

INSPECTION REPORT

HARROP FOLD SCHOOL

Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 133351

Headteacher: Mrs V. Devonport

Reporting inspector: Mr D. Cox
10297

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd May 2003

Inspection number: 249284

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11 to 16

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Hilton Lane
Worsley
Manchester

Postcode: M28 0SY

Telephone number: 0161 7905022

Fax number: 0161 7905456

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Frank Hankinson

Date of previous inspection: N/a

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10297	D. Cox	Registered Inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and students' achievements.</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9086	R. Watkins	Lay Inspector		<p>Students' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?</p>
19596	B. Treacy	Team Inspector	English. English as an additional language (EAL)	
22411	A. Axon	Team Inspector	Mathematics	
22691	R. Woodhouse	Team Inspector	Science	
11933	D. Driscoll	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)	How good are the curricular opportunities?
20124	J. Peach	Team Inspector	Modern languages	
15462	C. Blakemore	Team Inspector	Geography	
22590	R. Castle	Team Inspector	Physical education. Citizenship	
4689	M. Christian	Team Inspector	Art and design	
31705	J. Mason	Team Inspector	Music	
4372	R. Fordham	Team Inspector	Religious education	

28101	A. Lagden	Team Inspector	Special educational needs	
15832	J. Vanstone	Team Inspector	History	
30973	G. Hancock	Team Inspector	Design and technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Harrop Fold is a larger than average comprehensive school in Salford, educating 1287 students between the ages of 11 and 16. It opened in September 2001 following the amalgamation of two schools, and is based on the same two sites, about one mile apart, that were occupied by the previous two schools. Most of the students come from the immediate vicinity. This current academic year students in Years 7, 8 and 11 are on the Hilton Lane site and those in Years 9 and 10 are on the Longshaw site. Few students are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and there are five students who come from a home where English is an additional language. Five students are at an early stage of language acquisition.

In 2002, 31.3 per cent of the student population was entitled to free school meals, which is above average. The overall socio-economic circumstance of the students is below average. The attainment of students on entry is below average. There are 145 students on the register of special educational needs; this is 11.2 per cent of the school population, which is broadly in line with the national average. Two per cent of the students, an average proportion, have a statement of special educational needs. Most students on the higher stages of the special needs register have moderate emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school is part of an Excellence in Cities initiative (EiC), and a new headteacher took up post in January 2003.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a very poor standard of education. Teaching is poor. Students' standards by the time they leave Year 11 are well below average and their achievement is poor. Poor leadership and management have led to the situation in which the school finds itself; few students are receiving an education to which they are entitled. Overall, the school provides very poor value for money.

What the school does well

- Students achieve well in art and design, drama, business studies and child care as a result of the good teaching in these subjects.
- The new headteacher is beginning to have a positive impact. Her vision for the school is clear; she knows where she wants the school to be in the short, medium and long term.
- The school has received the Arts Mark Gold award.

What could be improved

- Teaching is poor, so students are underachieving.
- Behaviour is poor because teachers have not had training in how to deal with it.
- Poor leadership and management have led to the school not being able to provide an acceptable standard of education.
- The curriculum is poor in many respects and contributes to students' underachievement.
- Teachers and students do not have a clear idea about how students are progressing because the assessment systems are unsatisfactory.
- Students' attitudes and attendance are poor.

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

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspection Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Harrop Fold School is a new school and there is no previous inspection report.

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	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	n/a	n/a	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Students join the school with standards of attainment that are below average, and by the time they leave Year 11 their standards are well below average. Students' achievement is poor.

By the end of Year 9, standards are average in art and design. Standards are below average in all other subjects with the exception of English, science, history and modern languages, where standards are well below average, and ICT, where standards are very low. Students' achievements are good in art and design; satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education; unsatisfactory in science, citizenship, history and modern languages; poor in English and very poor in ICT. In the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were well below average in English, mathematics and science when compared with all schools. Overall, results were well below average. Results were average in mathematics and science and well below average in English when compared with similar schools. Students made very poor progress given their results when they were in Year 6.

Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well below average when compared with all schools, and below average in comparison with similar schools. The school fell somewhat short of its GCSE targets for 2002; targets for 2003 are not sufficiently challenging. By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment are above average in art and design and drama. Standards are below average in all other subjects with the exception of English, science, modern languages and religious education, where they are well below average, and in ICT, where standards are very low. Students' achievements are good in art and design and drama, and satisfactory in all other subjects except science, citizenship, modern languages and religious education, where achievement is unsatisfactory, and ICT, where achievement is very poor.

The poor quality of teaching in some areas of the school, particularly teachers' low expectations, is resulting in students not being challenged enough and therefore underachieving. Flaws in the curriculum further hinder their achievements. Many students also underachieve because of their poor rate of attendance.

Throughout the school there are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of students. Students with special educational needs, in line with other students, make poor progress in mainstream classes. However, the additional help provided by the learning support department does enable some of them to make good progress, with many completing GCSE courses successfully.

Standards of literacy and numeracy are well below average.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students' attitudes to school are poor. In a significant minority of lessons lack of interest is the norm.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms

Students' behaviour is poor. There is a high level of exclusion; in the term preceding the inspection there were 137 fixed term exclusions and four permanent ones.

Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are unsatisfactory. Students' ability to show initiative and exercise responsibility is unsatisfactory.
Attendance	Attendance is poor. In 2001-2002, it was 85 per cent, well below what is usually seen in other schools. Unauthorised absence (truancy) is high. On a typical day during the term preceding the inspection, in Year 11, one in every five students was absent.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Poor	Poor

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.

Overall, teaching is poor. Around one lesson in four fails to reach a satisfactory standard; there is no significant difference in the proportion of teaching that fails to reach a satisfactory standard between the two sites or between key stages. In four out of ten lessons, teaching is good or better and there are examples of very good teaching.

In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good in art and design; satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education; unsatisfactory in science, citizenship, history and modern languages; poor in English and very poor in ICT. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is good in art and design, and satisfactory in all other subjects except science, citizenship and religious education, where it is unsatisfactory, and ICT, where it is very poor. Examples of good and very good teaching were observed in subjects such as business studies, child care and drama.

When teaching is most effective, the work contains a suitable level of challenge, variety is introduced into the lesson and students have the chance to be active in their own learning. There are several factors that lead to poor or less effective teaching. In a number of the classes seen, students had been taught by a number of temporary teachers in succession and for varying lengths of time. In these circumstances, the work lacks continuity, students feel they are not making progress and so they become demotivated. One way in which this concern manifests itself is in poor behaviour. In a significant minority of lessons too many students behave badly and disrupt the learning of those who wish to concentrate on their work. In lessons where this happens, the major cause is deficient classroom management by the teacher because the teacher does not control the behaviour of students. The absence of teaching strategies to interest and stimulate students results in the continuation, lesson after lesson, of bored and unchallenged students. Much of the unsatisfactory teaching results from teachers trying to teach material that is too easy for the students concerned. The marking of work is poor.

The teaching of students with special educational needs in mainstream classes is poor overall. However, the quality of teaching and support in the learning support bases is satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has a poor curriculum overall as a result of the very poor curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for students with	The learning support department provides satisfactory provision for

special educational needs	students with special educational needs. However, when these students are in mainstream classes, they receive the same poor curriculum provision as other students.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Satisfactory support is provided, and this enables students to join the main classes at an early stage.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, the school makes unsatisfactory provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).
How well the school cares for its students	Arrangements for students' welfare and personal support are unsatisfactory and measures for promoting good behaviour and providing academic guidance are poor.

The curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 is very poor; at best, only one in five students in Year 11 has received their entitlement this year. Very few students study a foreign language, and some do not study design and technology or sufficient information and communication technology or citizenship. Some students are not taught any physical education. The school has unsatisfactory links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Poor leadership and management have led to the situation in which the school finds itself; few students are receiving an education to which they are entitled. The new headteacher is beginning to have a positive impact.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The effectiveness of the governing body has been very poor. Governors have not fulfilled their role of monitoring what the school is doing and taking effective action.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very poor. Monitoring systems have not been rigorous enough, so nobody has gained a clear impression of the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly teaching.
The strategic use of resources	The school's financial management is also poor. There is no systematic method of linking funding to school improvement. The new headteacher is in the process of setting up a new system of funding. The school no longer has enough full-time, permanent teachers and is forecast to spend somewhere in the region of £70,000 on temporary staff between April and July of this year.

The school applies the principles of best value poorly and does not challenge itself enough. Systems are not in place to enable the school to know what its strengths and weaknesses are and to challenge itself to improve.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision for students with special educational needs is satisfactory.• The school is welcoming.• The new headteacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour in the school is not good.• Parents are not kept well informed by the school about the progress their child is making.• The school does not work closely enough with parents.• The school is not well led and managed.• Homework is not always set.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of the parents. The school is welcoming; the new headteacher is approachable and has a clear vision of how to improve the school. Provision for students with special educational needs is satisfactory within the learning support bases.

Inspectors also largely agree with what the parents would like to see improved. Behaviour is poor and the school does not work closely enough with parents. Homework is not always set and poor leadership and management has led to the school's current very poor position. However, inspectors found that the information sent home about students' progress is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. Students join the school with standards of attainment that are below average, and by the time they leave Year 11 their standards are well below average. Students' achievement is poor. Parents' concerns about the standards and the results that students attain are fully justified.
2. In the 2002 Year 9 national tests, results were well below average in English, mathematics and science when compared with all schools. Overall, results were well below average. Boys performed better than girls in mathematics and science. Results were average in mathematics and science, and well below average in English, when compared with similar schools. Students made very poor progress given their results when they were in Year 6.
3. By the end of Year 9, standards are average in art and design, but below average in all other subjects with the exception of English, science, history and modern languages, where standards are well below average, and ICT, where standards are very low. Students' achievements are good in art and design; satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education; unsatisfactory in science, citizenship, history and modern languages; poor in English; and very poor in ICT.
4. The 2002 GCSE results were the first in the new school's history. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well below average when compared with all schools and below average in comparison with similar schools. Both boys' and girls' results were well below average. The school fell somewhat short of its GCSE targets for 2002; targets for 2003 are not sufficiently challenging.
5. By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment are above average in art and design and drama, but below average in all other subjects with the exception of English, science, modern languages and religious education, where they are well below average, and in ICT standards are very low. Students' achievements are good in art and design, and satisfactory in all other subjects except science, citizenship, modern languages and religious education, where achievement is unsatisfactory, and ICT, where achievement is very poor.
6. The poor quality of teaching, particularly teachers' low expectations, is resulting in students not being challenged enough and therefore underachieving. Many students also underachieve because of their poor rate of attendance. For example, in the term preceding the inspection, in Year 11, one in every five students was usually absent. There are large gaps in coursework and this is having a massive impact on the results that students attain at GCSE. However, students achieve well in art and design because of the good quality of the teaching they receive. There are also cases of students achieving very well in drama and business studies, where the quality of teaching is often very good. On the other hand, in ICT, the quality of teaching is very poor and as a result students underachieve.
7. Throughout the school there are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of students. Gifted and talented students make poor progress even though the school has received funding from the Excellence in Cities initiative for setting up a scheme to support these students. Students for whom English is an additional language make progress at the same rate as other students. When they enter the school, and are at the early stages of learning English, additional support is provided and this enables them to join the main classes at an early stage. Students with special educational needs, in line with other students, make poor progress in mainstream classes. However, the additional help provided by the learning support department does enable some of them to make good progress, with many completing GCSE courses successfully.
8. Standards of literacy and numeracy are well below average. Students' skills in reading and writing are generally underdeveloped for their age. A high proportion of the written work seen was brief and

often confined to filling in responses on worksheets. The contribution that other subjects make to developing students' skills is unsatisfactory.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Students' attitudes to school and their behaviour are poor. In a significant minority of lessons lack of interest and unco-operative attitudes are the norm. Some parents are unhappy with standards of behaviour. Students' poor attitudes are also evident in the way high numbers of them arrive late or are frequently absent from school. Other aspects of students' personal development are unsatisfactory.
10. When students meet with good teaching it gains their attention. For instance, in a good mathematics lesson, the teacher used a variety of relevant activities successfully to gain students' interest in a data-handling project. As a result of the brisk pace they worked well, gaining success and enjoyment in their tasks. Students pay satisfactory attention in a proportion of more mundane lessons. At times, a class will behave reasonably in a lesson that lacks pace and demands little effort from them. For instance, a group of lower attaining students on a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) horticulture course who had good relationships with their teachers was remarkably tolerant of extended weeding activities that did very little to extend their skills. However, a significant minority, more often boys, shows little commitment to education, and behaviour deteriorates considerably when they meet with weaknesses in teaching. The extent of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons varies little between the two sites and the age groups that were seen, though it tends to be greatest in lower attaining groups. The students involved in trips to art galleries and other interesting events, such as 'Zulu Experience', 'Indian Dance Workshop' and 'London Theatre Experience', to broaden their experience speak about them with enjoyment. The ones who play in sports teams are also enthusiastic about these opportunities.
11. Around the buildings and sites, behaviour is usually satisfactory. Helped by the supervision of staff, students are mostly sensible, though at times rather noisy, as they move between lessons. However, instances of really poor behaviour do arise both in lessons and around the sites. In January 2003, the new headteacher introduced arrangements for recording exclusions accurately which have led to the apparent recent rise. In the term preceding the inspection, such incidents resulted in 137 fixed term exclusions and four permanent ones; these involved more boys than girls. Fewer exclusions were recorded in previous terms, although students were often sent home because of poor behaviour.
12. Relationships are unsatisfactory overall. Students respond positively to staff who manage them well. For example, in one good lesson, students, including several with special educational needs, worked very well in groups to develop role play about dealing with a demanding customer at a travel agency. However, students' respect for teachers and for each other dwindles if management of behaviour is ineffective, or if the work is too easy or too hard for them to do. Most students know that others have a right to work and that misbehaviour is wrong, but an unco-operative minority lack the self-control and will to conform, preferring, when they can, to get away with immature, anti-social behaviour. The students who want to make progress in lessons are at times resentful of those who exploit chances to misbehave. Concerns expressed by some students about bullying issues also point to weaknesses in relationships. The few students from ethnic minorities are satisfactorily integrated. However, many students have only a limited understanding of other peoples and cultures they may meet in the wider community. They find it hard to empathise with others' feelings and ideas. However, in a guidance lesson about racial discrimination issues, students needed careful explanations and well-judged prompting before they began to realise how a football player or a spectator who is a victim of discrimination might feel.
13. Students' ability to show initiative and exercise responsibility is unsatisfactory. A sense of social responsibility is seen when Student Council members discuss projects to benefit the school community, and in the way volunteer Year 10 students have trained as mentors to help younger ones. Others, without such opportunities, often lack self-confidence and initiative because these are insufficiently developed either in lessons or in the general life of the school. For instance, less

homework is set than often happens in other schools, and this is one of the reasons why students' ability to work independently does not develop as it might.

14. Students identified as having special educational needs, in line with other students, display poor attitudes to learning in mainstream classes. However, in the learning support bases they work cooperatively and respond well to the opportunities offered by the school, including the extra help given by teaching assistants and others. Students with behavioural difficulties often respond well to the strategies employed by support staff.
15. Attendance is poor. In 2001-2002, it was 85 per cent, well below what is usually seen in other schools. Unauthorised absence (truancy) is high, because of the number of students who miss school without an acceptable explanation. At the time of the inspection, there were signs of some improvements in response to the school's efforts; attendance in the spring term 2003 was around two per cent higher than in the spring term 2002. However, concerns still arise in every age group about the number of absences. This is much worse in the older classes. On a typical day during the term preceding the inspection, at least one in every ten Year 7 students was away from school. In Year 11, one in every five was usually absent. Internal truancy is also a problem, with students missing from lessons even when they have attended registration at the start of the day. The way senior and middle managers find time to patrol corridors goes part of the way to tackle this problem. The high absence levels affect the progress of the students involved because of the gaps in their learning that are never filled. Consequently, exam results suffer; in 2002 nearly one in 14 Year 11 students left school without any GCSE successes at all.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, teaching is poor. Around one lesson in four fails to reach a satisfactory standard; there is no significant difference in the proportion of teaching that fails to reach a satisfactory standard between the two sites or between key stages. In four out of ten lessons, teaching is good or better, and there are examples of very good teaching. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good in art and design; satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education; unsatisfactory in science, citizenship, history and modern languages; poor in English; and very poor in ICT. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is good in art and design; satisfactory in all other subjects with the exception of science, citizenship and religious education, where it is unsatisfactory, and ICT, where it is very poor. Examples of good and very good teaching were observed in subjects such as business studies, child care and drama.
17. When teaching is most effective, the work contains a suitable level of challenge, variety is introduced into the lesson and students have the chance to be active in their own learning. This was seen in a Year 7 English lesson on a poem by Tennyson, in which students became interested in exploring together the differences between modern and Victorian terms. In art and design, the quality of teaching is good and secures good learning. The greatest strength in the teaching of art and design stems from very good subject knowledge, whereby students are given accurate background information and shown correct techniques.
18. When teaching is poor or less effective, a number of features are in evidence. A high proportion of teaching is undertaken by temporary teachers. In a number of the classes seen, students had been taught by a number of such teachers in succession and for varying lengths of time. In these circumstances, the work lacks continuity, students feel they are not making progress and so they become demotivated. One way in which this concern manifests itself is in poor behaviour. These teachers are not being supported well enough in some cases.
19. In a significant minority of lessons too many students behave badly and disrupt the learning of those who wish to concentrate on their work. In lessons where this happens, the major cause is deficient classroom management by the teacher. These lessons typically feature lengthy presentations by the teacher followed by predictable lists of questions calling for short written answers from students who have weak literacy skills. The absence of teaching strategies to interest and stimulate students results, lesson after lesson, in bored and unchallenged students talking noisily, and often shouting out, above the voice of the teacher. Teachers do not use the

school's discipline systems consistently and staff new to the school do not always know what the systems are.

20. Much of the unsatisfactory teaching results from teachers trying to teach material that is too easy for the students concerned. This, in some cases, leads the students to become bored and start to misbehave. Part of the problem that teachers have in setting suitably challenging work stems from the unsatisfactory systems that the school has for assessing students' standards. Teachers do not make use of the data available to them when planning their lessons; this leads to work being set that is normally not challenging enough or, in some cases, far too difficult.
21. The marking of work is poor; work is not always marked regularly and guidance is not provided on how to overcome weaknesses. There is insufficient reference to national levels and grades, or use of school data on students' previous performance. As a result, the identification of underachievement is too slow.
22. The teaching of students with special educational needs in mainstream classes is poor overall. However, the quality of teaching and support in the learning support bases is satisfactory. The appropriate support for individual students' needs and the monitoring of their progress create a purposeful environment. Where provided, the use of teaching assistants is inconsistent. Some teachers, for example in mathematics and science, use their experience and skills effectively. Good support by teaching assistants was observed in a Year 9 mathematics lesson where they contributed well to students' learning, keeping them on task and discreetly guiding them so that they could take an active part in the lesson. Overall, the learning of students with special educational needs in mainstream classes is poor and in line with that of other students.

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

23. Despite some strengths, the school has a poor curriculum overall as a result of the very poor curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
24. All students study drama in Years 7 to 9, which plays an important part in raising their self-esteem and allows difficult issues to be raised and discussed. This positive feature is offset, however, by the failure to ensure that all students are taught citizenship, and by the inconsistent use of computers in subjects other than information and communication technology. This inconsistency means that the school is not ensuring that students are receiving their entitlement in this respect, and the curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
25. The situation in Years 10 and 11 is far worse; at best, only one in five students in Year 11 have received their entitlement this year. Very few students study a foreign language, and many do not study design and technology or sufficient information and communication technology or citizenship. A very small number of students are not taught any physical education. There are some good aspects, such as the opportunity for higher attainers to take GCSE business studies a year early, but these are nowhere near good enough to counterbalance the major weaknesses in other areas. The new headteacher and senior staff have recognised the deficiencies in the curriculum and have drawn up an action plan in an effort to begin to correct these concerns.
26. The school has a programme of vocational education for a significant number of Year 10 students who study subjects such as plumbing, horticulture and hairdressing. While this provision has some strengths, such as hairdressing, which offers a group of students a most worthwhile experience and is improving their standards and attendance, other weaknesses lead to the provision being unsatisfactory. The horticulture course, for example, has very few resources and nothing like enough to complete the course; there are no fence posts for fencing, no sand and cement for hard landscaping and no polytunnel. This means that students have spent the entire year digging patches of land and sowing and weeding vegetables, rather than making progress on the course that the tutors are trying hard to teach. Some students who are on vocational courses, miss lessons in important subjects such as English and science, as well as lessons in other subjects they have chosen. A few students are placed on the course at late notice, and so miss a

whole day's lessons each week to carry out tasks such as picking up litter because there are no plots of land available for them.

27. The strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are unsatisfactory. Nobody ensures that there is any consistent approach to developing these skills, so while some teachers may ensure that their classes improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar, for example, other teachers in the same subject may be making no attempt whatsoever. The contribution that other subjects make to developing students' skills in understanding and using number is unsatisfactory. Although teachers have had some training on the National Numeracy Strategy, it has been insufficient. There is no whole-school policy and not all departments have developed their own strategies.
28. Personal, social and careers education are all unsatisfactory. The school has appropriate schemes in place, but many different teachers teach the topics and the variation in the quality of the teaching is unsatisfactory so that, as in other subjects, some students do well while others make very little progress.
29. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The physical education department provides a varied range of sporting activities and provision in art and design is good. Some subjects, such as information and communication technology, provide activities for students after school, including regular rehearsals for the school production and choir practises, however there are limited bands or orchestras. A significant number of students have had work exhibited at the Lowry Art Gallery and the school has recently received the Arts Mark Gold award.
30. The learning support department provides satisfactory provision for students on the special educational needs register. All students with special educational needs benefit from taking part in opportunities such as the breakfast club. The provision for students with statements of special educational needs meets the needs of their statements, and these are monitored and reviewed annually. Students benefit from good support from a range of external agencies such as the Connexions service and the brief intervention team, as well as the education welfare and psychological services. However, when students are in mainstream classes, they receive the same poor curriculum provision as other students.
31. The school makes good use of its links with colleges to provide more suitable courses for some students, and has satisfactory links with its feeder primary schools and other members of the community, such as the local police force. The school has good links with local industry and provides work experience for all students in Year 11.
32. Overall, the school makes unsatisfactory provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). Several references in documentation would suggest awareness of the importance of SMSC development; it is the delivery and co-ordination that are unsatisfactory. There is no planned and co-ordinated approach to SMSC development across the school in terms of a shared policy for the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of this aspect of the curriculum. An audit of how subjects can make contributions in this area has not been undertaken. The religious education course provides good opportunities in these areas, and there are valuable examples of opportunities for reflection and discussion of spiritual and moral issues.
33. Provision for students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory overall. Assemblies take place twice each week for each year group. Assemblies rarely constitute worship, although one assembly did provide a small opportunity for reflection, but was not connected to the overall assembly theme. There are no plans to provide for tutor time to operate a *thought for the day* programme that is linked to assembly themes. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met. There is some evidence of planning in departments for spiritual development, but this is inconsistent and lacks structure. The PSHE programme contributes little in this area. In some subjects, opportunities for the spiritual development of students were observed. For example, the religious education curriculum makes a significant contribution. Students are encouraged to consider and respond to questions about the meaning and purpose of life. In English, students are exposed to a range of literary works. In art and design, students are required to draw upon their

own attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of the world as source material for their work. Many displays provide uplifting experiences for students. However, many opportunities to enhance this aspect of students' personal development are missed in most subjects.

34. Provision for moral development is unsatisfactory. Opportunities are targeted largely through the PSHE programme and drama. Topics such as attitudes to bullying, sex education, drugs awareness, values and family life, and equal opportunities provide a sound curriculum for discussion and the development of attitudes and values. However, the delivery of this aspect and the poor student attitudes towards it mean that it has little effect in enhancing students' moral development. The school has clear expectations of students knowing right from wrong but student response is poor. The new headteacher is a good role model for students: they speak of her being fair and approachable, but firm when necessary. Assemblies make some contribution to this area.
35. Several subjects contribute in providing opportunities for moral development. In religious education, students are able to respond to aspects of morality using their knowledge of religious and ethical issues. In physical education there is a clear awareness of the importance of playing by the rules, but there are also several examples of cheating. Several other subjects, such as art and design, drama, science, geography and music, all provide opportunities for students' moral development. However, too many opportunities are missed to enable students to respond in a positive manner.
36. Provision for social development is unsatisfactory. The school provides opportunities to take responsibility and develop social understanding. The PSHE programme provides many opportunities in this area in terms of specific curriculum provision such as rights and responsibilities, healthy environment, citizenship and decision-making skills, all of which provide a valuable contribution to developing attitudes and fostering independent thinking. However, students' responses mean that the delivery of these is generally ineffective. The School Councils meet regularly and provide clear opportunities for students to develop their communication skills and make important contributions to the life of the school. There are opportunities for Year 10 students to act as mentors for students in Year 7. The 'primary links team' of Year 7 students also visits the feeder primary schools to reassure primary pupils about the move to secondary school. Most subjects contribute towards social development. For example, in art and design, students explore the social contexts of the work of artists. In physical education, students work well in groups and teams. However, many subjects do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to work in groups and pairs and, as a consequence, their social skills are underdeveloped.
37. Provision for students' cultural development is unsatisfactory. There are several opportunities for students to be involved in activities that extend their cultural development. The school's curriculum, however, does not provide planned opportunities for students to develop an awareness of the variety of different cultures and traditions that exist in this country. Furthermore, not enough work is done to enable students to develop a wider appreciation of their own local culture. The school's curriculum in PSHE provides some opportunities. For example, topics such as individual differences make some contribution, but this area could provide greater opportunities to develop attitudes and values. There are aspects of religious education that make a significant contribution, especially in terms of the study of different religions and the cultures that support them. Some subjects do make an important contribution to the cultural development of students. For example, in geography, Year 9 students study the way of life of African tribes. In art and design, the study of different artists from around the world and the many examples of ancient and ethnic art all provide students with an awareness of the variety of different cultures. In English, literary texts enable students to compare life in several cultures. Study trips, trips to France and visits to museums and art galleries all provide opportunities for students to explore their own cultural heritage and those of others. However, many opportunities are missed to enable students to improve this aspect of their personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

38. Arrangements for students' welfare and personal support are unsatisfactory, and measures for promoting good behaviour and providing academic guidance are poor. The new headteacher and

senior management have identified weaknesses in the care and guidance procedures and have plans to improve matters. At present, however, gaps and weaknesses in provision cause concern.

39. Instances of good attention to care are seen. For instance, a good induction programme is underway for students who will join the school in the autumn. Support from a team of current Year 7 students, who are befriending Year 6 pupils in the feeder primary schools, has been added to the existing programme of visits. A popular breakfast club is another positive feature. However, important aspects of pastoral care are not at present organised well enough. Currently, four heads of house lead teams of tutors, with students in each house drawn from across the whole age range and with class bases on two widely spaced sites. Consequently, the head of house may not be at hand to investigate a problem and make sure it is followed up. A new structure based around year groups and therefore better matched to the characteristics of the school is being developed for the next school year, but at present members of the senior management team have to fill the gap and deal with issues that might be appropriately resolved at a lower level of responsibility. Further weaknesses in care arise because of the inconsistency of input from form tutors. In some instances tutors use the 15-minute morning registration slot effectively, but too often the opportunity is wasted. For instance, especially in the older age groups, tutors seldom look at students' planners with them, to check if they are regularly recording and completing homework. Additionally, several tutor groups are taken by temporary teachers who may change from week to week, so that students find there is no one person to turn to for ongoing support.
40. The learning support department shows a satisfactory level of care and concern for students with special educational needs. The procedures for placing them on the special educational needs register are applied consistently. The register is updated and circulated to staff. Individual education plans are developed for all students who are at the school action and school action plus stages and for those with statements. However, their use by teachers is inconsistent. Whilst good use of them was observed in some lessons, many teachers do not take sufficient account of them when planning lessons.
41. Procedures for managing and improving behaviour are poor, and measures to control bullying are unsatisfactory. Policies relating to aspects of behaviour management and bullying are yet to be developed, agreed and consistently applied within the school community. Staff for the most part take bullying seriously when they are told about it and work to resolve such concerns. Nevertheless, a worrying number of students have concerns about being bullied and about the time taken to resolve issues. Students also comment on variations in teachers' skills in managing behaviour. In a significant minority of lessons, teachers, including temporary teachers, do not cope well enough with deteriorating behaviour. This contributes to the high number of incidents of poor behaviour that occur and to the very high number of fixed term exclusions. Until recently, requirements with regard to the organisation, recording and reporting of these exclusions were often ignored. It was accepted practice for staff to send students home without consulting the headteacher and without completing the required exclusion records. Since January 2003, the new headteacher has introduced proper procedures and staff now follow these. Though the exclusions can in general be justified as a response to poor behaviour, there is room to expand the judicious use of other relevant sanctions, such as isolation, so that where possible the student stays in school to get on with relevant work. Staff liaise appropriately with agencies such as social services and the youth offending team when this is appropriate to an individual student's needs.
42. Child protection procedures need review. Suitable routines in line with area child protection procedures are followed when concerns are reported. However, routines are not underpinned by a school-specific child protection policy to ensure relevant guidance is always available for each member of staff, including temporary staff. In addition, there is an urgent need for measures to eliminate the possibility of students accessing unsuitable Internet sites via the school's computers.
43. Monitoring and promotion of attendance are improving but currently remain unsatisfactory. Awards are used to recognise good attendance. Each morning staff on both sites make telephone calls to the parents of any students who are absent without excuse. The education welfare officer gives good support in following up those with the very lowest attendance; heads of house liaise regularly

with her, to help identify the students she should target. A high profile project to fast-track court action against parents of persistent poor attenders has recently been introduced with the support of the education welfare service. This scheme has already brought about some improvements. However, not enough time is allocated to following up concerns about absence; available time is targeted appropriately but further absentees would benefit from an intensive response. Absence from lessons during the day, after students have registered in the morning, is another concern. Senior and middle managers patrol corridors to discourage such internal truancy and also carry out occasional spot checks, and there is a regular system for checking class registers against the official attendance registers. Occasionally, teachers appear unsure about whether particular individuals listed in a class register are actually meant to be present. During the inspection there were two school evacuations, one on each site. Both were successfully undertaken; however, a check of students was made at only one of the evacuations.

44. Appropriate routines are in place for looking after any students who become sick or injured in school. Staff trained in first aid are available on each site. However, some parents are unsure about the routines to be followed if students bring essential medication into school.
45. Procedures for assessing students' performance are unsatisfactory. Data are available centrally but are not being used effectively by departments or tutors to identify areas of strength or weakness. The school tests students when they arrive at the school and uses the information available from their previous school to place students in the appropriate groups. However, inconsistent use is made of this information by departments. At the start of the academic year, teachers are provided with class lists that have a wide range of data about each student. However, many teachers do not refer to this information when planning their lessons and do not match work closely enough to meet the needs of individual students.
46. During their time at the school, students' achievements are recorded by individual teachers, and some departments, such as mathematics, record these results in a central system and use these results to help identify areas in need of improvement. Other departments do not use a central recording system and it is therefore difficult to identify when individual students, or groups of students, are not doing as well as they should. This is particularly the case in ICT and in religious education. In some cases, setting is taking place on the basis of a student's attitude to the subject rather than their aptitude. This means that students who have learning difficulties often have their lessons disrupted by students with behavioural problems in the same group who become bored when work is too easy for them.
47. Information concerning how a student is performing in one subject compared to another is used unsatisfactorily. Central monitoring is possible as the information is collected, but as yet this has not been used by tutors or teachers in most subjects to monitor at regular intervals how students are progressing and to advise them on how to improve. Students generally have some idea of how well teachers judge they are doing, in terms of National Curriculum levels or projected GCSE grades. They are involved in agreeing the targets, which appear in their annual reports. However, little is done to help them grasp just what they must do to achieve improvements. For instance, although all students in Year 11 meet with their tutors to discuss the grades they are likely to achieve and record their results using a 'record of achievement' this rarely leads to them being given precise targets for certain areas or extra help to improve their work. There are plans to address this weakness and to pass relevant information on to tutors at an earlier stage, but this has not yet happened. The awards system provides a degree of motivation, especially for younger students. However, students who generally attend to their work find it hard at times to accept that their efforts get little notice, while less attentive ones are rewarded for seemingly small improvements. The learning mentors provide good support for the individuals they help, though they recognise that closer liaison with teachers would be helpful.
48. Little use is made of the information available to plan a variety of courses for students. There is some provision of a work related course; however, this is not based on a need identified through the assessment of their performance but on the wishes expressed by students in their options.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. A disturbingly large number of parents are unhappy about many aspects of the school. A few parents praise particular points or say that there are improvements since the new headteacher arrived. However, the proportion of parents showing any real enthusiasm for the provision is lower than is usually the case at other schools. While some parents want more information from the school, a large minority take little interest in its work. A well composed home-school contract which asks for commitment from parents, student and school is in place, and most parents have signed it. However, the school's efforts to live up to its commitment and to increase parents' interest and involvement in its work are not consistent enough, despite recent improvements. For instance, parents are not told enough about the school's routines for behaviour management and have not been consulted yet about a behaviour policy.
50. The information sent home about students' progress is satisfactory. Annual reports have a good format. The quality of comments is variable, but on balance they give a clear enough account of what students can do and the progress they have made. This year, an interim review is also being sent home, so the reporting system now gives parents more information than previously. Despite the number of parents who would like more information about how their children are doing, for instance about how new Year 7 students settle down in the autumn term, the proportion of parents who attend any meetings that are offered is often disappointing. Since the arrival of the new headteacher extra efforts, such as reminder phone calls from administrative staff, have been introduced to encourage attendance at consultations with teachers and at other meetings. As a result, more parents of Year 9 students than the teachers would normally expect came to a presentation about the new Key Stage 4 Pathways project. Even so, this still only gained around two thirds of the possible attendance. Other links with parents are not used well enough to develop a sense of shared interest and support for students' progress with learning.
51. Ongoing information for parents about school events and achievements is rather sparse. An interesting newsletter to which students contribute is produced, but this appears only twice a year. Teachers' encouragement for students to use their homework diaries is variable. It largely fades away after Year 8, so this potential source of information for parents about homework and other matters is lost. Systems such as sending home 'postcards of praise' exist for telling parents of special successes, but they are not used consistently enough. Good efforts are made to inform and involve parents of students with special educational needs. Staff, including administrative staff and learning mentors, generally make good efforts to build partnership with parents when concerns arise about any student's behaviour or attendance. Parents on occasion are supportive, but a small minority show little sympathy for the school's aims.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. Poor leadership and management have led to the situation in which the school finds itself; few students are receiving an education to which they are entitled. Some staff are disenchanted and morale is low as they are still reeling from the effects of the amalgamation and the opening of the new school. Monitoring systems have not been rigorous enough, so nobody has gained a clear impression of the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly in teaching. Standards are well below average, and many students are underachieving as a result of the poor teaching. Furthermore, teachers do not have a clear vision for the new school. However, the new headteacher is beginning to have an impact. Her vision for the school is clear; she knows where she wants the school to be in the short, medium and long term. The headteacher has a highly visible presence around the school and is approachable by students and teachers; through this approach she is beginning to rebuild the confidence of staff, students, parents and the community.
53. The headteacher is supported by the senior leadership team. All members of the senior management team now have line management responsibilities. There is still room for senior staff to take a more active role in monitoring and evaluating the work in the subjects for which they are responsible. Members of the leadership group are working hard but need to ensure that they take more of a lead and follow through and complete tasks. For example, a draft school assessment policy was produced some 18 months ago but has never been implemented.

54. The quality of leadership and management provided by many middle managers is weak. However, there is variation in the quality of leadership and management at this level ranging from good through to very poor. For example, the subject leader for mathematics leads her team well and provides good support for others in the department. The teachers work well together and are keen to raise achievement in mathematics. However, in ICT, leadership is very poor. Teachers do not work as a team, rather as individuals, and morale is very low. Teachers who are new to the department receive very poor quality support. One teacher who is new to the profession, for example, has three GCSE groups but has had no training in the course and does not even have a scheme of work, so has no idea how long to spend on each topic.
55. The acting special educational needs co-ordinator, working closely with the learning support manager and the team of teaching assistants, provides satisfactory leadership and management for the learning support department. An administrative caseworker provides useful support. Links exist with a small number of departments, especially through the work of the teaching assistants, but provision would benefit from the development of a more effective working relationship with all departments. Whilst some in-service training in supporting students with special educational needs has taken place, there is a need for further professional development for all staff on managing students with behavioural difficulties.
56. Nobody has been held accountable for the standards achieved by students in the school. This lack of accountability extends to other areas. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are very poor. Consequently, there is no evidence of the impact of performance management objectives or outcomes on the quality of education that the school provides. Elsewhere, the autonomy that many departments operate has led to stagnation. Nobody has a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, so the strengths have not been used to develop other teachers while the weaknesses have continued unchecked.
57. The effectiveness of the governing body has been very poor. Governors have not fulfilled their role of monitoring what the school is doing and taking actions where they are found to be needed because they have not always had the necessary information. Some disciplinary hearings, for example, have had to be postponed because governors were not provided with the information they needed. However, governors now say they are being provided with information by the new headteacher that is enabling them to have a better understanding of how the school operates. For example, governors have received training from the headteacher on financial management and whole school development. There have been a number of team building exercises involving the senior leadership team and the governors.
58. The failure to use data properly means that the school's senior managers have not been able to draw up adequate plans for its improvement. The school improvement plan for 2002/3 makes no reference to raising standards, and the plan is of a very poor quality. There is almost no mention of how funding or the professional development of staff relates to school improvement. Subjects do not always have an improvement plan. In some subjects, for example, in science and ICT, there is little evidence of regular meetings and teamwork to discuss strategies for improving teaching skills and standards. As a result, the use of policies such as those for marking and homework is inconsistent and there is insufficient guidance and purpose behind the work of departments.
59. The school's financial management is just as poor as other areas. The latest Auditor's report noted no significant areas of concern. However, there is no systematic method of allocating funding to subjects, although the new headteacher is in the process of setting up a new system based on a formula/development model. The school no longer has enough full-time, permanent teachers and is forecast to spend somewhere in the region of £70 000 on temporary staff between April and July of this year. Overall, the school is providing very poor value for the money it receives. Funding is above the national average for schools.

Staffing

60. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is poor overall. The school has had to rely on non-specialist and temporary teachers to cover for absence, and this has resulted in inconsistency and lack of continuity in learning for many students. Consequently, students are not achieving as well as they should. This is particularly evident in English and science, where there is a high reliance on temporary teachers, some of whom are non-specialists in the subject. The use of many temporary teachers in English is badly affecting the progress of many students, whilst the staffing of religious education is unsatisfactory because of the reliance on many non-specialist teachers, so that students in Years 10 and 11 are making insufficient progress on the course. In some subjects, however, such as in music, improved staffing stability and the good match of teachers to deliver the curriculum has led to improved standards. There is sufficient technical support in science, ICT and design and technology to assist teachers in planning and organising their lessons. The school carefully targets its support for students with special educational needs and they achieve in line with other students in the school.
61. Arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are poor. Although there are procedures to support newly qualified teachers through a programme of meetings throughout the year, the quality of support is variable from one site to the other. It is more effective at the Hilton site because this is where the line manager is based, but new teachers are not so well supported at the Longshaw site. Senior managers observe lessons and give guidance, but the frequency of visits is variable from one teacher to another. There is no overall provision to assist teachers through a 'mentor' programme that would help ensure greater consistency of support to newly qualified teachers. The school does not arrange a programme of training to meet the needs of new teachers, though they may attend training sessions for other teachers. There is no manual of school procedures to inform and guide temporary staff, and the level of support given to them is inconsistent across subjects. The school has links with local universities for the training of future teachers and has been successful in recruiting teachers, but current staffing difficulties have reduced the school's participation in the scheme in recent times. There is no whole-school policy and practice to promote staff recruitment and retention that is central to a school's ethos and development, whereby staff feel valued and supported at different management levels within the school; consequently the morale of staff is variable across the school.
62. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are poor. This is because of inconsistencies in planning and participating in training courses. In some subjects, training needs are identified in planning and help to improve teachers' competence, but in other subjects training is not contributing to teachers' effectiveness. Teachers have had very little training in managing the behaviour of students. Also, in ICT for example, teachers have not undergone essential training for GCSE teaching whilst in religious education the many non-specialists are not being trained to raise their knowledge and understanding of the learning requirements of the course.

Resources

63. The school has an adequate level of resources. The ratio of students to computers is broadly average. However, in science there are insufficient opportunities for students to use computers and modern technology to enhance their studies. Students rarely have science lessons in a computer room, for instance to undertake research, or to use the specialist software which the school has purchased. Moreover, there is a shortage of equipment such as dataloggers. The requirements of the National Curriculum for the use of ICT in science are not met.

Accommodation

64. Overall, the provision of accommodation is satisfactory on both the Hilton and Longshaw sites. Since the formation of the new school there has been sufficient financial investment to ensure that the accommodation on both sites supports students' learning; regular maintenance and refurbishment has helped to ensure a satisfactory environment for learning. Good features are seen in the three ICT suites on each site; there are good working spaces away from the keyboards, which enhance working. Art and design has good spaces for all the different aspects of the subject, enabling students to work in spacious conditions. There are good quality science laboratories on the Longshaw site; however, on the Hilton site three of the laboratories are in need

of major modernisation. There are occasions when music and geography have insufficient space; however, these difficulties could be resolved by better management of the use of rooms. The quality of display about both sites is good and enhances the environment. The library facility on the Longshaw site is meagre and does not support learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. To improve further the quality of education provided and students' standards, the management of the school should:

- a) Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that the work is not too easy for students, so that they are interested in their lessons;
 - ensuring all teachers apply the school's marking policy consistently and rigorously;
 - making a concerted effort to improve standards of literacy and numeracy;
 - making sure teachers are aware of the needs of students with special educational needs and how these needs may be met;
 - making better use of homework.

(paragraphs 1, 3, 5-8, 16, 18-21, 27, 61, 62, 67, 68, 70-73, 76, 82, 87, 92-94, 107, 124, 126, 130-132, 134, 143, 144, 163, 166)
- b) Improve the behaviour of students by:
 - ensuring that the procedures for controlling behaviour are adhered to;
 - providing training for teachers in managing behaviour in the classroom.

(paragraphs 9-12, 18, 19, 41, 91, 95, 138)
- c) Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - producing a school improvement plan that focuses on raising standards and makes better use of finances to support the school's immediate priorities;
 - instigating ways of checking up on the quality of teaching, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, using the strengths to improve practice and taking actions to put the weaknesses right;
 - analysing data on students' performance and using the conclusions to inform teachers of how well they are doing and where they need to improve, and to set the school's priorities for improvement;
 - ensuring governors carry out their duties of monitoring and evaluation properly and meeting all statutory requirements.

(paragraphs 12, 23, 25, 26, 52-54, 56-59, 74, 128, 134, 170)
- d) Improve the curriculum by ensuring all students receive their statutory entitlement.

(paragraphs 103, 148)
- e) Improve the quality of the data on students by:
 - ensuring all teachers apply the school's marking policy consistently and rigorously;
 - recording grades systematically;
 - sharing outcomes between teachers so that a full picture of a student emerges.

(paragraphs 45, 46, 135, 167)
- f) Improve students' attitudes and attendance by:
 - ensuring there is a planned and co-ordinated approach to SMSC development across the school in terms of a shared policy for the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of this aspect of the curriculum.
 - ensuring that the provision for citizenship and personal and social education is implemented consistently;
 - ensuring all teachers apply the school's policies for recording attendance and follow up any students that are absent from lessons.

(paragraphs 9, 15, 28, 32-37, 43, 89-91, 103-105, 138, 141)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	166
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	65

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	17	45	57	30	12	2
Percentage	0	10	27	35	19	7	2

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the school's roll	1287
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	434

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	26
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	145

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

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	50

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	12.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.1

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 (Year 9)

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	128	135	263

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	46	67	73
	Girls	65	78	70
	Total	111	145	143
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	42	55	54
	National	66	67	66
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	10	27	15
	National	32	45	33

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	57	76	70
	Girls	73	86	71
	Total	130	162	141
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	50	62	54
	National	67	70	67
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	22	30	17
	National	32	44	34

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	150	131	281

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	32	129	136
	Girls	37	115	122
	Total	69	244	258
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	25	87	92
	National	50	91	96

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	29

per student	National	39.8
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Ethnic background of student

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1259	44	4
White – Irish	7	1	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	2	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	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	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	88.6
Number of students per qualified teacher	15.2

Financial year	2002/2003
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Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	929

	£
Total income	3940680
Total expenditure	3994181
Expenditure per student	2998
Balance brought forward from previous year	149028
Balance carried forward to next year	95527

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	71.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21.3
Key Stage 4	21.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	17

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1287
Number of questionnaires returned	330

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	27	52	12	7	2
My child is making good progress in school.	33	54	7	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	38	14	10	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	38	22	9	3
The teaching is good.	25	54	9	5	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	31	28	18	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	46	8	7	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	42	4	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	17	37	27	12	7
The school is well led and managed.	27	38	12	7	17
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	52	12	6	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	41	12	6	17

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 **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching, learning and achievement by the end of Year 11 are satisfactory.
- A small proportion of the teaching and learning is of good quality.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning by the end of Year 9 are poor and students' achievement is poor.
- A high proportion of the teaching in Years 7 to 9 is undertaken by temporary teachers. This means that learning lacks continuity and is slow.
- Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory.

66. In the National Tests for 14 year olds in 2002, results were well below the national average for all schools and for similar schools. In comparison with all schools, results in English were similar to those attained in science and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, results in English were below those in mathematics and science. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Teacher assessments were higher than the results students achieved in tests. In 2002, the GCSE results in English were well below the national average, and in English literature they were below the national average. In English, boys performed better than girls; in English literature their performance was similar.
67. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that attainment by the ends of Years 9 and 11 is consistent with examination results obtained in 2002; well below average. When students' prior attainment is taken into account, achievement is poor by the end of Year 9 and satisfactory by the end of Year 11. Students with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as other students.
68. In all year groups there are some higher attaining students who are confident speakers and can express themselves fully. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson when students discussed how imaginary guesthouses in Manchester might be described to their best advantage. As they move up the school such students gain in confidence and can, for example, explain some of the poems they read more fully by drawing upon their own experiences. However, the majority of students express themselves briefly and find difficulty in expanding what they have to say in response to questions.
69. In the sample of drama lessons that were seen, students had the opportunity to explore a range of social situations through improvisation. In one Year 8 lesson, students were given the opportunity to be active and critical, particularly with respect to how performances might be improved, and this led to improvements in vocabulary and in how to offer constructive criticism.
70. By the end of Year 9 students do read different types of writing. However, much of the reading matter being studied in the lessons seen during the inspection was confined to brief extracts from novels or poems. Students' response was mostly confined to answering 'closed' questions, in a number of cases directly onto a worksheet. Though it was evident from previous work that students do undertake some extended reading, these opportunities are less than might be expected. Few students read for their own pleasure or undertake their own research. Essentially, their skills are underdeveloped. By the end of Year 11 students go on to read more complex literature. Higher and middle attainers can write in some depth on such topics as comparing characters in plays or upon aspects of structure. However, only very few students have developed higher level skills that would, for example, enable them to evaluate the quality of what they read. Most students are aware only of the gist of what they read and are not aware of the precise messages contained in the

language. The standard of reading aloud is low, with very few students being able to project their voices to effect or to read with expression.

71. By the end of Year 9 students have mostly developed some skills in writing for different audiences and can, for example, write descriptions, narratives and letters. By the end of Year 11 they go on to extend their range. For example, a small proportion of higher attaining students produce good, full writing on such topics as reviewing trailers, using the appropriate technical language, or comparing named short stories by Thomas Hardy and L. P. Hartley. Some middle attaining students also redraft their work. However, at all levels in the school the work of most middle and lower attaining students is marred by inaccurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. Many write in a simplistic manner and with a limited use of vocabulary. In many cases, handwriting and presentation are of a low standard.
72. Teaching and learning are poor in Years 7 to 9, but satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. A small proportion of the teaching is good. When teaching is most effective, the work contains a suitable level of challenge, variety is introduced into the lesson and students have the chance to be active in their own learning. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson on a poem by Tennyson, in which students became interested in exploring together the differences between modern and Victorian terms. When work is thoroughly marked and accurately assessed, and when students are given clear advice on what they need to do to improve, they take a pride in their work and are ready to redirect their efforts. The benefits of this approach were especially evident in the folders of higher attaining students in Years 10 and 11. When teachers maintain good discipline and create a good environment for learning, good relationships exist between students, and teachers and students display positive attitudes and are co-operative.
73. When teaching is poor or less effective, a number of features are in evidence. A high proportion of teaching, especially in Years 7 to 9, is undertaken by temporary teachers. In a number of the classes seen, students had been taught by a number of such teachers in succession and for varying lengths of time. In these circumstances, the work lacks continuity, students feel they are not making progress and so they become demotivated. One way in which this concern manifests itself is in poor behaviour. More widely, in other lessons seen, the work being taught did not match students' prior attainment. Examples were seen where the tasks were too easy and so students were not able to improve their skills. In other instances, the tasks set were beyond the known capabilities of the class and the teacher's explanations did not take into account students' needs. Many lessons followed a similar pattern, which involved teachers giving verbal instructions for a written task, usually answering questions, that students were then required to start. However, this presented many middle and lower attaining students with difficulties, as they did not possess the skills necessary to answer the questions in the correct fashion. There were only a few instances when the teacher actually worked with the students to model answers with them, so leading students to understand the relevant writing conventions. A significant proportion of the marking is superficial, many errors are overlooked and comments do not indicate how the quality of the work might be improved.
74. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Whilst teaching has been monitored, this has not resulted in the subject teachers working together as a team to share best practice and eliminate poor practice. Assessment and the use of assessment are unsatisfactory. Some of the assessments made by teachers are inaccurate. Assessment data are not sufficiently taken into account in teachers' planning to ensure that the challenge of the work matches students' needs. The arrangements for the training and support of the graduate trainee teacher within the department are unsatisfactory. Both the trainee and the head of department have concerns. These concerns need to be resolved promptly.
75. The head of department serves as a good role model as a classroom teacher and she has a clear vision of what needs to be done if standards are to be raised, as is seen in the department's improvement plan. It is, however, essential that that the ideas are translated into effective action.

Literacy across the curriculum

76. Standards of literacy are well below average. Students' skills in reading and writing are generally underdeveloped for their age. Occasionally opportunities are provided for students to use and develop research skills, for example in geography projects in Year 9, that require students to use the Internet, but such opportunities are limited. Students do not develop a wide range of reading skills that would enable them to study independently. The standard of reading aloud is generally low, so students are not able to communicate their understanding to an audience with skill or confidence. A high proportion of the written work seen was brief and often confined to filling in responses to worksheets. Some limited opportunities are provided for students to be more expansive, for example in English and history, and here students do produce more substantial work. Students' written work contains many errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

English as an additional language

77. Students for whom English is an additional language make progress at the same rate as other students. When they enter the school, and are at the early stages of learning English, additional support is provided and this enables them to join the main classes at an early stage. Students value the extent to which other students help them to follow lessons.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- There are good procedures for monitoring the progress that students make.
- The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is improving teaching and standards.

Areas for development

- There is not enough planned use of homework and some marking is cursory.
- Strategies for developing numeracy skills are not fully developed across all subjects.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology.

78. Results in the 2002 National Tests for 14 year olds were well below average in comparison with all schools, but average when compared with similar schools. Boys did better than girls. In comparison with all schools, results in mathematics were similar to those attained in English and science. In comparison with similar schools, results in mathematics were similar to those in science, but above those in English.
79. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well below average. Students' results in mathematics were similar to those in most other subjects they studied.
80. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average, and this represents a satisfactory level of achievement for all students. The improvement in standards compared with the national test results is the outcome of more effective teaching and learning. Teachers are developing more effective teaching methods and preparing students better for the national tests. The school has developed further the National Numeracy Strategy into its planning of lessons, and this has had a positive effect on achievement. Students' basic numeracy skills are sound. The higher attaining students can add and subtract fractions, using their understanding of equivalent fractions to write them with a common denominator. Although middle attaining students understand the angle properties of triangles, they have difficulty in using that knowledge to calculate missing angles. Low attaining students plot coordinates in the first quadrant. Higher attaining students show their understanding of areas and circumferences of circles by calculating areas of compound shapes. When carrying out their data-handling project, higher attaining students learn to identify strategies for gathering and analysing data so that they can test a hypothesis. They can identify the data needed and how it is to be collected. Middle attaining students understand how to calculate the mean values of discrete data, but there is some confusion about the difference between the mode and median, and this hinders their progress in analysing data. Low attaining students are keen to

produce good work and understand the difference between a primary and secondary source. They progress to record the data using class intervals to create frequency tables.

81. Standards by the end of Year 11 are below average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement for all students. The improvement in standards compared with the 2002 GCSE results is a result of strategies that the school has developed. It organised revision classes and supplied students with revision guides. The school consolidated the syllabus and there was an improvement in the percentage of students entered for the examination. In their coursework, students are developing good skills in investigations. Their understanding of statistical surveys is good and diagrams are accurate, so that students can give a clear statistical interpretation of the results. When investigating the 'fencing' problem, the middle attaining students present their information graphically. Although they can explain the rules they have found, they do not extend this to using mathematical symbols. Middle attaining students have a sound understanding of coordinates, which they use well when creating graphs of simple linear functions. Higher attaining students apply the circle theorems they have learnt when solving problems of angles in circles. Low attaining students can calculate angles in triangles, but have greater difficulty in calculating missing angles in quadrilaterals.
82. Standards of numeracy and literacy are generally below average in mathematics, and overall standards of presentation vary. Where they are good, students set their work out clearly and spell mathematical terms accurately, and there are sound structures to their answers. However, not all work is carried out to this standard. Minorities of students do not show how they work out their answers, and this impedes their learning. There are errors in spelling, particularly when writing mathematical terms, and these are not always corrected. Students generally contribute well in class discussions and confidently explain their answers to each other. However, there are examples when students shout out answers; they do not always listen to each other, and this slows down their pace of learning. Although graphical calculators are used in lessons and there are clear plans for the modules of work, the quality of the use of information and communications technology is inconsistent.
83. Students with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress. They are placed in smaller classes, and learning support assistants work well with teachers to ensure that students are integrated into the lessons, stay on task and have help in understanding difficult concepts. This was particularly evident in lessons where the learning support assistants not only sit next to students but also circulate around the class as appropriate.
84. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all years and results in satisfactory learning. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding, and in the better lessons there is an enthusiasm for the subject that motivates students to want to learn. Teachers plan their lessons well. They identify clear learning objectives, and effective use is made of the three-part lessons, particularly in Years 7 to 9. The starter activity often acts as an effective introduction to the main part of the lesson, consolidating skills previously learnt and preparing students well for the main activity. For example, when students were learning how to develop strategies for solving data-handling investigations, the teacher makes sure that students can work out averages and range before applying them so that they can analyse the data. In the better lessons, there is an appropriate balance between the different types of activities, and this keeps students interested and motivated. In the better lessons, teachers ask students 'How did you do that?' This encourages students to explain how they worked out their answers and contributes well to the intellectual effort they make. Overall expectations of what students are expected to achieve are satisfactory, and there are examples of good practice. In the better lessons, there is a good level of challenge. Questions are asked that deepen students' understanding by challenging them to think about applying previous understanding to new learning, for example when considering the n^{th} term of triangular numbers in a Year 7 lesson.
85. Management of students is generally satisfactory, but there are areas for improvement. In the best lessons, students are alert and concentrating well. However, in the weaker lessons, teachers fail to capture the students' interest and attention, and to insist on high standards of behaviour. The teacher does not always insist that all are attentive when introducing new work, for example when

explaining the data-handling project. Consequently, students copy down the data -handling cycle, but are confused about what they are to do next and waste time by chatting with each other. The use of homework is unsatisfactory. In the better lessons, it is set regularly and tends to relate to classwork well. In other groups, work is not set regularly. The quality of marking is inconsistent, and marking varies between teachers. There is some good quality marking where teachers indicate where students have made mistakes and what they need to do to improve. Teachers can assess what students understand, and both students and teachers can track the progress students make. Some marking, however, amounts to no more than ticks and crosses, so that students do not know where they have gone wrong.

86. The overall quality of leadership and management in mathematics is satisfactory, with some good features. The head of department leads her team well and provides good support for others in the department. The teachers work well together and are keen to raise achievement in mathematics. Teachers have adopted the National Numeracy Strategy in their planning of lessons throughout the school and have introduced strategies to improve attainment. Nevertheless, there are too few opportunities for students to use computers to enhance their mathematics. There is a need to improve the monitoring of teaching and learning so that good practice in teaching styles can be shared and problems with managing the behaviour of students can be identified and rectified. The underachievement of students in the past has been identified and strategies developed to improve attainment, though it is too early for this to have had an effect on national examination results. Students' performance is monitored well with regular tests, and the results are linked well to standards found in lessons. The information from assessments is analysed well and used effectively to place students in groups so that work set is at an appropriately challenging level for all students. The information is also used well to support students who are not achieving as well as expected. However, there are weaknesses in the day-to-day marking of students' work. This needs to be consolidated across the department so that there is a more consistent approach.

Numeracy across the curriculum

87. Standards of numeracy are well below average. The contribution that other subjects make to developing students' skills in understanding and using number is unsatisfactory. Although teachers have had some training on the National Numeracy Strategy, it has been insufficient. There is no whole-school policy, and not all departments have developed their own strategies. Some practice of handling data was seen in geography, where students use their skills to convert pie charts to bar charts, and in physical education students record scores in games. They measure and weigh accurately in design and technology. Although there is some analysis in their coursework, it is quite superficial and is limited to the production of simple graphs and charts. In science, students lack confidence in using formulae, particularly in rearranging them.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The level of resources is generally good.
- There is very good liaison with the technicians so lessons start promptly.

Areas for improvement

- The leadership and management of the subject are poor; there is a lack of teamwork.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory resulting in unsatisfactory learning.
- The high level of teacher absence contributes to the inconsistency in practice.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology.
- Marking is poor, and there is insufficient use of assessment data.
- Students' attitude to their work is unsatisfactory.

88. In the National Tests for 14 year olds in 2002, results were well below the national average for all schools, but average in comparison with similar schools. In comparison with all schools, results in

science were similar to those attained in English and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, results in science were similar to those in mathematics, but above those in English. Boys overall performed better than girls.

89. Standards in the GCSE examination in 2002 were well below average. However, in the single science examination, results were above average, with boys performing particularly well. By comparison, students' results in the double science examination were very low, and a very high proportion of these students did not obtain a grade. The group who are most affected are those who do not attend regularly because they miss important deadlines for coursework. Students' results in single science were generally better than they obtained in other subjects, but in double science they were inferior.
90. On entry to the school, standards in science are generally below average, and often well below average. In Year 7, low attaining students had difficulty in recalling the words 'conductor' and 'insulator', but they set up simple circuits to test a variety of materials. Many of them did not read the ammeter accurately, and they required support to record their results clearly. By contrast, higher attaining students showed better recall of the work they had covered in a previous lesson on animal classification. They could distinguish the five groups of vertebrates, and enjoyed the challenge of identifying the differences in their characteristics. By Year 9, students begin to plan scientific investigations independently, though they showed little interest in analysing the results of their tests about how the rate of dissolving depends on the size of the particles. In another Year 9 class, students clearly understood the meaning of sensitivity as applied both to the feeling of pain and to the emotions. In spite of the interesting class activity, they showed limited interest in thinking about what their results indicated about the sensitivity of the skin in different parts of the human body. A significant proportion of students also showed a lack of pride in the presentation of their work. Overall standards are well below average; this represents unsatisfactory achievement, with students' unsatisfactory attitude a contributory factor.
91. The standards of work in the sample provided by the school were below average, but overall standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are well below average. Very few students produce a level of thought and of written work which will lead to the higher grades at GCSE. Higher attaining students in Year 10, for instance, are making unsatisfactory progress mainly because of long-term teacher absence and a lack of suitably qualified temporary teachers. They had received insufficient help in preparing for a recent module test, and were understandably displeased with the situation. Students in another Year 10 class were able to identify many of the key factors of a healthy life style. However, they showed little motivation to improve their work, and their learning depended more on teacher insistence than an interest in learning. Students with special educational needs are well known by their teachers, but lesson plans do not give enough consideration to their individual targets. Support assistants are effective in helping students with learning difficulties. Less help is provided for students with behavioural difficulties, and irregular attendance also restricts progression. Students with special needs therefore make unsatisfactory progress.
92. The quality of teaching varies from very good to poor. Overall, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in all years. There has been a very high incidence of teacher absence during this academic year. This has a negative impact on the quality of learning, because of a lack of continuity, and also because temporary teachers often have a lack of experience and qualifications. However, there is also some unsatisfactory teaching by permanent full-time teachers.
93. There are some strengths in teaching. There is very good liaison with the technicians, and teachers in general plan the content of their lessons well. However, more thought is required in devising the activities through which students learn by doing. There is a tendency for teachers to talk for too long, leaving less time for students to use their initiative. Temporary teachers are less well prepared, with much of the work set for students based on reading and answering questions from books, or even simply copying sections of writing. Even where planning is good, the quality of learning is often limited because of ineffective behaviour management techniques. In very few classes were teachers able to relax and enjoy their teaching, because too much of their time is taken up in keeping students on task. Sanctions for persistent offenders were not applied quickly

enough. The marking of work is poor; only a minority of teachers mark work regularly, give praise and rewards for improvements, and provide guidance on how to overcome weaknesses. There is insufficient reference to national levels and grades, or use of school data on students' previous performance. As a result, the identification of underachievement is too slow.

94. The contribution made by the science department to the teaching of basic skills is unsatisfactory. Teachers are clearly aware of the national priority for improving students' literacy, and some good use is made of key words; however, these are not always displayed clearly, and there is often insufficient consolidation during the lesson summary. The opportunity for students to write in their own words is limited mainly to coursework. The use of numeracy is satisfactory, for instance in taking measurements from scales, but the use of graphs and formulae is underdeveloped, particularly in Years 10 and 11. There are insufficient opportunities for students to use computers and modern technology to enhance their studies. Not all teachers have completed their training, resulting in a lack of expertise and confidence. Students rarely have science lessons in a computer room, for instance to undertake research, or to use the specialist software which the school has purchased. Moreover, there is a shortage of equipment such as dataloggers. The requirements of the National Curriculum for the use of ICT in science are not met.
95. The leadership and management of the science department are poor. There is very little monitoring of data, of students' work or of teaching. There is no evidence of regular meetings and teamwork to discuss strategies for improving teaching skills and standards. As a result, the use of policies such as those for marking and homework is inconsistent. Furthermore, no handbook or improvement plan was available during the inspection, so there is insufficient guidance and purpose behind the work of the department. The scheme of work draws upon national guidelines, and provides satisfactory guidance, particularly in Years 7 to 9. There have been insufficient opportunities for teachers to access professional development, particularly in the use of modern technology; teaching therefore lacks variety and is often uninspiring. The quality of resources is good, apart from the lack of modern technology, but the match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is poor, with the level of temporary cover very high. The subject has fallen behind national expectations in its development in recent years, resulting in standards which are well below average and unsatisfactory achievements by students.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and leads to good quality learning.
- Overall, standards of work are above average by the end of Year 11.
- From below average starting points in Year 7, students' achievement in art and design is good and most students make good progress.
- The curriculum is broad and ensures students gain skills in using a wide variety of materials.
- Students have good attitudes to the subject and most of them try hard in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- At present, the department lacks a leader, so responsibility for decision-making is left to individual teachers.
- There is no department handbook, so tracking schemes of work is difficult, especially for new and inexperienced staff.
- There are inconsistencies in marking and assessment, giving an inaccurate picture of quality of work, especially in Years 7 to 9.

96. The results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicated a low percentage of students attaining Level 5 and above when compared with national averages.
97. In the 2002 GCSE examinations in art and design, there was high level of entry, and results were average. Boys and girls did well in art and gained their best results in the subject.

98. Students enter school with differing experiences and skills in art and only a superficial knowledge of artists and art history. By the end of Year 9, students' standards of attainment are average and their achievement, therefore, is good. Most students make good progress in all aspects of art. Students who are gifted and talented have ample opportunities to do more challenging work in order to make appropriate progress at higher levels. Work seen during the inspection exceeds the most recent teachers' assessments. Drawing skills improve steadily from Year 7, as students learn to observe closely and use their drawings as inspiration on larger and more inventive pieces. Students in Year 9, for example, doing a heads project, are working with pencil, paint, distorting images using the computer, creating cubist works and making models in various materials. Students mix paint carefully and use it brightly. In printing and batik work, a display of Year 9 students' realistic drawings of butterflies and insects and the use of jewel-like colours is impressive. In ceramics, most students do finely detailed pieces and, in this, students with special educational needs make good progress and often produce the best work. Most show good understanding of facial proportion and effective use of fabric for embellishment on papier-mâché heads. Students use their sketchbooks to draw, paint and research about art, artists and crafts from other countries. This helps their cultural development as it gives them insight into the lives and works of famous artists and how people produce and see art across the world. Knowledge of tribal African and Aboriginal art is particularly good.
99. From their start in Year 10, when standards are average, students improve in drawing and painting, and build up skills in graphics, printmaking, printing, ceramics, textiles and resistant materials, and extend their knowledge of the techniques employed by real artists. Students' standards of attainment are above average and achievement, therefore, is good. Students are encouraged to research themes and make preparatory studies in sketchbooks. They experiment freely with tools and materials and most can successfully modify and develop their chosen ideas. The higher attainers write detailed notes, mount examples of practice pieces and explain the thinking behind their work to show how well they can produce and analyse art, often using ICT for better effects. On final pieces, many students display painstakingly detailed work. For example, they use careful dotting techniques when reproducing Aboriginal-type art work, make fine relief detail on clay building frontages, show precisely worked areas on optical art pieces and create bright well-observed acrylic paintings on garden seats. In most instances, students in Year 11 produce sufficient work to enable them to select the best for display and GCSE grading. Much of the work shows sustained interest, as students can work through a theme in varying materials. The few less successful students, mainly boys, gain lower grades because they produce fewer pieces of work, but not necessarily of poorer quality.
100. The quality of teaching overall is good and secures good learning. In lessons seen during the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching and most lessons were good or very good. The greatest strength in the teaching stems from very good subject knowledge, whereby students are given accurate background information and shown correct techniques. Most aspects of the teaching are good. Thorough lesson planning and preparation ensures students have enough time and materials for investigation and scope for personal work. Teachers expect students to work hard and produce their best. They display work prominently in the studios and around school to celebrate successes. Most students rise to the challenge in lessons as they are motivated by the wealth of work and realise that in time they too will produce something worthwhile. They settle quickly, enjoy watching demonstrations and examining pictures and artefacts, and work, try hard and produce a good amount in lessons. Students are treated equally and fairly; there is mutual respect, so behaviour is good and teachers do not waste time in gaining order and discipline. Most students enjoy their art lessons and even the students who feel they are 'not good' at art enjoy it because, as many of them say, they like their teachers. In lessons, appropriate praise encourages all, but especially the less confident students. Teachers speak to students about their work and homework, but as they rarely write about it many students who lack powers of retention forget what the teacher has said and are unsure of how they can improve. There is no common system of marking through the department, and assessment is inconsistent, accounting for inaccuracies in awarding levels for Year 9 in 2002.

101. Teachers have worked hard to raise standards, by creating challenging modules of work, well aligned to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the examining boards. Each module ensures students gain skills, knowledge and insight into art throughout the world. Some topics also increase students' vocabularies, understanding of perspective and proportion, and skill in using the computer for distortion and pattern-making. Students often work alongside real artists, and some of their works are now on display in local and national art galleries, prominent places in the community and the school Millennium garden. The school has recently been awarded an Arts Mark Gold award in recognition of the quality attained and variety of work offered to the students.
102. The subject is well managed by the head of faculty, who holds meetings to maintain morale and ensure the day-to-day smooth running of the department. At present, the head of department is on long-term sick leave, so leadership is unsatisfactory. Lack of a department handbook is resulting in inconsistencies in marking and assessment, and responsibility for decision-making is left to individuals. New and inexperienced teachers have no guidelines from which to plan their work, and have to rely on help from colleagues. As the department has rooms on both sites, the problems are compounded. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching, and some teachers need training in the use of computers in order to extend the curriculum. However, the subject is doing well because of the particularly good qualities of individual teachers who are succeeding despite a lack of leadership.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- A variety of enrichment activities involve students in citizenship.
- The Year Councils provide a forum to involve students in the wider and practical aspects of citizenship.

Areas for development

- An analysis of the existing provision has still to be completed.
- Subjects have mapped out areas to promote citizenship; these have yet to be developed within teaching.
- Citizenship needs to be made explicit in lessons.
- There is no monitoring or evaluation of citizenship lessons or procedures for assessing the progress made by students.

103. Some features of citizenship have been taught across the curriculum for some time; however, citizenship as a distinct subject is in the very early stages of development. Insufficient progress has been made in the analysis of the subject, and some aspects of it are not covered; consequently citizenship fails to meet statutory requirements.
104. By the end of Years 9 and 11 standards are well below average. History, art and design, drama, geography and PSHE are just starting to take an active role in the promotion of citizenship. Discussions in lessons show glimpses of awareness of the subject, but it is not always made clear that some aspects of the lessons are part of the citizenship curriculum. Many subjects, like science, design and technology and music, have yet to contribute to the subject. Many enrichment activities outside lessons provide good opportunities to develop citizenship, for example the citizenship day with the local rotary club and charity work for overseas aid. Overall, students' achievement in citizenship is unsatisfactory; this is a consequence of the subject being in the very early stages of development.
105. In work seen during the inspection, a small minority of students were starting to acquire basic knowledge and understanding of different aspects of society, for instance in human rights and conservation issues. However, there are inconsistencies in what students learn, know and are able to do as the subject is taught by a large number of teachers. Few lessons identify a citizenship content; very few students are aware that they are learning skills promoting citizenship. This was

exemplified in a Year 8 lesson on drugs, where many students knew the differences between illegal and legal drugs but not the important citizenship elements of the legal or medical consequences. Similarly, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson on data handling, students successfully used the national census; however, the citizenship element was not made explicit. By the end of Year 11, geography students understand environmental issues like ozone depletion and conservation of the rainforests; some are aware of the consequence of not taking action on these issues. Again, the citizenship element is not made explicit to them. Students work in pairs and small groups when discussing issues like globalisation and money management, unaware that they are learning citizenship skills preparing them to be better-informed citizens.

106. Students have good opportunities to participate in school-initiated activities and take action within the local and wider community. About one-fifth of students take advantage of the extra-curricular opportunities offered in physical education. This involves inter-school matches where students are taking responsibility as team members or captains. Enrichment activities and events successfully support the citizenship programme, for example involvement with St Ann's hospice and participation by students in a crime awareness day. All students, including those with special educational needs, are integrated well into activities. Art in the community, musical productions like *Grease* and *My Fair Lady* and residential outdoor pursuits involve a range of students in participating, working co-operatively and, during residential trips, living alongside one another. This enhances community spirit.
107. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory. Citizenship is taught by a large number of teachers, which leads to inconsistencies in teaching and also learning. Overall, teachers demonstrate satisfactory subject knowledge and understanding of citizenship. However, higher expectations of students' contributions and work are needed if learning is to improve. Teachers often fail to insist upon good standards both of behaviour and of work, which was exemplified in a Year 10 lesson on budgeting for a holiday; as a result students did not learn. There is an insufficient range of teaching methods to meet the needs of all students; a greater range of strategies and resources is needed in order to improve learning. Students frequently show unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour in citizenship lessons, as exemplified in a Year 10 lesson on family life. However, some students with positive attitudes and good behaviour successfully discuss and debate issues about society, as seen in a Year 8 lesson where lower attaining students discuss legal and illegal drugs.
108. The relatively new co-ordinator of citizenship has had insufficient time to develop the subject. A full analysis of the school's existing provision has yet to be completed to ensure coverage of all the citizenship requirements. There has been no monitoring and evaluation of citizenship. Although most subjects have identified areas that promote citizenship, there is little evidence seen in long or short term planning made by departments. Citizenship is rarely made explicit in lessons. On the positive side, Year Councils enable students to participate in decision-making related to the activities of the school. Prefects, monitors and sports captains give opportunities for students to be involved in worthwhile and practical citizenship.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teachers in the department are well matched to curriculum needs, are well qualified and work hard.
- The quality of individual lesson planning ensures that time and resources are well used.

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough use of computer aided design and making (CAD/CAM) and ICT.
- Students' skills in design, analysis and evaluation are weak.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.

109. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were well below the national average. Girls performed

better than boys overall. Students' results in design and technology were not significantly different from those obtained in most other subjects.

110. The standards attained by students by the end of Year 9 are below average; this represents a satisfactory level of achievement. The school broadly meets the requirements of the National Curriculum; however, opportunities for the use of ICT are limited, and computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) does not feature. In addition there is no provision for textiles technology. In general, design skills, evaluation and analysis are less well developed than making skills. This is evident in all material areas. The way that teachers organise projects for students to follow in Years 7 to 9 does not ensure sufficient planned progression to take into account prior learning between the units taught; this leads to a lack of challenge for higher attaining students in some of the material areas. Detailed planning is in place needed to ensure that the planned activities are fully mapped onto the National Curriculum and that experiences gained in one unit are built upon and extended throughout the course.
111. Standards in Year 11 are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement, given students' attainment at the end of Year 9. Standards are higher in food technology, where students making skills are often well developed. Whilst making skills overall are satisfactory, designing skills are underdeveloped and lack the rigour required for high achievement. In general, students' skills of analysis and evaluation are weak; design specifications and subsequent analyses are not being used as the basis for performance criteria in projects. This is particularly evident within the design development stage of projects, and often leads to superficial design activity. The poor level of attendance has a negative impact upon standards because it leads to gaps in learning for many students and leads to incomplete coursework assignments.
112. The quality of teaching and the learning that it promotes in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Students benefit from knowledgeable teachers who demonstrate an interest in the subject. Lessons are well planned, and the pace of lessons is usually brisk. A good range of activities captures the interest and involvement of students of all levels of attainment, and students with special educational needs progress at a rate which matches those of other students. However, work is not always matched to the needs of the students, and as a result they are not consistently extended or challenged. The department has identified gifted and talented students; however, schemes of work and lesson activities are not sufficiently varied to ensure a consistent challenge for the most able. Homework is regularly set across the department and is usually used to reinforce learning. The department has an established marking policy; however, whilst work is consistently marked, assessment is not being used effectively to set challenging targets or to guide individual lesson and curriculum planning. The department is yet to introduce CAD/CAM into the curriculum, and ICT has not impacted positively upon standards.
113. The quality of teaching and the learning that it promotes in Years 10 to 11 is satisfactory. There is some good teaching, for example, in food technology and electronics, where students are actively engaged in activities, the pace of lessons is brisk, and clear teaching and learning objectives are met. Information and communication technology is used by students to support learning. Students make particularly good use of circuit design software in electronics and a nutritional analysis program in food technology. In addition, students in food technology make good use of a digital camera for recording their food products. The standard of marking is satisfactory; it is clear to students and constructive comments are often provided. However, teachers are not using the results of assessment to directly improve students' learning. Where assessment is least effective, it does not set targets or provide feedback on how to improve. Where it is used more effectively, clear targets for improvement are set and guidance given to support students in raising attainment.
114. Students' attitudes to the subject are satisfactory. They are generally interested in their lessons and work co-operatively; students are particularly enthusiastic during practical lessons. However, in a significant minority of lessons learning is affected because some students' behaviour and approach to the lesson and are unsatisfactory.
115. The department makes a satisfactory contribution to the development of students' literacy skills by concentration on the use of technical vocabulary and the use of writing frames. In addition,

opportunities for extended writing are provided, for example when Year 9 students are expected to write at length about production planning in connection with resistant materials. Teachers reinforce the correct use of technical vocabulary in lessons, emphasise it in their planning and often highlight it through displays in classrooms. Students' numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed through activities such as accurate measurement, marking out and weighing. The department also makes a good contribution to extra-curricular activities. A 'green powered' go-cart project club for local primary aged students is run after school, and numerous coursework classes are provided for students in Year 11.

116. The leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory. The members of the department work well together, and accommodation and resources for learning are well managed. The department is beginning to use self-evaluation as a tool for improvement, although the monitoring of teaching and learning is currently not good enough to lead to significant improvement and, whilst the department has developed a plan for improvement, too little emphasis has been given to the raising of standards through improved teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Recent planning of the subject curriculum has been good and gives clear guidance about what is expected in lessons.
- Resources are well used to motivate students in their studies.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to monitor progress and raise standards.
- Marking of work is unsatisfactory.

117. Results in the 2002 GCSE examination were well below average. Girls achieved higher than boys did, and a higher proportion of boys were unclassified compared to boys nationally. Students did less well in geography than in other subjects studied.
118. The standards of work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 9 are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement given students' standards on entry to the school. Students possess an appropriate range of geographical skills, such as reading map references and plotting data. The work is mostly accurate, but poor attitudes of a minority lead to below average standards because work is untidy and left incomplete. Students know a range of terms, such as 'condensation' in studies about weather, and know the sequence of events leading to rain, but few understand the process of physical change that occurs when air is forced to rise. Students have knowledge of topics such as how river valleys are formed and understand about the development of countries, but standards are below average because oral and written answers lack explanation and students do not show enough knowledge of places.
119. The standards of work at the end of Year 11 are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement given students' standards at the start of the course. Students use number to plot graphs and charts. In Year 10, for example, they use data to construct population 'pyramids' to compare the different structures in India and Britain, but do not analyse and explain the differences adequately. Students know about global issues, such as the causes and effect of pollution from 'acid rain', but do not show depth of understanding in written work or illustrate answers with knowledge of places. The standard of work in books is variable. Whereas higher attaining students have good attitudes and take care in writing, resulting in above average attainment, many do not think deeply enough about issues or use diagrams well to support answers. In some topics, however, such as tectonic studies, many students have good understanding of the terms 'epicentre' and 'plates' and use them well to describe why earthquakes occur in particular areas.
120. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The aims of lessons are made clear to students, so they know what is expected of them, but teachers do not make effective use of summary sessions, so they do not show how well they have learnt. Teachers mostly manage classes well, so that learning proceeds smoothly and students achieve well, but occasionally teachers' limited subject expertise results in slow progress and not enough is achieved in the lesson. Teachers make good use of resources and help motivate students well in lessons, but many teachers do not plan strategies to meet the needs of students at different levels of attainment, so that higher attainers are not being extended. On the other hand, lower attainers in a Year 7 lesson achieved very well because planning was effective in meeting their needs. Marking of work is unsatisfactory because of inconsistencies in on-going assessment, which results in students not knowing how well they are doing. Teachers make good use of homework, particularly in setting projects such as work on tropical rain forests in Year 9, which results in students achieving well.

121. The quality of teaching and learning in Year 10 is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject expertise and their explanation of topics is clear, so students understand what is being explained to them. In good lessons learning is effective because students are well managed: lessons are well structured and provide on-going challenges, resulting in good progress. In a higher attaining Year 10 lesson, for example, good planning provided opportunities for discussion, enabling the teacher to assess students' knowledge about global warming. As a result clear gains were made in understanding about the causes and effects of pollution to the environment. Satisfactory use is made of film and reprographic resources, but atlases are rarely used to support knowledge of places and not enough use is made of computers because of difficulty of access. Teachers regularly mark work, but inconsistencies in quality means that students are not well informed about progress.
122. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The recently appointed head of department has made good progress in writing schemes of work and improving standards in the subject. Over time, however, there has been and still is insufficient monitoring of students' work, so that they are not achieving highly enough. Standards are beginning to rise, especially in Year 10 where there is better subject expertise, but the use of assessment information in the subject is unsatisfactory because it does not inform fully about progress and how students can improve. The quality of curriculum experience is improving, but there are currently few opportunities for students to gain practical experience through fieldwork.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and have put into place a few improved learning strategies.
- Some students experience lessons of high quality and learn very well.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching has not ensured that all students benefit from high quality lessons.
- The analysis of available statistical information about student performance lacks rigour and is not used effectively to help raise standards of students' achievement.
- The strategies for helping students to improve their basic literacy skills are inadequate.

123. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were very low in comparison with the national average. Students performed worse in history than in most of the other subjects they studied.
124. In the work seen during the inspection, students' standards of attainment by the end of Year 9 are well below average. This is an unsatisfactory level of achievement, given that most students join the school with levels of attainment in history that are below average. In lessons, students of all levels of prior attainment display, in their oral answers, good knowledge of the topics being studied. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, students of higher attainment showed, in bright and lively answers, a clear understanding of how the interdependence between the different strata of society in medieval England underpinned the feudal system. Similarly, students of lower attainment, in a Year 8 lesson, demonstrated good oral understanding of the reasons for the development of the Triangular Passage that took black slaves from West Africa to the Americas, and of the huge profits that ensured that many of those involved overlooked the cruelty involved. However, it is in students' written work that unsatisfactory achievement is most evident. Higher attaining students show their capacity for drawing on varying sources of information and conveying their understanding effectively in clear, fluent writing, such as the short biographies of L. S. Lowry and Queen Victoria. On the other hand, lower attaining students lack the skills of analysis and explanation that would enable them to go beyond mere description, and even copy phrases from their text books when tackling questions such as 'Why did Hitler become ruler of Germany?' In the written work that students are given to do, there is an over-emphasis on routine tasks that require

short, often descriptive, answers to questions about information contained in sheets handed out by teachers. This means that many students are insufficiently challenged to develop the higher-level skills needed for analysing complex causes of events and for explaining their conclusions in extended pieces of writing.

125. The standards of attainment of those students who choose to continue with the study of history in Years 10 and 11 are below average. In the context of their prior attainment, this represents satisfactory achievement. There was no opportunity during the inspection to observe lessons in Year 11 because the GCSE examinations had started, so judgements are based on Year 10 lessons, and on the written work of students in both year groups. In a Year 10 lesson on the Vietnam War the majority of students showed, in their oral answers, that they understood why the USA became increasingly involved, after the withdrawal of the French, in their efforts to limit the spread of Communism in the Far East. The written work of higher attaining students on the same topic reflects this level of understanding. For instance, Year 11 students effectively evaluated the reliability and usefulness of a range of primary and secondary sources of information, producing convincing and well-supported views about the USA's motives, and its methods of fighting the war. Whilst the answers of students of lower attainment indicate knowledge and the ability to extract information from historical sources, they lack a well-planned structure and fail to select sufficient evidence that supports their opinions convincingly. So answers by lower attaining students in Year 10 to the question 'Why was there tension in Europe between 1900 and 1914?' describe events and actions rather than explaining the reasons for tension. The work seen in Years 10 and 11 was, however, of a higher standard overall than that reflected in the 2002 GCSE results. Teachers have put into place a revised learning programme for students that places greater emphasis upon examination techniques.
126. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have good subject knowledge and manage most classes at least satisfactorily in terms of student behaviour. There is teaching of a high standard that engages the interest of students of all levels of attainment and motivates them to produce their best work, as in a Year 7 lesson in which students of lower attainment successfully compared crime and punishment in medieval times with today. In a significant minority of lessons, however, too many students behave badly and disrupt the learning of those who wish to concentrate on their work. In lessons where this happens, the major cause is deficient classroom management by the teacher. Lessons typically feature lengthy discussions by the teacher. The absence of teaching strategies to interest and stimulate students, results in bored and unchallenged students who talk noisily, and often shout out, above the voice of the teacher vainly calling for quiet. There has been monitoring of such lessons by more senior teachers but this has, so far, failed to improve the quality of teaching to a satisfactory standard. The quality of teachers' marking of students' work is also inconsistent. At its best it informs students clearly why they have been given the marks awarded and tells them what to do to improve. There is marking, though, that is restricted to brief and general comments about students' efforts that do not point the way forward.
127. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and have put into place improved learning strategies following the department's evaluation of the very disappointing 2002 GCSE results. In one Year 10 lesson with a group of lower attaining students, for example, the teacher focused clearly on building students' understanding of the USA's policy in Vietnam in readiness for them to write important course work; a writing frame would be presented to them in the following lesson to help them present their own conclusions more convincingly. In a lesson with a higher attaining group, students whose teacher was temporarily absent for illness, readily displayed good understanding of the reasons for the spread of Communism in the period following World War II, and the powerful influence of the Domino Theory that resulted in the escalation of the USA's involvement in Vietnam. Their obvious interest in, and enjoyment of, the course was convincing evidence of the good quality of teaching that they receive; they stated their appreciation of the level of intellectual challenge that they find stimulating. The marking of students' written work varies in quality, between different teachers, from satisfactory to excellent. The best has copious comments on the reasons why work has been judged to be of the standard awarded, and provides clear and helpful comments about how to attain higher grades.

128. The management of the subject is good whilst the leadership provided is only satisfactory. Administrative procedures are thorough and effective and help to ensure that the potential problems presented by the school's two sites are minimised. The documents that declare the subject's teaching and learning expectations, however, whilst very full, are sound rather than inspiring. The policy about the teaching of literacy, for example, lacks the specific detail on practical strategies that is critical to improved standards of achievement in Years 7 to 9 especially. This helps to account, in part, for the varying quality of teaching and learning in the lessons of different teachers in those years. The information given to teachers about the range of learning styles and marking strategies they should employ is less prescriptive than it could be and too much scope is given to individual interpretation of what is best for students. For this reason, and because the formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching by senior staff has been ineffective in improving some unsatisfactory teaching, the good standards of teaching that are a feature of the best lessons have not permeated all lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Students reach high standards in the use of computers in art and design.
- There is some good teaching where students make good progress.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of teaching is very poor, so students are underachieving very badly and standards are very low.
- Very poor leadership and management have led to poor staff morale and very low standards.
- Students are not receiving their entitlement to be taught the subject.
- Measures to prevent students accessing unsuitable sites on the Internet are inadequate.

129. GCSE results were below average in 2002. The results were not recorded or reported correctly so it is not clear how well boys and girls performed.

130. Standards by the end of Year 9 are well below average and students' achievement is very poor. The assessments made by teachers show that only one student this year has reached the national average and this assessment is accurate given the quality of work seen during the inspection. The work in Year 7 is some of the best in the whole school, with students in one teacher's classes producing reports that combine text, spreadsheets, digital images and data from databases in convincing reports to the headteacher on the cost of carpeting the rooms. The students found this stimulating, and it demonstrates just how well they can achieve when they are taught well. Unfortunately, the great majority of students do not receive such teaching and underachieve very badly. Most spend time carrying out simple tasks, such as copying out work and filling in gaps in worksheets. They are asked to follow simple instructions, getting little or no opportunity to think for themselves. As a result, by the end of Year 9, standards are little changed from those in Year 7 and students have made almost no progress at all.

131. Standards by the end of Year 11 are very low. The predictions for the current Year 11 students' GCSE results are very low. Students' achievement is very poor as a result of very poor teaching or the very poor curriculum. Only a minority of students study the subject in Year 11 and some do not study it in Year 10. The standard of work seen during the inspection was very similar to that seen in Year 7, with students having made only minimal progress during their time in school. One lesson, on searching a database, was actually taught to both a Year 7 and a Year 10 class; the Year 7 students got further than those in Year 10. Throughout the school, students are able only to carry out simple tasks under direction. They can enter text and organise their work to a limited degree, sort and search a database and use simple formulae in spreadsheets. However, they are unable to work on their own initiative to design systems or model situations, for example, and can produce work of any quality only when they follow the prompts.

132. The quality of teaching and learning is very poor. There is an ingrained belief that students are very low attainers in ICT when they join the school, a belief that is incorrect. This leads to teachers setting work that is far too easy for students and, as a result, students become bored and start to misbehave. Some teachers cannot control behaviour adequately; students are allowed to play games, mess around with the programs or simply wander in and out of lessons at will. There are no proper schemes of work, so students of all levels of ability carry out similar tasks. The worksheets used are often too easy for the higher attainers, while students with special educational needs are unable to read them. There are not enough subject specialists, so some teachers do not have enough knowledge to be able to use the software properly, while others are unqualified. Some teachers do no marking whatsoever, while others are using different systems to assess the work. Lower attainers in Year 7 quickly become frustrated at their lack of progress when the teacher fails to gain their attention at the start of the lesson, so they do not know what they are supposed to be doing or how to do it. Overall, with most teachers, students are simply not being made to work hard enough or given the opportunities to show any initiative. Nevertheless, some students do make progress, but it depends on who is teaching them, so a student's progress is not guaranteed but more of a lottery.
133. Some use is made of computers in other subjects and this is where students can show what they are really capable of. In art and design, for example, some of the work with digital images, involving filters, produced by students in Year 8 is exceptionally good, as is some work in design and technology. However, this is the exception rather than the rule, and a student's experiences of using computers in other subjects is as hit and miss as the quality of teaching they are likely to receive.
134. There are many other problems with the school's provision that are contributing to students' exceptionally poor progress; almost all of them stem from the very poor way the subject is led and managed in the school. Teachers do not work as a team, rather as individuals, and morale is very low. Teachers who are new to the department receive a very poor quality of support. One teacher who is new to the profession, for example, has three GCSE groups but has had no training in the course and does not even have a scheme of work, so has no idea how long to spend on each topic. Another teacher has no idea of the prior attainment of the students because no data have been provided. This means that teachers are unable to plan their lessons at a suitable degree of difficulty for the students involved. Teachers are now doing their own assessments using a variety of methods that cannot ensure that assessments are accurate.
135. No proper analysis is carried out of examination results to determine students' achievements, and the development plan makes no reference to standards whatsoever. Teaching is not monitored, so nobody has any idea of where the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching lie. The software used is different on the two sites and there are not enough measures to prevent students from accessing unsuitable Internet sites via the school's computers.
136. The department has several individuals who receive some form of management allowance for the subject, but the students still receive a very poor standard of education.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Students in Year 7 are developing good spoken skills in both languages.
- Higher attaining students in Year 9 are making good progress towards their GCSE examination.

Areas for improvement

- Some teachers do not manage the behaviour of students well.
- Homework is not regularly set and marking is erratic.
- Students do not have well developed listening skills.

137. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, students attained results in French that were very low compared to the national average. In Spanish, results were well below average. Although girls did better than boys, they did so by a smaller margin than would be expected nationally. Significantly fewer students took French than would be expected nationally; the number taking Spanish was, however, well above the national figure. Students did less well in French and Spanish compared to their achievement in the other subjects studied. A much smaller proportion of students than would be expected nationally passed with a grade G or above, while many more achieved grade U. No students achieved A* or A grades in either language, and in French few also achieved B grades.
138. By the end of Year 9, students are attaining standards which are well below what would be expected nationally in French and Spanish. This represents an unsatisfactory level of achievement as students enter the school with standards that are below average. Too many students in Year 9 have poor behaviour which is not always well managed by the teachers. In addition, the large numbers of students who are frequently absent from school are also badly affected as they find it difficult to catch up when they return.
139. In both languages, by the end of Year 9, students are generally better at speaking and writing than at listening and reading. Students do not get enough practice at listening to tapes and videos and so, while they can understand the teacher talking in French or Spanish, they find listening to native speakers much more difficult. In reading, students cope well with the short extracts but have few opportunities to work on authentic or more extended texts and so have less well developed skills of reading at length. They can write short postcards and paragraphs about themselves and their local area, but few of the higher attainers are able to write accurately using a variety of tenses unless they are following a model. When speaking, students are often asked to work from memory and to ask as well as answer the question and so have developed better speaking skills. In Year 9, higher attaining students have been given the opportunity to start the GCSE course early and to prepare some of the coursework. Students with special educational needs are not always well taught; some teachers find it difficult to manage the behaviour of disruptive students, who therefore do not achieve as well as they should.
140. In the current Year 7, however, there is a marked improvement in what students can do. There has been a change in the teaching style, as most of the staff have adopted the ideas from the Key Stage 3 Strategy and other innovative projects. For example, some students are expected to use French for everything they want to say. They are expected to give whole sentences rather than just one word when writing and speaking, and to be able to express their opinions on everything, including the work they are doing, which they do with great enthusiasm.
141. Students are attaining well below the standard expected nationally for French and Spanish by the end of Year 11. Very few students currently study a language during Years 10 and 11, and the numbers have dropped significantly over the past two years. Of those who are currently studying a language, achievement is unsatisfactory as a significant minority of students do not do as well as would be expected. The group most affected are those who do not attend regularly, because they miss important deadlines for coursework.
142. Students' writing improves during Years 10 and 11 because they have very specific tasks for their coursework and are well guided about the requirements of the examination. In both languages, students can speak at a basic level on topics such as where they live and, in Spanish in particular, they do this well. Lower attaining students are hesitant in their replies but are, nevertheless, able to make themselves understood and to communicate basic messages. As in Year 9, students cope well when reading short extracts from textbooks, but they have insufficient opportunity to develop their ability to read at length. Many students say they find listening to tapes difficult and would benefit from more practice in this.
143. In French and Spanish, the quality of the teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall because of the lack of consistency across the department. Students learn well with the teachers who explain the tasks clearly and allow them time to practise, but in some lessons students misbehave by calling out and refusing to do the work that is set. In some lessons seen students were expected

to sit and listen to very lengthy explanations by the teacher, so they became restless and misbehaved. In these lessons, which were mostly seen in Year 9, relationships have become strained and little learning takes place. Teaching is much better in Year 7, where there have been some new initiatives including the Key Stage 3 Strategy and TALK project. There is also much less inconsistency in the quality of the teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11, where the few students who are learning a language have more desire to learn and the teachers plan interesting lessons. Students who are regularly absent, however, often miss important deadlines, and teachers find it difficult to help them to catch up.

144. Homework is often not well planned and is not set regularly by all teachers. Students do not have a textbook to take home, so cannot refer to work that they have done previously. This is exacerbated by the lack of a systematic use of their exercise books to record notes and key language. In some lessons, especially in Year 10 Spanish, teachers ensure that students make careful notes on the language so that they can refer to them later. This was not the case in all lessons seen, however, and many students found it almost impossible to find work that they had done earlier. Marking in books is erratic; sometimes it is clear and helps students to see what they can do to improve, but mostly it is perfunctory. It is much better when it is directly related to the examination in Years 10 and 11, and students are given much more guidance about how to improve their coursework.
145. Teachers often move swiftly between activities, but in several lessons seen there was insufficient time allowed for students to use the language for themselves. This meant that students did not make as much progress as they could have done, and writing tasks were very simple and short. In contrast, in Year 7, students frequently used French spontaneously for everything they wanted to say in class and seized every opportunity to show what they could do. Teachers had prepared some very interesting materials and games, which the students thoroughly enjoyed, almost forgetting that they were actually learning a language.
146. Lessons are well organised, but the resources and tasks are not always appropriate for the range of abilities in the class. There are times, for example, when more difficult work is not available for students who would benefit from working from authentic texts or being expected to write at greater length. When teaching students with special educational needs, teachers are not always providing the support that students need by giving them adapted tasks or extra help sheets.
147. Currently little information and communication technology is used in lessons, but as access to computer rooms has been difficult not all staff get the opportunity to use computers with students as often as they would like.
148. The department is satisfactorily managed at a day-to-day level. The head of department has worked hard to ensure that staff have access to all the information and resources they need. Results are beginning to be analysed and, for example, in Year 9 higher attaining students are now allowed to start their GCSE course early in an attempt to encourage more students to continue with French in Year 10. Leadership is, however, currently unsatisfactory because there are serious weaknesses in the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, where very few students study a language at all and the numbers are dropping considerably. There is also too much inconsistency in the quality of the teaching in the department. The current head of department has not had enough time to monitor the performance of all the staff, although there has been support for some teachers who are finding it difficult to manage behaviour. There are plans to share these new initiatives in Year 7, which are proving successful.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- There is growing interest in taking music at GCSE level.
- There is some very good teaching, although the picture overall is only satisfactory.
- Many students are well motivated.

- There is a modest but effective extra-curricular provision, including free instrumental tuition.

Areas for improvement

- Planning of lessons to ensure consistent good behaviour and discipline.
- The updating of the departmental handbook and schemes of work.
- The sharing of good practice within the department through systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching.

149. Although the group size was too small to make the judgement reliable, results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well below average. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were not carried out.
150. Standards of work observed during the inspection at the ends of Years 9 and 10 are below average. In Years 9 and 10 students' current achievement is satisfactory. Girls' achievement is slightly better than boys', a factor closely related to the behaviour and concentration of some boys. The achievement of those students with special educational needs and those designated as gifted and talented is satisfactory.
151. In Year 9, all students learn to play and to compose at keyboards. While most are able to relate alphabetic names to notation and to the keys of the instrument, few are able readily to play well-known melodies, either by ear or by using notations. While they know in theory the rhythmic relationships of notes, they do not apply these well when reading music. They play and improvise simple blues music. Most students work constructively together in group work, but a small minority are unfocused in their work and limit opportunities for themselves and others. Students in lower years are better motivated and achieve more interesting results, especially in improvisation where, as in a Year 8 lesson on pentatonic improvisation, they are concentrated and creative. Finger technique is also more secure in lower classes. No singing was observed in lessons.
152. In Year 10, the number opting for music is a little above average. Several students learn instruments individually and perform to a modest standard. Many have no supplementary tuition and perform at a basic level. When listening to prescribed music for study, they lack the ability to listen in a concentrated manner without distracting themselves and others through conversation. They lack confidence working with technical language and with the symbols of written notation. Consequently, their understanding of the topics prescribed is superficial. Higher attaining students are able to layer different elements, such as rhythms, bass, chords and melodic materials using the memory facilities of keyboards to create pieces in blues and ternary forms.
153. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all years. Better teaching was characterised by skilled practical demonstration, illustration and preparation of materials, which set inspiring standards for students to emulate. The choice of materials for practical work enhances the subject's appeal. Where there is a clear code of discipline and good lesson structure, relations between teachers and students are good and attitudes positive. In several lessons, students were keen to take materials to practise in their free time. Generally, students work well together in groups, making a good contribution to their social education and improving their self-esteem. Personal development through music is good. There is much good informal support and feedback to overcome difficulties and to encourage the students to strive higher, with extension activities usually at hand. Teaching is less successful when order is ineffectively established at the beginning of lessons. When planning is not rigorous enough, connections between different aspects of the course are overlooked and consolidation of learning through effective summaries at the end of lessons or through board- or book-work is absent. Strategies for the active involvement of students in appraising the performances of their peers are underdeveloped, as are strategies for ensuring continuity when practical work is continued over a series of lessons. For example, composition work in progress is neither notated nor recorded as a prompt for the next lesson. Key vocabulary, often including the derivation of words, is well taught orally, but the monitoring of spellings in students' written work is weak. There is some work with number through the mathematical explanation of musical rhythm.

154. The schemes of work include some good materials, which contribute to the growing appeal of the subject at GCSE level. However, there is no formal planning for literacy; numeracy; citizenship; information and communications technology; spiritual, social, moral and cultural education. The handbook would not help a replacement teacher to maintain the planned provision of the department. There is very little use of learning support assistants for students with special educational needs. There is a modest but effective extra-curricular programme, including a choir of 40 members, mostly girls. Recent collaborations in the performing arts include *My Fair Lady*. *Grease* is currently being enthusiastically rehearsed. Six instrumental teachers provide lessons free of charge to some 50 students, less than the average proportion nationally. Formal procedures for monitoring the students' attainment and progress are inadequate, with teacher assessments to National Curriculum levels having been only recently introduced. There is little formal evidence of assessment being used to guide the planning of the curriculum. Student self-assessment is in its infancy.
155. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Both teachers have been appointed within the past eighteen months and have faced difficult circumstances, particularly pertaining to the contractual status of the second in department. This, together with having one teaching room temporarily condemned and another being a non-specialist room, has constrained the department's opportunities to make rapid progress. However, these issues have been resolved and there is now a sure commitment to improve standards and provision. Teaching is not monitored and evaluated enough: the good practice observed is not shared sufficiently to produce consistently high quality teaching. The lack of computers is a disadvantage to GCSE students in particular, although there are plans to address this. While resourced well with keyboards, there is no opportunity to develop students' motor skills because of a lack of tuned percussion instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Documentation and lesson planning are good; this ensures a common physical education programme.
- The department is well led and staff are committed to raising standards.

Areas for improvement

- The introduction of alternative certificated courses is needed in Years 10 and 11.
- More time in lessons needs to be spent on skill acquisition and development.

156. The 2002 GCSE examination results were very low. Results show no significant difference between boys and girls. Students did not do as well in physical education as they did in their other subjects. GCSE dance is in its first year; as yet there are no examination results. Students are beginning to produce quality dance work in both their theory and practical lessons.
157. In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are below average. However, the below average standards reached by the end of Year 9 represent satisfactory achievement by all students. By the end of Year 9, students take some responsibility for their own warm-up; many know the reasons for warming up the body prior to taking part in physical activities. Higher attaining students begin to understand some of the physiological changes that occur as a result of warming up. In games, most students have a basic knowledge of the rules, and appropriate skills to enable them to participate successfully. The majority of students apply rules fairly and accept the decisions of those who officiate; however, there are instances where cheating occurs. This was demonstrated in a Year 9 rounder skill circuit. Most students know the long barrier technique to be used when fielding a ball in cricket or rounders; however, only a small minority are successful when they play a game. In both cricket and rounders the basic footwork skills are insufficiently developed and as a result weak batting and fielding skills constrain the

development of these games. In the majority of lessons students' behaviour and attitudes are good and support the learning environment. All students in Years 7 to 9, including those with special needs, are fully integrated into lessons and, like their peers, make satisfactory achievement.

158. Standards by the end of Year 11 are below average; all students achieve at a satisfactory level in relation to their work in Year 9. Students show an improved understanding of warm-up prior to physical activity; they understand the benefit of warming up is to improve performance and to minimise injury. In cricket and rounders some students understand the necessity for playing down the line of a ball. However, very few students are able to do this in a game situation as most play across the line of the ball and consequently often are unsuccessful in striking it. Catching a cricket or rounders ball is better developed. Work from files shows that students by the end of Year 11 start to understand factors that affect athletes' performance. Higher attaining students show a secure knowledge of factors composing fitness. Students design basic programmes of training for football and netball; however, average and low attaining students find analysis of information difficult. Students' weakness in analysis of the performance of others is shown in a Year 10 GCSE theory lesson where students have difficulty linking specific sports with training methods. High attaining students show a secure knowledge of prevention of injury. Many GCSE students know the major bones and associated muscle groups and how these work during exercise. While practical skills are average, written work is well below average, partly due to poor literacy skills. Written work is poorly presented and contains many errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Use of number was seen but is not well developed to enhance work. Limited ICT work was seen in students' books and files, indicating that the investigative element of GCSE work is underdeveloped. All students in Years 10 and 11 are fully integrated into lessons, and the achievement of those with special educational needs is as satisfactory at that of their peers.
159. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and results in satisfactory learning. Inconsistencies in teaching were observed. A common weakness in the teaching is that more time in lessons needs to be spent on skill acquisition. For example, in most of the striking and fielding lessons insufficient time was spent on skill development and progression. As a result, lack of skills often inhibits success in playing rounders and cricket. Staff are usually well organised, lessons are well planned, and there are good routines which ensure little teaching time is wasted. Time, though, could be used to better effect in skill acquisition than in a mini game. In many lessons teachers have appropriate expectations of both effort and behaviour, but in a significant minority of lessons expectations of both students' behaviour and their work are unsatisfactory. This was exemplified in Year 9 and 10 cricket lessons. Overall, relationships are good and this feature encourages good, sensible and mature behaviour. Where the management of students is good; students participate well in lessons. However, there were instances where the management of students' behaviour failed to ensure that students made progress. Teachers are sufficiently flexible in their teaching as they circulate, helping and supporting students in order to meet the individual needs of all of them. Overall, teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of physical education. They apply this knowledge successfully in their teaching, as was seen, for example, in a Year 8 lesson where low ability students successfully learnt very good fielding skills. Where questioning is good it reinforces the students' knowledge and understanding. For instance, during a Year 7 rounders lesson the teacher probed and questioned the students' knowledge of the different techniques of fielding a ball. Students' development and reinforcement of literacy skills is supported through the use of key words and technical language, but there is a need for more reinforcement in all years.
160. The leadership and management of the department are good. New procedures and documentation are beginning to impact on the work seen in Years 7 and 8. The development of new assessment procedures is allowing the successful tracking of students' performance. New documentation has enabled the development of lesson planning, which ensures a common physical education programme. However, there is a need to look at alternative courses for students in Years 10 and 11. A small group of students have no physical education programme in Years 10 and 11. Information and communication technology has been successfully used in departmental administration. The department offers a varied range of seasonal extra-curricular activities for all students, which both supports and extends their work. Regular observation of teaching is needed in order to share good practice amongst the team. The physical education teachers work closely

together as a team and are supportive of one another; they are all enthusiastic and committed to raising standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Religious education makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of teaching, especially in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- The use of assessment data to inform the planning of new work is unsatisfactory.
- The setting of detailed targets against which student progress can be identified, and sharing these with students is unsatisfactory.
- Departmental leadership and management are weak.
- The monitoring of staff and student work are unsatisfactory.

161. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average in relation to the Salford Agreed Syllabus. In Year 10, attainment is well below average. In 2002, the GCSE short course results were below the national average.

162. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, standards of attainment are below average by the end of Year 9; this represents satisfactory achievement. There are clear examples of students developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts. In Year 7, students understand the use of symbols in Christian baptism. As a result of a well-structured task, students show a clear understanding of the use of symbols in church rituals. In Year 8, students develop a clear understanding of the principle of non-violent protest. As a result of the use of video clips by the teacher, students make important links between the life of Ghandi and current issues. In Year 9, students understand the importance of the role of women in Islam. As a result of clear explanation by the teacher, students understand the importance of respect and duty in Muslim culture. They find some difficulty in relating their learning to everyday experiences. This results from a limited range of approaches by the teacher. The provision of more suitable tasks for special educational needs students is currently underdeveloped. The use of key words, technical language and discussion work is a useful aid to improve speaking and listening skills.

163. In lessons and work seen in Year 10, attainment is well below average, and this represents unsatisfactory achievement. In Year 10 GCSE, students' achievement is unsatisfactory. The lack of specialist teachers is an important factor that contributes to this situation. Students who are most affected are those who do not attend regularly because they miss important deadlines for coursework. Students make satisfactory gains in knowledge, but their ability to apply this to new situations and to life experiences are limited. They show an understanding of the difference between religious and moral issues. The limited range of approaches by the teachers does not enable students to develop independence of thought. As a consequence, their ability to *learn from* religion is rather limited. They do not have the ability to produce balanced arguments and their skills of analysis, investigation and interpretation are underdeveloped.

164. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by students of different gender or ethnic background. Students with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those who are gifted or talented make unsatisfactory progress. Greater challenge is needed for all students across the whole ability range.

165. Overall, students' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. They behave in a satisfactory way, but generally show little interest or enthusiasm for the work. They collaborate well with each other and are happy to share their ideas. However, too many opportunities are missed for students to work in groups and pairs. The relationships between teachers and students are satisfactory, and teachers

support individuals both academically and personally. Student behaviour makes a limited contribution to their achievement and progress.

166. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and unsatisfactory in Year 10. Lesson aims were not shared with students in most cases. Teachers make satisfactory use of questioning to consolidate current learning and to review previous work. The range of teaching styles is rather limited, and this restricts the way students are enabled to *learn from* as well as *learn about* religion. This affects the ability of students to maintain their interest and develop understanding of religious principles and concepts. Resources are rarely used well, and there is an excessive use of written tasks. Teachers manage student behaviour in a satisfactory manner and this contributes to their learning. Extension work and homework could be used more effectively to enable students to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have low expectations of students and rarely challenge them to succeed. This means that students do not make sufficient progress in relation to what they are capable of achieving.
167. Assessment of students' work is unsatisfactory. The procedures do not provide a sound basis for assessing what students know and understand. The marking of students' work is inconsistent and lacks accuracy. Assessment does not sufficiently inform the teaching and learning cycle and the planning of new work. The department does not set detailed targets against which it can assess students' progress. Consequently, students are unclear about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve. This is recognised as an area for development.
168. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is broad, balanced and meets the needs of the students and the requirements of the Salford Agreed Syllabus. The schemes of work require considerable development and need to be linked to the fundamental aims of the syllabus designed to assist students both to *learn about* and *learn from* religion. Lesson plans do not provide sufficient flexibility to enable students to reflect on the information they gain in lessons.
169. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, so providing opportunities for students to explore world issues of justice, relationships and personal beliefs.
170. The leadership and management of the department lack strategic direction and are unsatisfactory. The improvement plan does take sufficient account of current priorities and is, therefore, a useful tool to enable future growth in a strategic and systematic way. The monitoring of staff and students' work is underdeveloped and is unsatisfactory. Consequently the department is unaware of its relative strengths and areas for improvement. The head of the department approaches the task with commitment, and is supported by one other member of staff. Planning is underdeveloped. Support and in-service training for all departmental staff is limited.