

INSPECTION REPORT

**CHRIST'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
COMPREHENSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Richmond

LEA area: Richmond-Upon-Thames

Unique reference number: 102929

Headteacher: Mr G Long

Lead inspector: Dr Calvin Pike

Dates of inspection: 29 September – 2 October 2003

Inspection number: 258600

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	467
School address:	Queens Road Richmond
Postcode:	TW10 6HW
Telephone number:	020 8940 6982
Fax number:	020 8332 6085
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd. Lee Francis-Dehqani
Date of previous inspection:	12 January 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Christ's is a small, Church of England comprehensive school that has had a turbulent history over the last five years. This has included its reorganisation as a Church of England school following years as an Anglican-Roman Catholic school; its anticipated closure; decrease in roll to 269 (January 2001) as pupils transferred to other schools; rejection of closure plans by the Secretary of State; a change of headship and acting headship; fast turnover of staff; a lowering of attainment; and, an increase in the number of primary schools sending pupils to the school from a wider area, mainly outside the Borough. Many of these issues are now being addressed and greater stability has been achieved; the school and its areas for development have changed considerably since its last inspection in 1998.

The school is increasing in popularity and is working towards gaining Specialist School Status as a Business School. It currently has 467 pupils on roll. Although there are only 18 pupils in Year 11, numbers in each year group have increased consistently. The majority of Year 7 pupils are drawn from local primary schools. There are slightly more boys than girls in each year group, except in Year 10. The prior attainment of pupils on entry is below average overall, but the ability range is becoming more comprehensive. There is an increased proportion of higher-attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8. The proportion of older pupils who have moved in or out of the school is relatively high but very few younger pupils have left the school since joining it. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs; these are mostly of an emotional and behavioural type. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is broadly in line with the average. There is a greater than average percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English. The most common other languages spoken by these pupils are Korean, Spanish and Arabic. Most pupils in the school are of white-British background, although a greater proportion of older pupils have Caribbean, African and Asian heritages.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1565	C Pike	Lead inspector	Music English as an additional language
14066	G Hoggard	Lay inspector	
4455	R Joslin	Team inspector	English
19528	R Portsmouth	Team inspector	Mathematics
15079	A Boys	Team inspector	Science
8052	K McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
11190	W Burke	Team inspector	Art and design
11190	W Burke	Team inspector	Design and technology
23324	S Greenland	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs
10759	L Bappa	Team inspector	History Citizenship
12408	A Frith	Team inspector	Modern languages
25748	R Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school, making rapid progress. Standards are below national expectations, but pupil achievement is satisfactory overall. Girls out-perform boys in most subjects; in examinations, there is under-achievement by white boys. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but uneven. Barriers to improvement in recent years relate to the school's need to address a range of priorities concurrently. In particular, not all new and existing teachers have adjusted fully to the varying needs of the pupils. The headteacher has been very successful in leading developments to date. The relatively new leadership team works well, yet some roles have been too slowly implemented. Although some heads of department are very effective, middle management roles are underdeveloped. Aspects of governance related to some statutory requirements are unsatisfactory, but governors are exceptionally well-informed, appropriately challenging and very effective in monitoring the school's work. Leadership and management of the school are good, having a positive impact on standards achieved. The school offers **satisfactory** value for money overall.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's vision and leadership is very effective in enabling the school's development.
- The well-informed governing body is constructively challenging and monitors the work of the school exceptionally well.
- The quality of teaching in art and design and geography is very good, but there is unsatisfactory teaching in modern foreign languages and citizenship.
- Not all teachers use available data well enough to ensure that their expectations match the different needs of pupils, especially as the intake of the school changes.
- Assessment is not used fully by many teachers to improve their planning and to set targets for individual pupils in lessons.
- The line management of departments by the leadership team is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the quality of performance is consistent or emulating that of the best.
- Provision does not meet statutory requirements for citizenship, the collective act of worship or for some elements of the prospectus to parents.

The school has been very effective in meeting its challenges since the last inspection, especially those associated with the reversal of the decision for its closure and the rapid decline in numbers of pupils on roll. Since 2001, the governors and relatively new headteacher have effectively managed the consequent budget deficit; brought the school together on one rather than two sites; increased numbers on roll year on year; increased the proportion of pupils from local primary schools; attracted a more comprehensive intake whose prior attainment on entry is higher; improved pupil behaviour which had reportedly declined; improved pupils' literacy skills; managed staffing to ensure a good match of teachers to curriculum as the school has developed; begun to address unevenness in teaching quality; and, improved attendance rates. As at the last inspection, the use of assessment to inform and improve learning remains uneven and some aspects of the governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus do not comply with requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2002
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	E	E	D	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Pupils **achieve satisfactorily** but this varies between year groups. In 2002, standards were below the national average for pupils in Years 9 and 11. Those in Year 9 had achieved well below that of pupils in similar schools whilst the small group of Year 11 pupils had achieved well above that of pupils in a similar context. Results improved in 2003. Standards are currently below national

averages for pupils aged 14 and 16, partly as the prior attainment of the majority on entry to the school was below average. The attainment of Year 7 and 8 pupils is more often above national expectations and they achieve well in most subjects. In English, mathematics and science, these pupils achieve well and standards are mostly in line with national expectations. Standards in art are consistently high. In modern foreign languages and design and technology they are below national expectations. Pupils **behave well** and show **positive attitudes**. They are maturing well with a clear understanding of social, moral and cultural issues. They respect the feelings and values of other people and can distinguish the principles of right and wrong.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but stronger in Years 7, 10 and 11 than elsewhere. It is very good in geography and in art and design. Teaching is good in English in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory elsewhere. Teaching is good in mathematics, physical education and history across all years. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory overall. In modern foreign languages and citizenship, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Learning is enhanced by the subject specialist staff and by the good relationships they have with pupils. Learning is limited by unsatisfactory aspects of assessment. The curriculum is broad and balanced with very good enrichment opportunities. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Pupils receive satisfactory care, guidance and support. Work with parents is good and links with the wider community and partner schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **managed well**. The headteacher is a very good leader. He has a clear vision and high aspirations for the school that are shared and realised very well. The relatively new leadership team is good but the pace of implementing some elements of their roles has slowed up recently. Middle managers in departments and year groups are effective but their impact in monitoring to ensure improve is underdeveloped. Governors challenge constructively and monitor outcomes well. They, with the headteacher, have been instrumental in bringing about recent successes. Some aspects of their work are unsatisfactory as they do not meet statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are **very satisfied** with the school. They appreciate that their children are happy and making progress, the approachability of the headteacher and most staff, standards of behaviour in and out of school and improvements in recent years. Some parents express concerns about some teachers' understanding of special educational needs matters, with which the inspectors concur from their observations of whole-class teaching. **Pupils are mainly very pleased** with their school, though a significant number of older pupils remembered examples of bullying.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- ensure that all teachers assess pupils' individual needs then use this information to guide planning for learning in lessons;
- use data to sharpen staff understanding and expectation of the needs of pupils, especially as the profile of pupils on intake changes across the school;
- address the uneven quality of teaching between and sometimes within departments;
- strengthen the line management of departments, developing the accountabilities of middle managers throughout the school;
- move forward more quickly in implementing the roles of the newly developed leadership team;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- for citizenship, the collective act of worship and the prospectus and annual report from governors to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement in Years 10 and 11 and for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory even though the profile of pupils on entry to the school shows an increasing proportion of higher-attaining pupils. Girls do better than boys in Years 10 and 11 and their achievement is good. However, the small number of pupils in Year 11 make this comparison less significant. Standards in all core subjects are below average but they are more often above average in the current Years 7 and 8.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improving achievement and standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9.
- Good achievement in developing literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) skills, although the latter are not sufficiently reinforced in each subject.
- High achievement and standards in art and design.
- Under-achievement and low standards in modern foreign languages, in design and technology and, over a period of time, in music.
- Uneven achievement in some classes of pupils with special educational needs who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Commentary

1. Pupils' achievement in the core areas is improving and standards are being raised. They are developing greater skills in writing and reading as well as enhancing their confidence in speaking. This is in part because the school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy effectively. English teachers are aware of the changing profile of the school's intake and accommodating pupils' needs carefully in their planning. Similarly, pupils have good levels of competence in using number, both in mathematics and some other areas of the curriculum. Pupils can use ICT skills effectively in discrete lessons, but have limited opportunity to reinforce these in other subjects.
2. Standards are consistently high in art and design as a result of the high expectations set, which the pupils live up to. Pupils are encouraged to develop independence in their learning. By contrast, standards are below expectations in modern languages, design and technology and music. Although teachers in modern languages have good skills and speak in the foreign language most often, pupils themselves have more limited practice. Their writing skills are limited and they have little confidence in speaking. In design and technology, pupils are insufficiently challenged in their work. They do not have enough experience of designing and evaluating their work so that they understand how it can be improved. In music, standards in the classroom are below expectations and achievement over a period of time has been limited. This is because the department has had a series of temporary teachers who, although individually supportive of pupils' learning, have not ensured continuity in the curriculum provided or that pupils make sufficient progress from one year to the next. Achievement in lessons during the inspection was good and standards for Years 7 and 8 were closer to national expectations.
3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when given additional support outside the main classroom. When this support is absent, they sometimes make relatively slow progress in lessons. This is partly because teachers do not always show an awareness of the level of the pupils' needs in their planning, particularly to meet the needs of those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils with literacy or other learning difficulties achieve at the same rate as their classmates in lessons, because most teachers know them individually and provide for their different needs. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are not always so well

understood and their progress is not measured separately. Test scores show that at least fifty percent of the pupils on the register of special educational needs are achieving in line with expectations and a small number beyond expectations. However, few of these pupils improve their test performance to the level where they are removed from the list.

Standards in Key Stage 3 (Test/Task) at the end of Year 9 in 2002

	English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above (school)	63 (59)	63 (46)	63 (58)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above (national)	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above (school)	11 (27)	47 (25)	16 (21)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above (national)	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	36 (18)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	86 (89)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	35.1	39.8

There were 42 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Year 9 national test results in 2002 were below average in all core subjects, except that the percentage of pupils who obtained higher levels in mathematics was above average. Overall, these results were in line with similar schools. Although data suggests that pupils' achievement since the start of their Year 7 was below that in similar schools, it is not possible to rely on this analysis as the numbers of pupils in the cohort are so small, and because the movement of pupils in and out of the school in the three previous years for the year group was relatively high. The rising trend in the school's results was above the national trend. Boys achieved higher than girls in all core subjects. More recent test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 (for which national comparisons are not yet available) show an increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 and above in all three core areas. Girls did better than boys in English and boys out-performed girls in science and mathematics. Based on teacher assessments in other subjects, girls did better than boys except in physical education.
- GCSE results in 2002 were below average for the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C and A*-G grades. However, the proportion gaining one A*-G grade was well above the national average. Compared with similar schools, the percentage gaining five A*-C grades was above average and those gaining five A*-G grades were in line with similar school averages. Results over the previous three-year period had improved, although the rising trend in the school's results was below the national trend. Results in 2003 improved in all subjects with comparative information available suggesting that attainment in GCSE was above similar schools in English and science and in line with them in mathematics. Boys' results dropped in English. Results in modern foreign languages remained low.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Most pupils behave well and their attitudes to learning and school activities are good. Personal development is mainly good, though some opportunities are missed to develop spiritual awareness and to celebrate cultural diversity.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils are positive about their school, feeling it is friendly, tolerant and supportive of them, and relationships are good.
- Attendance figures have improved, but punctuality needs attention.
- Many pupils enjoy learning, especially in mathematics and art and design.
- Social, moral and cultural awareness is developed well.
- The attitudes of some pupils are less good, especially where teaching has weaknesses or offers insufficient challenge.

Commentary

6. As a result of strenuous efforts by the school, attendance has improved to the point where it is in line with the national average. This is beginning to have an impact on standards. However, too many pupils still arrive late to lessons with no real sense of urgency.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.5	School data	0.6
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

7. Pupils themselves are generally very happy at school. They enjoy meeting their friends, the after-school clubs and activities, and teachers who they see as friendly and accessible. Many attend the great variety of activities before, during and after school, especially in sport. Pupils speak highly of the Saturday workshops they have joined. Many pupils show genuine enthusiasm for learning, particularly in art and design where there are very high expectations of them and in mathematics where teachers generate very positive attitudes to work. Year 7 pupils, for example, were bursting with enthusiasm to solve the puzzle of function machines and showed real progress as they were led by a skilful yet demanding teacher to apply rules they had just established. However, in lessons where there is not enough to interest them or the pace is too slow, pupils can occasionally disrupt.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
158	30	1
30	4	0
22	12	0
79	46	3
14	10	0
26	6	0
9	3	0

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

8. Pupils' personal and social development is generally good, with opportunities for charity fundraising, sports leadership and responsibility as a prefect. Relationships are harmonious and tolerant. Pupils from the many different ethnic backgrounds, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are fully integrated into the daily life of the school. However, pupils have limited opportunities to draw on and celebrate the rich diversity of backgrounds pupils bring to the school as a whole. For example, pupils spoke very positively about the interest they derived from sharing ideas about preparing and cooking chicken according to their cultural backgrounds, and would welcome more opportunities like this. This approach may help to reduce levels of fixed term exclusions that, although triggered by relatively few pupils, represent a disproportionate number of pupils who are black or of mixed race backgrounds. Spiritual development and self-reflection are not encouraged consistently well. Assemblies can be lacklustre, although one harvest festival celebration during the inspection week provided an inspiring and thought-provoking experience. Across the subjects, some teaching is pedestrian. However, in art and design expectations are challenging and pupils are encouraged to explore their personal responses, resulting in corresponding depth to their work.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is satisfactory and enables most pupils to make gains in their learning. However, there is some unevenness between and sometimes within departments. The curriculum is broad and balanced with some good additions to the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 11. Pupils with special educational needs most often make sound progress but this is sometimes limited when insufficient use is made of the information available concerning their particular needs.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **satisfactory** overall which has a positive impact on learning. However, there are some significant differences in provision between year groups and subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy constructive relationships with their teachers, creating a good ethos for learning.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to clarify, reinforce and extend pupils' learning.
- Teachers in most subjects have good subject knowledge, plan their lessons well and teach them enthusiastically; this has a very positive impact on achievement.
- Teaching in art and design is very good as a result of consistently high expectations, excellent planning and positive feedback.
- Insufficient use is made of data analysis as a diagnostic tool.
- The school's assessment arrangements are not implemented consistently.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 94 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (3%)	18 (19%)	38 (41%)	25 (27%)	10 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

9. Teaching was satisfactory or better in the majority of lessons seen but in a significant minority it was unsatisfactory. However, the pupils' work indicates that the proportion of teaching that ensures satisfactory achievement over a longer period of time is higher, making the quality of teaching satisfactory overall. Teaching is more consistent in Years 10 and 11 where the smaller numbers of pupils who have been in the school for a longer time are better known and teachers prepare their lessons to target individual pupil's needs more closely. In Years 8 and 9 the quality of learning is more uneven as teachers have not always accommodated the changing needs and academic profile of the intake. Setting arrangements in Year 7 and teachers' concerns to accommodate the different range of prior attainment of the school's newest pupils are helping to ensure a better match of teaching to pupils' needs with higher expectations and levels of challenge from teachers and greater pace in learning.
10. Pupils learn effectively in the core areas of English, mathematics and science as teachers most often plan lessons to match the range of prior attainment of the pupils, challenge pupils well, and make good use of the time and resources available in lessons. Where appropriate, pupils gain through the opportunities to work independently with teachers' guidance. When they do so, they work collaboratively and extend their ideas and understanding well.
11. There are differences in the quality of teaching and learning, both by subject and by the stage of learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but stronger in Years 7, 10 and 11 than elsewhere. There is a greater proportion of very good or excellent teaching in Year 7 than elsewhere. There is also a higher proportion of good teaching in this year, and in Years 10 and 11, than in other years. The percentage of unsatisfactory teaching is highest in Years 8 and 9.
12. Teaching is very good in geography and in art and design. Teaching is good in English in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory across Years 7 to 9. In science, teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is good in mathematics, physical education and history across all years. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory overall. In modern foreign languages and citizenship teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In modern languages, although there are some examples of good practice in both French and Spanish, particularly in Years 7 and 10, the activities are too often mundane and do not motivate pupils to work hard.
13. One strength of teaching is the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils. The pupils often demonstrate a great deal of trust in their teachers, and a liking for them. This ensures that, in most classrooms, there is a good and productive working atmosphere that enables pupils to learn well. Most teachers are specialists, able to extend what is being taught and approach topics in a variety of ways. Another strength is the use of questioning and discussion to clarify, reinforce and extend pupils' learning. In history, for example, pupils in Year 7 made very good gains in their understanding of how to use sources of evidence as a result of the teacher's careful and enthusiastic questioning.
14. Unsatisfactory teaching is not spread evenly throughout the school. Just over half the unsatisfactory lessons seen were in Year 9, the year in which attitudes and behaviour are least secure. In some cases, teachers have not adjusted to the changing nature of the intake sufficiently quickly. Some of the unsatisfactory learning seen was in citizenship. This is partly because this part of the curriculum is taught by tutors whose expertise in the subject varies greatly. Furthermore, where there are no comprehensive schemes of work to help them plan their lessons more effectively or assess learning. Where lead teachers have appropriate expertise, such as in a Year 7 personal, social and religious education (PSRE) session linked to harvest festival, the quality of teaching and pupils' opportunities to reflect on and learn about their responsibilities as citizens were good.
15. In most lessons, teachers' expectations matched the prior attainment of pupils. However, in Year 9 some unsatisfactory teaching was evident where challenges were too limited, especially for higher-attaining pupils or for those for whom English is an additional language. Similarly, some satisfactory lessons in Years 7 and 8 could have enabled pupils to achieve more if closer

attention had been paid to the pupils' starting skills, knowledge and levels of understanding. In the majority of lessons seen, the learning of pupils with special educational needs was satisfactory because teachers were aware of their needs and provided appropriate support and resources. However, plans to support the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties were not as well defined and their learning sometimes lacked pace.

16. Learning support assistants generally deal tactfully and effectively with the pupils allocated to their care and on occasion extend that help to other pupils in the classroom. In some subjects the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. For example, lower-attaining pupils in a Year 7 football lesson improved well because the teacher used appropriate groupings, modified tasks and demonstrations. Teaching and learning was also satisfactory where a small group of pupils was withdrawn from lessons for additional literacy support. However, it lacked the stimulation necessary to make it a fully effective learning experience by failing to put the language being learned into any kind of purposeful context.
17. Following the substantial work of a consultant associate headteacher for a temporary period, the school has begun to develop its own effective strategies for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This is limited at present and does not involve middle managers fully enough to have a strong impact on standards.
18. Another significant barrier to improving teaching quality is that assessment is not well rooted in the practice of the school. There are inconsistencies in the quality of assessment within individual subjects. There is, for example, an island of very good practice in art and design. The success of this department is closely related to its use of teacher assessment to raise pupils' awareness of their skills and areas for future improvement rather than simply recording attainment at a given point in time. Whether orally in lessons, or by way of written feedback in sketchbooks, pupils are helped to understand the kind of qualities aimed for in their work and the gaps in their present skill development, knowledge and understanding as well as how to improve. Assessment in English, mathematics and geography is good. Good assessment records are kept in science but they are not always used effectively to set targets for improvement. Procedures in modern foreign languages are poor: by giving grades for effort, the department departs from the practice of other curriculum areas and confuses pupils. Here the pupils are unable to describe what they need to do to improve. This means that pupils do not always understand how they can improve their work or whether they are making sufficient progress in all their subjects. Teachers rarely provide sufficient detail to help pupils understand how their work compares to national standards and what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum

The curriculum has many good features in all year groups but, as it does not meet statutory requirements for citizenship or for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, it is unsatisfactory overall. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. The good accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good curriculum development in Years 10 and 11 provides for the full range of pupils.
- Citizenship is not properly established in the curriculum and does not meet statutory requirements.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is limited.
- Pupils with special educational needs do not always have equal access to the curriculum.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is good.

Commentary

19. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 is being developed well to meet the needs of the full range of pupils. GCSE courses are provided in a range of vocational subjects as well as more academic subjects, and there is also a GNVQ course in ICT. Pupils have the opportunity to gain early qualifications in mathematics, ICT and some languages. From last year all pupils have been taught ICT in discrete lessons, which meets one of the key issues of the previous report. A work-related curriculum is in place for pupils who learn better with an input of workplace experience; these courses are also linked to local further education institutions. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have access to all National Curriculum subjects and media studies. Provision for citizenship does not meet statutory requirements; this is unsatisfactory and limits learning opportunities in all year groups.
20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall; pupils with statements receive their entitlement of hours and their provision is reviewed according to statutory requirements. Because teachers have been given guidance in how to help these pupils to learn, classroom provision is generally satisfactory; in some cases, it is good. Learning support assistants are allocated to individual pupils and groups of pupils in subject lessons, and they generally support pupils effectively. Pupils with specific literacy needs are withdrawn from lessons in small groups for intensive teaching of language skills. This restricts their access to the full curriculum.
21. Personal, social and health education is provided as part of a programme, including citizenship and aspects of religious education which link with the school's separately time-tabled lessons of religious education. This leads to inadequate time for some elements of the programme. The quality of teaching of this programme is inconsistent and mainly unsatisfactory.
22. Pupils appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school which start daily with the breakfast club and include a homework club as well as sporting, artistic and musical activities. There is a recognised need for more lunchtime opportunities for pupils who have to travel long distances and have difficulty attending after-school clubs. There are sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff to teach the curriculum and support pupils' needs. Although the school is undertaking a re-building programme this is causing minimal disruption to the curriculum and the building is safe, attractive and well-resourced.

Care, guidance and support

Provision is satisfactory. Pupils, staff and parents feel that this is a friendly school where everyone is known, respected and help and support are offered to those who need it. However, there are deficiencies in monitoring and providing appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs to ensure all pupils are included and have equal access and opportunity to develop fully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good induction arrangements and a range of shared activities for primary school children.
- This is a small, friendly school where pupils are well known to staff and are provided with a good range of help and support.
- Unevenness in responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs, pupils of minority ethnic backgrounds and of those for whom English is an additional language.
- There has been a limited response by the school to everyday matters such as toilets or canteen arrangements, leading to some pupils feeling their complaints have not been listened to.

Commentary

23. Workshops and summer schools for local primary children have been popular and helped attract pupils to the school for their secondary education. Year 7 pupils report they had a good induction and had few worries about the transition from primary school. The school is small, enabling teachers to know their pupils well and leading to good relationships and an encouraging

ethos for learning. Most, but not all, pupils feel there is an adult they can turn to for help. The school offers a good range of services such as homework clubs, counsellors, mentors and youth workers to enable pupils to overcome difficulties in their personal or school life. The 'fast track' system has allowed pupils to take GCSEs earlier than usual in mathematics, ICT and modern foreign languages, resulting in great pride and self-esteem. As part of its bid to become a centre for excellence in business and ICT the school has also started a number of business-related GCSE courses to add more choices for Year 10 and 11 pupils. The plan for careers education is good, giving pupils good access to sources of information and advice, and providing special support at key decision-making points such as Years 9 and 11.

24. Although staff show clear concern and care well for pupils, some aspects of guidance and support provided are not sufficiently well informed by rigorous analysis or close reflection of the outcomes of practice. For example, although the school has substantial data relating to the progress of its pupils, it has not been interrogated to establish comparisons of achievement levels of the different minority ethnic groups represented across the school. Great care is taken to ensure pupils who are excluded are not unfairly treated. However, limited attention has been given to analysing why the majority of fixed term exclusions involve black boys. As a result, measures have not been identified to prevent a recurrence of this profile in the future. Related to this issue, the process used to identify pupils with special educational needs who have emotional and behavioural difficulties is triggered most often by the behaviour of pupils who are most challenging to teachers. Moreover, information to support teachers in planning to meet the needs of such pupils inadequately differentiates between the range of need possible. Consequently, teachers are less able to pitch their expectations or strategies accurately enough to enable pupils to achieve well. Opportunities for misinterpretation of need also exist in planning for pupils for whom English is an additional language. This is because their place on the special educational needs register does not concurrently highlight if they have also been identified as gifted and talented. Whilst teachers' lesson plans note their language needs, they do not also emphasise the higher levels of expectations and outcomes that are appropriate.
25. Pupils use opportunities provided to express their views through surveys, school council and informal discussions; they feel they are listened to. At present several matters combine to cause some frustration for pupils. These include the limited number of toilets which are, they suggest, not always well stocked. They also feel that the canteen is inadequate for the numbers using it, and have frequently complained about the quality of food. However, some of these matters are planned for improvement when the new building is complete.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the community and with other local schools and colleges are very good. They have a strong impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very positive and have good links with the school.
- There are very good links with an impressive range of people and organisations in the local area. This in turn has a significant impact on pupils' learning and personal development.
- Some parents are concerned about the treatment of their children's special educational needs.

Commentary

26. Many parents report that they have been motivated to apply to the school inspired by the headteacher speaking about its future. They feel the school has a special atmosphere. Four parents, for example, have become interested enough to help with the bid for specialist school status. Others form part of a regularly meeting prayer group. Many comment that the staff are very approachable and sort out problems quickly. Information provided for parents is good. This includes a lively, regular newsletter and an easy to use and comprehensive website. However, the governors' annual report to parents still needs some minor additions, such as the next

election of parent governors. Some parents have expressed concern about the provision for their children with special educational needs, and this is partly upheld by inspection findings.

27. There have been notable and exciting collaborations with local art galleries, and an artist in residence, as well as several visits by writers and poets. Local businesses are involved in supplying mentors, offering work experience or running training for Year 11 pupils in workplace skills. The church, and its associated youth workers, also plays a large part in the life of the school. All these people are impressed with the school's open outlook, its professionalism and its commitment to the growth and achievement of each individual.
28. The Saturday workshops in practical subjects run for primary schools have attracted much praise, as have the summer courses run on the school site. Local primary headteachers speak very highly of the school's efforts to reach out to them, and there is no doubt that the perceptions of the school locally have hugely improved in recent years. Gifted and talented pupils, for example, are offered special courses at the local adult college, which in turn uses the school's facilities to run its own courses. Another local college offers taster days for post-16 courses. The net effect of this is an increasingly secure place in the local community and considerably improved opportunities for pupils to develop both personally and academically.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a very good leader who has managed the school very effectively through its period of turbulence. His relatively new leadership team provides sound management, having recently been restructured to maximise its professional expertise and incorporate a new business manager whose role includes responsibility for staff other than teachers. Governors support the school well in its strategic development, challenge appropriately and ensure exemplary monitoring of the work of the school, although aspects of some statutory requirements are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school.
- The leadership team is satisfactory, but was slow to implement some key decisions concerning its interdependent roles last term, as a result of which monitoring of departments and teachers is insufficiently rigorous to maintain the high pace of improvement.
- Some heads of department manage very well with clear planning, monitoring and high standards but the role of middle managers as a whole is underdeveloped and some are ineffective in helping to ensure improvement.
- The school's self-evaluation procedures are being developed effectively, but insufficient use is being made of data to analyse performance of different groups and ensure teachers use this fully to plan to meet pupils' different needs.
- Information concerning pupils with special educational needs is not sufficiently clear to help teachers become aware of the need to refine the curriculum provided for them. As a result, some pupils are not being included as fully as possible in lessons.
- Governors understand the strengths and most weaknesses of the school, showing strong support and effective challenge in helping to shape its direction, but statutory requirements concerning provision for citizenship and for the collective act of worship are not met.
- The school's approaches to financial management are carefully considered and detailed, using best value principles.

Commentary

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	1,725,584
Total expenditure	1,755,802
Expenditure per pupil	4,514

Balance from previous year	-143,596
Balance carried forward to the next	-173,813

29. Together the leadership, management and governance of the school work effectively to provide a good ethos in which pupils develop appropriately. The teaching quality enables pupils of all abilities to make clear gains in the learning of key skills, knowledge and understanding in most subjects. Standards achieved are increasing steadily, not only as a result of the school attracting pupils whose average prior attainment is rising year on year, but also because teaching is gradually, though not as quickly as appropriate, adjusting to the pupils' different academic differences and social backgrounds. As a result, although there are some important improvements in lesson planning and whole-school monitoring to be made before the needs of all groups of pupils are included fully, the leadership and management have been successful in ensuring a context for learning that encourages pupils of all abilities to succeed.
30. The management of the special educational needs department is unsatisfactory. The department does not include provision for gifted and talented pupils, and makes no distinction between the needs of pupils whose first language is not English and those with other language difficulties. The assessment of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is flawed because only pupils who manifest inappropriate behaviour in school are assessed and the criteria for their inclusion on the school list are not clear. This results in more pupils than necessary being diagnosed as being in this category and their needs being poorly understood by most of their teachers. Resources allocated for special educational needs provide a well equipped base, a part-time counsellor and learning support assistants for classroom support. However, the department has no mechanisms in place to assess the overall effectiveness of this input of resources.
31. The governing body works very effectively with the headteacher and senior staff to help shape the vision and direction of the school. Governors have very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide valuable support as well as an appropriate level of challenge for the leadership group. Working closely with the headteacher, they have helped set the school's priorities. They maintain control of the budget, expecting it to return to balance by the end of the financial year 2005/06. Individual members of the governing body have made regular visits to the school, although no formal record is kept of these. Governors have supported the headteacher in redesigning the working patterns of the leadership group and they have been instrumental in appointing specialist external support to help the leadership group become more effective. Those who visit are aware of how far the school has progressed and how much it still needs to develop. Using their own strong links with the community, they have helped to enable local businesses to make a contribution to the school curriculum. The governing body has not ensured that the school fulfils certain statutory obligations, the principal ones being the provision of education in citizenship and a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Because of this, and in spite of many very good features, the governance of the school is unsatisfactory overall.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Key Stage 3 literacy strategy has been introduced into lessons – pupils enjoy the crisp start to lessons which help them review their learning from previous sessions and understand what is expected of them by the end of each lesson.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory across Years 7 to 9 and this is contributing to improving standards.
- Assessment is good and helpful to pupils as clear feedback from teachers shows them what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.
- Leadership and management of the subject, which are clear and decisive, have contributed to improving standards and effective teaching and learning.
- Standards of speaking and listening are good and pupils respond confidently and can explain their ideas and opinions effectively.
- Whilst there are good examples of expressive and technically competent writing at both Key Stages, some lower attaining pupils – particularly boys and some for whom English is an additional language – lack the skills needed to improve.

Commentary

32. Results indicate that standards are below national averages in Year 9 and at GCSE. However, the 2002 results are unreliable as the group size was very small. Current standards are closer to national figures and reflect the steady improvement in standards made for the past four years in this subject. This consistent improvement since the last inspection is the result of strong curriculum leadership, improved teaching and the introduction of processes to track pupils' achievement. Current achievement at Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory and pupils show clear understanding of language and can express themselves clearly in both speech and writing. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and the use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy has made learning and the effective use of language clear to pupils. Achievement in the top set in Year 9 is good and pupils use a range of forms and styles to express their ideas in well organised and neatly presented written work. The newly arrived Year 7 pupils are close to and, for a significant number, above national standards and achievement looks set to improve yet further.
33. In Years 7 to 9 teachers are following the guidance of the literacy strategy and there are several strengths which help teaching improve pupils' learning. All lessons are carefully planned and have clear objectives which show pupils what they need to learn by the end of each session. Teachers' enthusiasm and the use of lively starters in the good and very good lessons encourage pupils' enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. Good question and answer techniques are used to challenge pupils and extend their learning and understanding of how language can be used to affect and influence the reader. Pupils in a Year 8 top set were able to rewrite traditional stories using accent and dialect to show their understanding of the differences between formal standard English and informal styles and lively teaching prompted the pupils to respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment producing good examples of creative writing.
34. Teachers also target resources well to match the needs of pupils with different levels of attainment. Thus pupils in Year 7, for example, all cover the same topics but resources are

targeted to meet the needs of each set. In addition, teachers group pupils within their classes further to support their learning. There is room for improvement here, particularly for some pupils for whom English is an additional language as, on occasion, and achievement is hampered by a lack of understanding of the texts or stories. Assessment is good and, generally, work is well marked and comments such as 'You need to use connectives here' and 'Your paragraphs should have been organised in this way' help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their achievement. Such assessments are also a feature of effective guidance in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' learning is also improved by teachers' crisp pace and timed activities help pupils move on quickly in their understanding. All lessons end with a plenary session which draws together what has been learned and pupils respond well and are eager to show their progress. On occasion, this part of the lesson is rushed but overall, lessons end well and pupils understand what they have achieved.

35. Learning in Years 10 and 11 is good and some methods from the literacy strategy have been introduced. Teachers have introduced clear guidelines linking examination criteria to learning and this enables pupils to track their own achievement and areas for improvement. Some low attaining pupils find the demands of extended writing challenging and, in one lesson, pupils studying "Stone Cold", a set text, were well supported by the teacher as they drafted their individual responses designed to show their ability to use the vocabulary and tone needed for different audiences. The use of guidance and praise helped pupils produce well-structured answers and their confident responses at the end of the lesson showed good progress in their learning and positive attitudes. Some pupils struggle to complete homework, but this is always followed up and teachers' persistence helps pupils' achieve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

36. Pupil's skills in language are satisfactory overall across all subjects, although oral skills are better than writing. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced and all staff have received training. However, the strategy is not implemented effectively across all subjects. There is good practice in English and art and design where the use of language is planned for in each lesson. In history, Year 9 pupils are given structured support to improve their essay writing and science teachers provide examples of good practice across Key Stage 3. All pupils have a vocabulary book to record subject specific words but not all subjects make effective use of this provision.

French and Spanish

Provision for modern foreign languages is **unsatisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use the foreign language effectively throughout lessons.
- Pupils behave well.
- Teachers value diversity in lessons, celebrating different cultural backgrounds.
- The level of challenge in lessons is too low and pupils are too dependent on their teachers.
- Teachers do not use assessment to help pupils set themselves targets and pupils cannot describe what they need to do to improve.
- The department has not identified any priorities or produced a development plan.

Commentary

37. Spanish is now the main foreign language taught at the school, but it was not offered before 1999 so GCSE results will not appear before 2004. It is now more popular than French with much greater numbers in Years 7 to 9. In 2002, the most recent year for which national comparisons are available, the pupils entered for GCSE French achieved significantly worse results in this subject than they did in the average of all their other subjects and the proportion

who gained higher grades was only half the national average. This proportion fell again in 2003 to one eighth the previous year's national average. Achievement overall is unsatisfactory, but there are signs of improvement in both languages in Year 10, where pupils who have chosen the subject have made good progress in lessons by concentrating hard to understand the foreign language spoken by the teacher. Even here, they do not have the chance to work independently of their teacher and it is rare that they do tasks that provide them with genuine challenge. In all years, pupils too often receive work they can do without making errors and this means it is too easy, depriving them of a sense of achievement and causing them to make slower progress than they could.

38. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, but there are some examples of good practice in both French and Spanish, particularly in Years 7 and 10. The good teaching is characterised by lively and energetic use of the foreign language throughout the lesson; in this the teachers are highly skilled, making use of a variety of strategies. They celebrate other cultures, demonstrating that diversity is positive and enabling bilingual pupils to do well. Pupils learn successfully by working with foreign language assistants, who make good contributions to lessons. Too often, however, the activities are mundane and pupils lose the motivation to work hard. They spend too much time copying lists of words, filling gaps in sentences or attaching labels to pictures, and the most able pupils have too few opportunities to learn through expressing their own thoughts. Procedures for assessment are poor: by giving grades for effort, the department departs from the practice of other curriculum areas and confuses pupils who expect to be told how well they are attaining. Furthermore, pupils cannot describe what they need to do to improve.
39. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory overall, but there are some areas in which progress has been made recently. The introduction of Spanish has proved popular and successful, the use of the foreign language in lessons has been greatly extended and trips to both France and Spain are planned. These and other developments have the potential to improve standards, but significant barriers remain. The department keeps inadequate records of pupils' progress, making it impossible to analyse and measure improvements from year to year, or to help pupils set themselves useful targets. Computers are not used enough in lessons, even though software is available, and there are no email links with pupils abroad. The department has not identified its development priorities or written an action plan. Some features of the department's work have improved since the last inspection; these include behaviour, use of the foreign language in lessons, the arrangement of trips abroad and the work of the foreign language assistants. Improvement overall is unsatisfactory because of the lack of progress with attainment, achievement, assessment and planning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching with some examples of excellent practice.
- The increase in results in external examinations over recent years.
- The use of assessment to monitor progress, improve teaching and raise standards although some marking of work lacks direction for pupils.
- A very effective head of department with vision and commitment to raising standards.

Commentary

40. The results in the 2002 national tests for pupils aged 14 were below the national average for all schools. Boys' results were much higher than girls'. However, this group of pupils was small, so comparisons with national figures are not valid. Pupils' standards in the current Year 11 are satisfactory as work seen covers all entry levels at GCSE and shows good individual

achievement. GCSE results for 2002 were above average. The 2003 results were higher than previous years

41. Standards in Year 7 are slightly above national expectations because there are few pupils who are below Level 4 and a good number who gained Level 5 in the national tests for Year 6 pupils. Work seen from Year 8 indicates that they too are above the national standard and some pupils are at a very high level for their age. Overall standards in Years 9 and 10, however, are broadly in line with national expectations. The higher attaining pupils are working at the upper levels of the National Curriculum. The statistics option in Year 10 is new this year and at this stage of the course standards are in line with expectations.
42. There is a comprehensive scheme of work in place that is underpinned by the National Numeracy Strategy and the National Curriculum. These enable teachers to plan lessons well and they use a range of strategies to develop learning. The only hindrance to this is that some of the classrooms are too small to accommodate practical work with large numbers of pupils. Starter activities often blend into the main part of the lesson. Plenary sessions are used when appropriate, teachers recognise that there are shortcomings in these and are seeking ways to improve them. There is regular testing of pupils' knowledge; these tests are well marked and stickers are used to highlight areas of improvement for pupils. Test results are also used to monitor under-performance and to seek ways to improve the scheme of work in the future.
43. Teaching is good at both key stages with several lessons very good and one excellent. There were only two unsatisfactory lessons: these were mainly due to lack of experience in the teachers and the reluctance of pupils to participate in the lesson. The best lessons had brisk pace and contained material that continually challenged pupils' understanding. In several lessons, paired discussions were used to ensure that all pupils understood the work in progress. Teachers also encouraged pupils to work out solutions to questions to the whole class. The response to this was always very positive. The pupils' response to very good teaching was one of enthusiasm and great interest. In a lesson, involving working with irrational numbers, pupils in Year 10 became very enthusiastic and excited as they mastered a series of very difficult ideas using irrational numbers. This enthusiasm was well used by the teacher to motivate the group even further. This group is working at the highest level in the GCSE syllabus. Five pupils in this group gained a grade B at Intermediate level GCSE in the 2003 examinations.
44. Pupils learn well because of the good and very good teaching they receive. They arrive at lessons promptly, generally settle quickly and work hard. The work is challenging but achievable for them all and as a result, levels of concentration, especially in the higher attaining groups are high. Pupils are polite, respond well to the open style of questioning used, and develop the capacity to give sound reasons for answers. They work well with other pupils and readily listen when others are speaking in lessons. A small minority of pupils misbehave but teachers have effective strategies for managing behaviour. Regularly marked homework encourages and reinforces pupils' learning.
45. Leadership and management of the department are very good. There is a vision for the future that includes high standards for all pupils. Teaching and learning are monitored to improve standards, but as the term has only recently started this is not yet fully effective with newly appointed teachers. There are regular meetings of teachers to discuss curriculum improvements and to share good practice. The department is housed in a well-decorated, adjacent suite of rooms but there is no central department office to keep confidential material or to use as a focus for teachers. The resources are very good although there is a lack of modern computer facilities available for use. The department has recently had the benefit of the installation of interactive whiteboards and data projectors. These are effective in enabling high quality presentation of lessons and teachers are seeking different ways to use them creatively in lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. Pupils' skills in mathematics are at an appropriate level for them to access all areas of the curriculum. There is no whole school policy for developing competence in mathematics across the curriculum and there has been no whole school training on numeracy across the curriculum. This means that there is no co-ordinated approach and hence little reinforcement of mathematical concepts in many subjects. Graphical skills are well used in science, physical education (PE) and geography where pupils use experimental results to produce accurate charts and diagrams and draw conclusions. Pupils also use ideas of scale and enlargement in art and design as they change the size of a picture but preserve proportionality.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are improving.
- The department's action plans are clearly focused on improvement and the staff are committed to raising standards.
- The pupils behave well in lessons because the teachers generally manage their classes well.
- In some classes there is a limited range of teaching methods, so that opportunities to get the pupils to explain their thinking and to apply their existing knowledge are missed.
- The teachers mark work regularly but they do not always give targets for improvement, or advice on how the pupils can achieve these improvements.

Commentary

47. Results in the 2002 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 were below the national average but the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 5 and above was in line with similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels was below average. The results gained were similar to those in English and mathematics. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were below average but they continue the rising trend of recent years. Overall, the pupils did slightly better in science than they did in their other subjects. Results in the tests and examinations met the targets set with the local education authority. There were no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls, when compared to the national differences in results. The results gained in the 2003 tests and examinations were further improved but national figures were not available for comparison at the time of the inspection.
48. By the end of Year 9 the standards attained by the pupils in all aspects of their work are below average. However, they are in line with the standards that would be expected on the basis of the pupils' past results, so achievement is satisfactory. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work they have done on living things, the properties of materials and physical processes is average in Year 7 but below average in Years 8 and 9. Pupils' practical skills are good enough to allow them to carry out routine practical work effectively and they work safely and co-operate well with each other. However, their ability to predict outcomes, explain findings and interpret evidence is below average because they do not have enough opportunities in lessons to practise these skills.
49. By the end of Year 11, standards are still below average but the pupils do as well as expected and slightly better than they do in other subjects, so achievement is satisfactory. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work they have done on living things, the properties of materials and physical processes is average in Year 10 but below average in Year 11. The practical work carried out in lessons is below average because the pupils do not have enough opportunities to demonstrate their ability to predict outcomes, explain findings and interpret

evidence. However, the standards attained in GCSE practical assessments, where the full range of skills is developed, are average overall.

50. There are no significant differences in the achievements of different groups of pupils, with most pupils achieving the results that would be expected, on the basis of their past results and attendance records.
51. The pupils generally learn well in science because they have positive attitudes and the teaching is good overall, although it is better in Years 7 to 9, where there is a greater variety of teaching methods in use. The teaching is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, although the limited variety of methods means that pupils are not always as stretched and motivated as they could be. During the inspection, some good teaching was seen in all year groups with some very good teaching in Year 7. The teachers have good subject knowledge, generally manage their classes well and have good relationships with their pupils. Routine practical work is well established and the pupils' work is marked regularly, although the standards of marking are inconsistent and the teachers do not always make it clear how the pupils can improve their work.
52. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are generally good and they usually work well in lessons with no signs of friction between different groups. They co-operate well when given the opportunity to work in groups.
53. Some classes have pupils with a wide range of attainment and the work is not always sufficiently adapted to cater for this range, particularly for the highest and lowest attainers in the class. The learning support assistants work effectively with the pupils they support. Pupils have the skills in English and mathematics that are necessary to carry out their science work effectively and there is a good emphasis on the development of language skills. The teaching of ICT skills is satisfactory and opportunities for pupils to use computer equipment are identified in the schemes of work. There is a need for further staff training on this aspect.
54. The department is well managed and the head of department has provided good leadership in focusing on improving standards. Appropriate priorities for development are tackled through the departmental action plan and this includes ideas gained from the national strategy to improve standards in Key Stage 3, although this is at an early stage and the teachers need more training to deliver it. Teaching and learning are monitored systematically but there is a need to improve the monitoring of marking and of the quality of pupils' work, in order to ensure that the pupils know what they have to do to improve. Good assessment records are kept but they are not always used effectively to set targets for improvement.
55. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly in raising standards of attainment, which have risen steadily in recent years. The teachers are well supported by a very well qualified and experienced full time science technician and this helps to ensure the smooth running of the department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the GNVQ ICT course are good.
- Monitoring of teaching is not rigorous enough to ensure greater consistency throughout the department.
- Pupils currently have insufficient opportunities to use ICT to enhance their learning in most subjects.
- Provision for all pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good and the most able can start an examination course in Year 8.

- The curriculum provides ICT lessons and an examination course for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The lack of on-site technical support for the computer network and ICT equipment in general can result in wasted teacher and pupil time when problems arise.

Commentary

56. The latest examination results at A*-C in the GNVQ intermediate course were very good. A smaller number successfully completed GNVQ part 1. Levels attained in 2003 were very close to those of 2001 when they were well above average. This represents a good recovery from a dip in 2002 when results were average. The attainment of girls is better than that of boys.
57. Provision for ICT is good in terms of timetabled lessons. Standards overall are satisfactory but they are good for many GNVQ candidates. The use of ICT by pupils in many subjects is underdeveloped although teachers are beginning to make good use of interactive whiteboards in lessons. All pupils in all years have ICT lessons, which ensure that appropriate skills and knowledge are covered in detail. From activities seen in lessons and in a scrutiny of work, overall standards, by the end of Year 9 are consistent with national expectations. This represents good progress for many pupils. A group of very well motivated, higher attaining pupils in Years 8 and 9 are currently following a GNVQ examination course, which they will complete in Year 10. The attainment of this group is very good, well above the average. In a Year 9 lesson pupils made very good use of their knowledge and skills to construct well-planned and effective Web pages.
58. Standards seen in lessons in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory overall but some very good work was seen in both years in the GNVQ course, where pupils worked with confidence using a range of suitable software. In a very mixed ability Year 11 group, all pupils made good progress because of very well organised teaching, which enabled them to use four different software applications to contribute to group presentations, which are assessed for the examination. The department should ensure that all of this good work is successfully written-up by all pupils to improve the numbers of who complete all of the examination course work requirements.
59. Most pupils make good progress in ICT lessons because much of the teaching is good in all years. The teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic, providing clear guidance and support for all pupils. In a very small proportion of lessons classroom management needs to be more rigorous to ensure that the pace of all pupils is maintained throughout. The majority of pupils have a very positive attitude towards their work. They are creative and are keen to demonstrate their skills, although a minority in Years 10 and 11 need to apply themselves more diligently in their coursework.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. ICT as a discrete subject is effectively managed and there has been a good improvement in standards by Year 11. Teachers in a growing number of subject departments are making good use of interactive whiteboards. This enables ICT to be used to enhance teaching and learning, however, the use of computers, by pupils, in some National Curriculum subjects has not developed sufficiently since the last inspection. The overall number of computers is favourable when compared to the national average although the small clusters of machines in subject areas are not used effectively. The lack of an on-site technician has an adverse impact on the reliability of the computer network, and ICT equipment. Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement in the provision for, and standards in, ICT as a discrete subject. The use in other subjects across the curriculum has not developed sufficiently.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and high expectations lead to very good learning.
- Results at GCSE have been below average.
- Pupils are now achieving well.
- The very good curriculum provides a very effective framework for learning.
- Good assessment leaves pupils in no doubt as to how to improve their work.
- Leadership is very good, building an effective department.

Commentary

61. According to teacher assessments, standards at the end of Year 9 have been below national expectations, but with an improving trend. In 2002 the numbers entered for GCSE were too low to make a valid statistical comparison with national results; 2003 results are in line with other subjects in the school. Work seen during the inspection indicates an improvement on these previous results both in Year 9 and in Year 11, resulting in standards that are now in line with national expectations. This means that pupils are achieving well throughout the age groups. There is no apparent difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs are also achieving well because they are well provided for.
62. The improvement in standards is due to the high expectations of the teachers and the interesting and well-structured lessons that plan for the needs of all the pupils in the group. No lessons were less than good and half of them were very good. This high standard leads to pupils feeling valued and they concentrate very effectively on their work and are keen to contribute to lessons. This good classroom ethos enables them all to learn well. Regular assessment, through questioning in class and good marking, leaves pupils in no doubt as to how well they are achieving and enables teachers to adjust lesson plans to suit individual learning needs. Social as well as academic development is enriched through an extensive programme of fieldwork that uses the local environment. Moral and cultural issues are emphasised where appropriate, as in a lesson about floods in Bangladesh. No opportunity is lost to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. ICT is used frequently both as a resource for research and to present work, for example the Year 11 coursework that is now in progress.
63. Although the department is led by a part-time co-ordinator it is well managed, but only because of outstanding commitment that leads to many extra hours being worked. The co-ordinator's leadership is very good, enabling the department to expand and develop in line with the needs of a growing school and to show clear improvement since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn well as a result of good and enthusiastic teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given good support.
- Pupils are given good support with their writing.
- More strategies are needed to help pupils move from one activity to the next without fussing.
- The content of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 needs reducing.

Commentary

64. No pupils sat for the GCSE examination in history in 2002. It is not possible to make meaningful statistical comparisons for the small group who sat in 2003 but the evidence suggests that standards were below average but at least consistent with pupils' prior attainment.
65. When pupils enter the school, standards in history are below average. Standards in the current Year 9 are below average as is the work done by Year 10 pupils when they finished in Year 9. However, the evidence suggests that standards in Year 7 and 8 are improving and pupils achieve well in the context of their prior attainment. There are no pupils currently studying history in Year 11. Standards at this early stage of the term for Year 10 pupils are below average but pupils achieve well in the context of their prior attainment. A particular strength of the department is teaching pupils to use historical evidence to make a conclusion – standards in this area are higher than might be expected. Although literacy skills are below average overall, standards in this area are also improving because teaching is focusing more effectively on helping pupils to write more confidently and more analytically. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers.
66. Teaching and learning are good in all year groups. As a result of the enthusiastic teaching, pupils enjoy their lessons and learn well. Behaviour is largely good, although more strategies are needed to help pupils move without fuss from one activity to the next. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support. A particular strength of the teaching is the use of questions to clarify, reinforce and extend pupils' learning. This was evident in a Year 7 lesson, for example, where pupils worked out why the Romans adopted the British habit of wearing trousers when they lived in this country. Pupils in another lesson successfully understood the link between the word *protest* and the word *Protestant*. Another strength of the department is the focus on developing pupils' writing skills. As a result, pupils write with increasing confidence and accuracy. There is scope, however, to develop a wider range of activities that develop pupils' skills in organizing their thoughts and selecting relevant pieces of evidence. Marking is thorough, although it would benefit the department if more strategies were developed to check the accuracy of teacher assessment at the end of Year 9. There are firm plans, however, to do this.
67. History is a very small department with only one teacher who is also the head of department. However, leadership and management are good with a clear vision of how to raise standards and the profile of the subject. There is a planned link, for example, with a neighbouring history department to share good practice and also to develop more effective assessment strategies. In order to raise standards further, the department needs to look at ways to reduce the content of the curriculum, particularly in Year 9 so that more attention can be paid to skill development. Resources are good: there is, for example, an interactive whiteboard arriving this term. However, opportunities to make use of information technology are very limited because of the shortage of computers.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality of teaching and learning in workshop activities, particularly in electronics and mechanisms.
- Good quality of teaching and learning in practical sessions in food technology.
- Unsatisfactory leadership and management.
- Weaknesses in assessment, as part of teaching and learning.

Commentary

68. GCSE results are below the national average but improving.
69. Standards in the current Year 9 are below the national expectation. This represents satisfactory achievement for many pupils in relation to their low level of skill development when they started at the school in Year 7. Pupils identified with special educational needs do not achieve as well as other pupils because of the carousel arrangements that interrupt learning and limit continuity and progression. Pupils enjoy practical tasks and participate well in food technology and also in electronics and the construction of mechanisms. Many boys, however, do not listen willingly to teacher instructions or behave responsibly in introductory or finishing off sessions. This slows the pace of many lessons and prevents more focused pupils from achieving further. Teachers' written comments on pupils' work are generous with praise for effort but insufficiently focused on helping pupils to improve their level of attainment. From the scrutiny of work, provided by the school, it was clear those pupils who researched, planned and wrote well in other subject areas did not always bring this same level of rigour to work completed in design and technology. Designing is the weakest element.
70. There is no Year 11 course. Currently standards in Year 10 are below average in resistant materials and graphics. The teacher has sensibly planned catch-up sessions in metal and wood techniques because of the low skill development of many pupils. The use of temporary accommodation and the two-hour session is having a negative effect on the delivery of the graphics course. These factors are adversely affecting learning and achievement particularly for lower attaining boys. Pupils are too dependent on the teachers with many lacking the confidence to work independently or the motivation to work collaboratively.
71. The quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory. Whilst recognising that the move to temporary accommodation has been challenging and time consuming although managed successfully, too little time has been allowed for monitoring teaching and learning. Currently assessment does not ensure that pupils know the quality they are aiming for or how to achieve this. The department development plan does not contain sharp targets for improvement. There are many missed opportunities for using ICT, including nutritional analysis in food. Practical food lessons are exhausting for the teacher because she has no technical help. Currently in food technology, time for mastering computer skills or for developing more focused assessment strategies is absorbed in preparatory and clearing up activities more appropriate for support staff. The school is aware of a health and safety issue raised concerning food technology. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory; standards are higher but ICT is still not having the impact it should have in technology.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement by all pupils.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- Excellent leadership and management.
- The lack of provision for and use of ICT.
- Minimal experience of three-dimensional ways of working.

Commentary

72. GCSE results are below the national average but improving.

73. Standards in the current Year 9 are above national expectations. This represents good achievement for all pupils in relation to when they started at the school in Year 7. Pupils identified with special educational needs do particularly well because teachers understand individual barriers to learning. The success of this department lies in the fact that teacher assessment looks forward rather than backwards. Whether orally in lessons, or by way of written feedback in sketchbooks pupils are helped to understand the kind of qualities aimed for in their work, the gaps in their present skill development, knowledge and understanding as well as how to improve. As a result of their teacher's belief that all can succeed, pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem and achieve well in individual lessons and also over time. Year 7 pupils for example, are encouraged to discuss ideas and to express personal feelings and values as well as to consider and respect other peoples' beliefs. The success of this approach to understanding one's own spirituality is evident in the way some Year 7 pupils choose to combine images from Islam and ancient Egypt in their recreations of Egyptian sarcophagi. By Year 9 pupils are working confidently using the formal elements of line, tone and colour to study the real world and also to explore more abstract ideas.
74. Standards in the current Year 11 are average. This is a very small year group with high levels of pupil mobility. Nevertheless, pupils are achieving well. Their canvases, developed after visiting the Aztec exhibition, bear witness to this fact. Excellent strategies, such as open ended question and answer sessions, the use of post-its to plan tasks and explain processes and emerging ideas, help pupils to become independent learners. Standards in Year 10 are above average. Gender differences, in this year group, are seen not in the standard of drawing attained but in their preferred styles of working. Higher attaining boys handle pencil tone sensitively; appreciating the balance of pressure needed depending on the grade of pencil used and the paper surface worked upon. By contrast, higher attaining girls relish their control over coloured pencils as they explore the decorative elements of African art.
75. The quality of leadership and management of art and design is excellent. As a result of the classroom experiences provided and the enrichment activities offered, this subject makes a significant difference to the lives of pupils in this school. Their work is displayed well and enjoyed and respected by all. Currently the department is housed in temporary accommodation. This interim arrangement was very well planned for but until the new art rooms are available the development of ICT provision and use is limited and opportunities for three-dimensional work are minimal. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good particularly in the quality of learning experienced and the standards attained.

Example of outstanding practice

The rules governing behaviour in this Year 9 lesson are established in the corridor outside the classroom. Pupils understand that this teacher has high expectations and requires the same from them. On entering the art room, the white board facing them is divided into sections for learning objectives, key technical words etc. These inform pupils and act as cueing devices to focus minds. Being offered open-ended questions about previous learning and allowed time to respond, ensures that most pupils express themselves clearly revealing good understanding of line, tone and texture. The teacher applies the five-minute rule consistently. Five minutes are allowed to collect equipment and start working. A five-minute warning is given to wind the activity down. Pupils move purposefully and eagerly into the activity session where they are required to use line and tone to produce pen and ink animal studies. They have learned previously that ink blobs and smudges, whilst not to be recommended, are regarded by their teacher as part of learning by doing. As a result there are no complaints about the equipment or regression into a state of feeling that they can't succeed. Rather they work carefully and achieve increasing control over the medium used. As the pupils gain in confidence and start to work independently the teacher's role moves from deliverer of information, to facilitator and finally to observer of progress. The five-minute warning, towards the end of the session, gives pupils time to complete what they are doing and clear equipment away. In the plenary pupils are invited to say what they have learned. Their responses are not always what the teacher expects because, unlike in lessons that are over tightly teacher controlled, these pupils are able to reflect and give genuine answers.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards of achievement over time are too low.
- The quality of planning is high and being developed well, particularly the use of reflection and plenary in each lesson to reinforce learning and encourage pupils' use of target language.
- The new teacher's expectations of pupils are high and teaching skills very good.
- The pace of learning is currently inhibited as the new teacher becomes familiar with the abilities and experience of pupils in the school.
- Management of classrooms and pupil behaviour is very good.
- Relationships between pupils and the teacher are good.
- The current accommodation and furniture are unsuitable and resources for learning are limited.

Commentary

76. Standards are low because, in recent years, music has been taught by a series of teachers without an overall curriculum which met the needs of the changing intakes of pupils and ensured continuity and progression in their learning. Consequently, achievement over time for the majority of pupils has been insufficient.
77. The quality of planning provided by the new teacher is good and being refined as more information about the pupils is gained, enabling lessons to be prepared which best match the range of prior attainment present. The teacher's expectations are high. She carefully adjusts them to raise self-esteem, participation and increase learning of key skills, knowledge and understanding with lessons. Planning is effective though not yet sufficiently linked to the range of previous experience that younger pupils in particular are bringing to the school. Assessment is used well to enable pupils to know how well they are doing and to improve, to gain a sense of performance and of audience, and to develop their own critical awareness and independence in learning. As a result, the quality of learning observed was at least satisfactory and more often good. In some instances when the teacher enabled pupils to achieve higher standards than they imagined for themselves, teaching and learning were very good.
78. Although the current accommodation for music is unsatisfactory, the school's new building programme includes a new music suite and appropriate other areas for music to develop. Recent resources for learning that have been bought are already being used well and motivating pupils to engage in learning with enthusiasm.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good; teachers plan lessons using a range of activities that allows all groups of pupils to learn well.
- Some facilities, including the temporary changing rooms, are inadequate; however, the new sports hall will enhance pupils' learning opportunities.
- The subject leader has a strong commitment to improvement and success.
- ICT is not used enough to support teaching and learning.
- Relationships are good and pupils have positive attitudes to work.

Commentary

79. Standards in lessons and work seen by Year 9 and Year 11 pupils matched national expectations and showed good improvement from their work in previous years; most pupils are achieving well. Year 11 pupils' examination results in physical education are below average, but they achieve better pass grades than those in their other subjects. Standards, overall, are rising at above the national rate. Pupils with special educational needs and the talented, achieve well. High-attaining pupils are successful in a range of sports at borough, county and sometimes national levels.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Teachers are very knowledgeable and manage pupils very well. Work is planned to suit all pupils and those with special educational needs and the talented make good progress. For example, in a Year 7 football lesson, lower attaining pupils improved well, because the teacher used appropriate grouping, modified tasks and used demonstrations. The learning of higher-attaining pupils, including the talented, is accelerated by extension tasks, grouping and extra-curricular participation. Teachers provide opportunities for independent learning in most lessons. In a Year 11 GCSE table tennis lesson, pupils planned work, judged peer performance and officiated. Learning is less effective in the few lessons where teaching is more prescriptive and pupils are given fewer opportunities to explore their own ideas.
81. Pupils' learning is enhanced by their positive attitudes and good relationships. Small numbers, however, underachieve because of poor concentration. Most pupils, across all years, improve their numerical skills through opportunities to score, measure and record performance. Teachers emphasise key words and are adept in their use of questioning. These approaches improve the technical vocabulary, speaking skills and listening ability of pupils across the attainment levels. Pupils' ICT skills in the subject are limited, due to lack of opportunity.
82. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a strong commitment to improvement and success. Good procedures are in place to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and pupils' standards. Assessment systems are good and are used well to monitor pupils' progress and set targets. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved to good and schemes of work updated; progress in other areas has been more limited, due to the disruption of building work. The inadequacies in accommodation, including the temporary changing rooms, will, however, soon be remedied by the completion of a superb new sports hall.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school does not yet fully meet statutory requirements to provide citizenship as a full National Curriculum subject.
- Teaching in the subject is currently unsatisfactory. This is because teachers are given insufficient guidance to teach the subject. There are no schemes of work, for example.
- Citizenship is not yet assessed separately at the end of Year 9.
- A start has been made to introduce the subject and there are firm plans to develop it.

Commentary

83. The school delivers citizenship mainly as part of its personal, social and religious education programme, taught once a week by tutors to the whole school. Allocation of time, therefore, as

well as staffing arrangements, constrain development of the subject. It is not possible to teach effectively the three strands of the subject in sufficient breadth or depth under the current arrangements. Delivery is also dependent on teachers' familiarity and confidence with this new subject.

84. It was possible to observe only a limited number of specific citizenship lessons during the inspection. In work seen, and from discussions with pupils, standards are below average and achievement, to date, is unsatisfactory. At all levels, pupils do not achieve as well as they might because of limitations in the teachers' understanding of requirements in this new, statutory National Curriculum subject. There are no schemes of work to help teachers plan their work and, as a result, the programmes of study are not fully covered.
85. Overall, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Written and oral tasks lack challenge. There is not much work in pupils' folders and much of what there is shows a limited range of tasks and coverage of the curriculum. Assessment of pupils' progress in the subject is embryonic at this stage. Currently, pupils are assessed in their achievement in personal, social and religious education as a whole.
86. Leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory. However, the school has made some clear progress with the introduction of the subject. Pupils' attitudes have significantly improved in the last few years and there is now a positive ethos throughout the school that can support this new subject. Pupils already have a school council and there are many other opportunities for them to exercise responsibility and learn about democracy. Several subjects of the curriculum already make an implicit contribution. Resources have been purchased to support teaching. The school fully realises that there remains much to be done in order to develop the subject and to meet statutory requirements.
87. Citizenship was not a separate National Curriculum subject at the time of the last inspection. The position of this new subject is similar to that found in many schools at present. Accordingly, procedures for monitoring and evaluation are in their infancy.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3