and 11. Sound use is made of French in the teaching, contributing to the development of pupils' listening skills. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to listen to native speakers on tape. Sorting exercises and writing guides aid the development of writing skills and pupils use ICT for redrafting, presentation and language exercises. Pupils are told the objectives of lessons but they are often not precise enough and are expressed in terms which pupils have difficulty in understanding. Planning is careful and detailed and includes a variety of activities. However, activities are not always appropriate and the techniques to introduce, reinforce and extend language are not sharp enough. Grammatical explanations are sometimes too abstract and complicated for the ability of pupils. In a Year 9 lesson dealing with comparisons, the explanations were not sufficiently concrete and pupils became confused and lost concentration. Relations between pupils and teacher are good and classroom management is satisfactory.

113. The amount of time available for lessons in Years 7 and 8 is too low to allow pupils to make appropriate progress, as is the amount in Years 10 and 11, particularly since all pupils are now taking a full GCSE course. The curriculum is satisfactory and includes provision for developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, but not personal development or citizenship. Assessment is good and is carried out regularly using National Curriculum and GCSE criteria and the results are compared with predictions made from standardised tests.

114. The teacher's has just completed the Graduate Teacher Programme and is better qualified in German than in French. During training support has been provided by the school and other organisations. However, as there is only one language teacher, the development of language teaching skills has been impeded. The subject is organised efficiently and the teacher is working hard to make progress. Good use is made of generous resources, particularly computers, to interest pupils.

115. Improvement since the last inspection in 1998 has been unsatisfactory, in that standards, as measured by GCSE results, have declined. However, there have been staffing problems and the current teacher is inexperienced. There is, nevertheless, some indication that results this year will show improvement.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils respond to high expectations and make good progress as a result.
- Good planning and assessment are driving up levels of attainment.
- Emphasis on securing basic musical skills assures a sound foundation for independent learning.

Areas for improvement

- Provision for instrumental tuition by peripatetic teachers.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	N/A
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	N/A
Achievement overall	Good	N/A
Teaching	Good	N/A
Learning	Good	N/A
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	N/A
Leadership and management	Very good	N/A

116. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below average with no pupil achieving Level 5. Given the well below average attainment on entry this indicated satisfactory achievement. Problems with staff recruitment and continuity of provision in the recent past have had an adverse effect on pupils' learning. There was no significant difference between the achievements of different groups of pupils. There is no music taught in Years 10 and 11.

117. Because of timetable constraints no lessons were observed. Work scrutinised indicated that lessons from the beginning of this academic year consisted of writing *about* music rather than making music, for instance, names of instruments, drawings and some notation. Since the appointment of an experienced teacher in January the levels of attainment have risen significantly. Recordings of pupils in Year 7 made in January show a very poor grasp of rhythm and basic counting skills but recordings made in recent weeks demonstrate a growing grasp and confidence in clapping and singing with greater accuracy in pitch and tempo. A group of Year 9 pupils singing enthusiastically and accurately indicates the good progress that has been made by both boys and girls in a short space of time, given the serious lack of musical literacy even six months ago. Although standards are still below average they are rising rapidly. Teacher assessment suggests a handful of pupils should be capable of tackling GCSE music.

118. From school records of classroom observations, teaching is good to very good. Although no lessons were observed during inspection the teacher can be heard on recordings challenging the pupils to improve their performance, to self evaluate and evaluate others and the pupils responding to the high expectations with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Pupils learn well because they respond to the teacher's expectations with creative and intellectual effort. Already they have mastered chords on the guitar and a small band has formed as a result of the new enthusiasm for this subject. Pupils spoken to expressed their enjoyment and sense of achievement. Attitude and behaviour are good.

119. The subject makes a good contribution to pupil's personal development particularly in the spiritual and social aspects, with the opportunity of emotional response to music and the growing confidence that comes from performing together.

120. Leadership and management are very good. Department documents are very comprehensive with detailed schemes of work and realistic plans for the future development of the subject. Assessment procedures and targets are already having a significant effect on learning as well as being used to inform and adjust lesson plans. For example, there is rightly an emphasis on embedding basic skills before moving on to work with computer programs such as Composer and Sibelius. The department is well supported by senior managers. Resources are being built up and are good. There are many useful and up-to-date books and manuscripts which were bought in recent years but show little sign of having been used. The accommodation is in a mobile classroom which is adequate and benefits from its isolation, the music disturbing no one. Few peripatetic instrumental teachers visit the school to teach individual pupils how to play, for example, a violin. This is historical and due to poor musical provision in the past. Music is likely to improve a lot in the next few months.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- The range of opportunities for boys outside lessons is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work.

Areas for improvement

- Raise levels of attainment, especially at GCSE.
- Improve the clarity and accuracy of written work.
- Girls have few opportunities for team games.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

121. There were too few girls in the lessons observed for meaningful comparisons to be made between differences in their standards of achievement and those of boys by the end of Year 9. Because of low numbers, girls have fewer opportunities to participate in team games after school. Both girls and boys have positive attitudes to their work. Teachers' assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 agree with the judgement of work seen as being below average.

122. GCSE results in 2002 were well below average compared to those in all schools. No pupil gained an A*-C grade. All pupils entered for examination attained an A*- G grade. When the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by the assessments of these pupils at the end of Year 9, they can be seen to be satisfactory. Hence pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

123. No pupils were entered for GCSE in 2001 and no work of pupils in the present Year 11 was available for inspection due to an imminent examination. Therefore, no judgement can be made of the trend of results.

124. By Year 9, pupils demonstrate that they have learned how to throw a discus or put the shot. Some have poor physical co-ordination but most are able to mirror the actions of teachers so that they quickly begin to learn basic techniques. Pupils have good awareness of safety considerations and always behave sensibly. When working in groups, they show satisfactory skills in planning activities. However, many have poor memories of earlier learning and this hinders progress. Higher attaining pupils can explain why one action is more successful than another.

125. Pupils in Year 10 have good levels of co-ordination and show sound skills of performance in a range of games. They show good levels of interest in practical activities and work hard in lessons. The quality of understanding of more theoretical aspects of GCSE work is below average. The quality of written work is reduced by inaccuracies of spelling and punctuation.

126. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because they enjoy their work. Their teachers have good understanding of their difficulties and provide appropriate help and encouragement. Pupils with high levels of attainment are equally well supported and are appropriately challenged so that their progress is good. Pupils at all levels of attainment benefit from being taught in smaller groups than are usual. The work of the department encourages pupils to develop self –confidence, which is weak when they enter the school. In particular, it encourages them to value their achievements and to recognise the successes of others.

127. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The quality of teaching was good in all lessons. Progress in lessons is satisfactory and sometimes is good although some pupils fail to remember what they have learned previously. The quality of learning was particularly good in a Year 7 class where all pupils sustained high levels of effort and concentration throughout the lesson. They responded positively to well- planned activities conducted at an appropriately brisk pace so all of the time was fully used to develop skills needed for throwing a discus. Pupils in a Year 9 class, learning to put the shot, made satisfactory progress because although some of them tended to lose concentration they were firmly managed by the teacher. A Year 10 GCSE group considering the body's response to exercise and how physical fitness can be measured made good progress because of pupils' positive attitudes to work and their good relationships with their teacher and each other. They showed satisfactory understanding of how different physical shapes can contribute to differences in performance.

128. Leadership and management of the work of the department are good and this has led to good improvement since the previous report. Significant progress has been made in recent years since new appointments were made. There is more sharing of good practice and discussion of issues. The quality of teaching has improved and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. There is also evidence of provision of more opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their work in addition to developing skills of performance. Evaluation still needs further development. Consideration of examination results has led to a decision to change the way in which pupils will be examined. The curriculum has good breadth but there is a need to provide more balance in Years 7-9. Currently, pupils have too much experience of games and too little of gymnastics and outdoor pursuits.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Good relationship with pupils supports learning.
- Learning is satisfactory despite staffing issues.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching by non-specialists reduces opportunities for learning.
- Planning and assessment do not support achievement well enough.
- The curriculum is not planned or organised well enough.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	N/A
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	N/A
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	N/A
Teaching	Satisfactory	N/A
Learning	Satisfactory	N/A
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

129. End of Year 9 teacher assessments in 2002 indicated below average attainment and a similar picture emerges from work seen during inspection with the majority of pupils at Levels 3 and 4. This is on a par with other subjects in the school. Achievement, however, is satisfactory given the well below levels of attainment on entry in Year 7. Boys and girls achieve equally well as do pupils with special educational needs because strategies to meet their learning needs are used effectively.

130. In Years 10 and 11 no pupils are entered for GCSE. Provision for religious education is met through the careers, personal and social education and citizenship combined program where it is taught mainly through discussion. There was little evidence to form a judgement during the inspection as no lessons could be observed in the days inspectors were present. Pupils' folders and notes contain some reflective and evaluative work on ethical behaviour, for example, attitudes to the environment, and a short but quite well argued piece on the role of Milosevic in Serbia.

131. By the end of Year 9 most pupils can produce some thoughtful work on topics such as commitment and marriage and understand the effect of belief on behaviour in various religions. Their understanding of symbolism and ritual is secure. Although they can express an opinion they are unable to marshal arguments or use more than one point of view. Their written work is well presented with some good examples of imaginative writing but very few longer pieces of writing. Pupils with special educational needs make thoughtful contributions to discussions in class but on occasion leave written assignments unfinished where content and time defeat them. A scrutiny of the present Year 7 written work indicates a higher level of attainment than in previous years although still below average, with some careful work on Hinduism and reflective writing on self and community.

132. Only two lessons could be observed. Teaching was satisfactory in both. In one lesson on religious artefacts pupils worked well in groups, with interest and concentration matching pictures to definitions. The card game was an effective method of achieving a good degree of accuracy. A lesson on the chronology of the Easter story demanded intellectual effort and concentration and good use was made of a video clip to reinforce the symbolism of ritual. Opportunities were missed, however, to explore topics in greater detail or to widen pupils'

understanding because the subject knowledge of the non-specialist teachers in this department does not extend much beyond the text within books. Lessons are teacher-led with no evidence of pupil research or independent learning. Pupils say they like the subject and their teachers and therefore do their best. They feel that they have made progress since coming to the school.

133. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. It provides opportunities for self-reflection as well as understanding of other religions and is a forum for the discussion of moral questions and ethical dilemmas such as abortion or euthanasia. Extra-curricular work includes past visits to churches and Lincoln Cathedral and some very pleasing work on stained glass resulted.

134. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Despite their best efforts, teachers delivering this subject are non-specialist and can offer only a basic provision. No departmental handbook is kept. No records of subject implementation of whole school policies, for example, curriculum, literacy or oracy exist. There is no development plan. Mark books indicate pupils' progress and levels but assessment has little effect on progress in learning because pupils do not know what targets they are to aim for. As a result, pupils' achievement is not as good as it could be. Little use is made of ICT either as a research tool or to present work. There is no specialist room for this subject and no available wall space to display and affirm pupils' work. Teachers make good use of the small amount of resources available, most of which is, however, somewhat dated.