

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **COLNE PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

Colne, Lancashire

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119719

Headteacher: Mr A Chambers

Lead inspector: Mr Chris Glynn

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 258602

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	954
School address:	Venables Avenue Colne Lancashire
Postcode:	BB8 7DP
Telephone number:	01282 865200
Fax number:	01282 866089
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roger Brown
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Colne Park High School is an average sized, mixed comprehensive school. It is oversubscribed and the number on roll is rising. Several families experience social and economic disadvantage and the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic communities and the number with special educational needs is in line with the national average. While the full range of abilities is found in all years the attainment of those entering aged 11 in 2003 was below average. The school has gained the Sportsmark Gold award for its provision for physical education and it is bidding to gain Specialist School status for mathematics and computing.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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3266	Peter Baker	Team inspector	English
3516	Adrian Koskie	Team inspector	Mathematics
4738	David Berrisford	Team inspector	Science
12326	Pauline Cameron	Team inspector	Design and technology
11357	Rona Heald	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
32147	Ann Wallis	Team inspector	Geography
31096	John Thornhill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
31701	Graeme Rudland	Team inspector	Music
32225	Christine Hough	Team inspector	Citizenship Physical education
15277	Chris Vidler	Team inspector	Business education
32340	Peter McKay	Team inspector	History
2012	John Prangnell	Team inspector	Religious education
8090	Frank Turns	Team inspector	Art and design
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**Colne Park High School provides a satisfactory and rapidly improving quality of education for its pupils. It has many very good features.** The examination results are in line with those of most schools nationally but at GCSE level are better than similar schools. The leadership of the headteacher and the governors is very good and the school is well led and managed across its academic and pastoral work. The quality of teaching is good and the school has extended the range of its curriculum opportunities to ensure all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed. Individual care and support of pupils and the aim to see each one achieves as well as possible are the basis of the school's aims. The staff work very hard and effectively to realise these aims. Achievement is satisfactory overall and is very good in some departments. Achievement is being raised as new assessment systems are introduced and as the school's new approaches to reviewing its own work become applied more rigorously across all departments. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management are good overall but the leadership and management of the science department are unsatisfactory.
- Monitoring and evaluation practice is very good and beginning to have a positive impact.
- Teaching and learning are good and have improved since the last inspection.
- Standards in examinations are rising and were the best ever in 2003 at both key stages.
- Standards are below average in history in Years 10 and 11 and in music in Years 7 and 8.
- Assessment, planning and target setting practices have been revised effectively.
- The curriculum is now broader and more relevant and there are very good opportunities for enrichment.
- Pastoral provision is very good and rigorous efforts are made to include all pupils in all activities.
- Below average attendance is lowering the achievement of many pupils.

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. The quality of monitoring and evaluation is now good and these systems are beginning to have a positive impact. There is now a very rigorous approach to school self-review. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Assessment practice has improved well with clearer and more effective systems for planning and target setting. However, some inconsistency in applying these changes is found in a few subjects. Competence has improved considerably in ICT. Examination results at 14 and at 16 are the best ever. The curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of older pupils particularly and the after-school activities programme increased. Despite considerable efforts by the school, attendance still remains too low and is affecting the achievement of many pupils. The school still does not meet its statutory duty to provide an act of collective worship.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

In 2003 the standards attained in national tests and examinations by pupils in Years 9 and 11 were average, representing satisfactory achievement for these pupils compared with their attainment when they entered the school. However, the schools' GCSE results were well above average compared with similar schools whose pupils had attained similar standards in Year 9. In all year groups standards in work seen was satisfactory overall. The improved quality of teaching, pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the impact of the new assessment tracking systems are helping raise pupils' achievement, which was good in two out of three lessons. However, poor attendance continues to depress achievement. Standards are below average in history for Years 10 and 11 and, due to timetable pressure, in music in Years 7 and 8. Pupils achieve particularly well in art, drama, food technology, physical education and in health and social care. Standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT all support learning well in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

## Year 11 results

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	D	C	C	A

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

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory** and is rapidly improving. Teaching and learning are good and students' very positive attitudes and behaviour raise their learning to good in most lessons. The teaching seen in almost a quarter of lessons was very good or excellent and in seven out of every ten lessons was at least good. Very few unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Assessment procedures are good. The recent revision of the curriculum has resulted in pupils being given access to a wider and more purposeful range of subjects and courses than previously. Provision for the lower attainers in Years 10 and 11 has improved especially and there has been major investment in the provision for ICT. Specialist and support staffing has increased and the quality of individual and pastoral and special educational needs support is very good. There are very good links with the parents and partner schools but more could be done to involve the local community in the life of the school.

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well governed by a very well informed and active governing body who are involved in all major strategic issues and who are rigorous in keeping up to date with educational developments and in their desire to further the success of the school. The headteacher gives very good leadership. He has built strong senior and middle management teams around him to realise his clear vision of ensuring each pupil achieves his or her potential within a climate of mutual respect and care. New strategies to improve self-reviewing and assessment practice are beginning to have a very positive impact and the managers are working hard to ensure that all departments adopt these strategies consistently. Leadership and management of the science department are unsatisfactory.

### PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are very supportive of the school and take a keen interest in their children's progress. However, a small minority value education less positively. This inhibits the school's attempts to increase attendance, and the aspirations and achievements of some pupils are consequently also lowered. Parents are most approving of the way the school helps children settle into secondary education. They believe the headteacher and staff expect pupils to work hard and they are complimentary about how well the school is led and managed. Reservations were expressed about levels of homework, information given about pupils' progress, the effectiveness of the reward system and the behaviour of some children. Inspectors agreed with the positive comments and did not judge the negative concerns to be major issues because they are being addressed by the school already. Pupils are very positive about the school, asserting that they are taught well, are trusted and cared for and are expected to work hard. They have a pride in and affection for the school and are supportive of the staff's attempts to improve its performance.

### IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise the level of attendance;
- raise standards in underperforming subjects, particularly in history and music;
- ensure effective leadership and management of the science department;
- develop initiatives to increase the involvement of the local community in the school;

and, to fully meet statutory requirements relating to the act of collective worship.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are **broadly average** in Years 9 and 11.

Achievement is **satisfactory** compared with pupils' attainment when they enter the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 have improved more quickly than the national trend.
- GCSE results are well above average for schools whose pupils have attained similar standards in Year 9.
- Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good in art, drama, food technology, physical education and GNVQ health and social care.
- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average in history and standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average in music.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- The 2003 mathematics and science test results in Year 9 were below average compared with schools whose pupils had similar previous attainment.

#### Commentary

1. Results in tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is currently below average. However, in previous years pupils have joined the school with standards which are average. Therefore, the average results attained by pupils in Year 9 in 2003 represent satisfactory achievement. Over the last four years results in English, mathematics and science have improved at a rate which is above the national trend. Results in all three subjects were average and met the targets set by governors. Compared with schools whose pupils had similar previous attainment English results were average but mathematics and science results were below average. The performance of girls compared with boys was similar to the national picture with girls doing better in English and boys' grades slightly above girls in science.

#### Key Stage 3

##### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.6 (33.2)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	35.3 (34.0)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	33.7 (32.8)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 188 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Currently, standards seen in Year 9 are average and achievement is satisfactory. In English, mathematics and science standards are average. In all other subjects, standards are average except in design and technology, art and drama where they are above average and in music where they are below average. In work seen pupils achieve well in English, design and technology, history, geography, physical education and art and very well in drama. Achievement is satisfactory in all other subjects and is helped by the pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' standards of literacy are sufficient to support their learning in some subjects but are underdeveloped in others. Good numeracy skills support pupils' learning across the curriculum. There are no consistent differences between the performance of higher and lower attaining

pupils across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Most pupils on the special needs register make good progress and achieve well in meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. The majority attain standards in tests and examinations that are at least in line with expectations and often exceed them. This is due to the good support they receive from class teachers and teaching assistants, particularly when they enter the school in Year 7. There are no significant differences in achievement for different groups of pupils on the register of special educational needs.

## Key Stage 4

### **Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003**

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	50 (40)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	89 (81)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	95 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	33.0 (32.8)	34.7 (34.8)

*There were 188 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- GCSE results are average compared with the country as a whole and represent satisfactory achievement. In 2003 average numbers of pupils gained five results in the ranges A\*-C and A\*-G, but a below average number of pupils gained at least one graded GCSE pass. Results are well above average for schools whose pupils had attained similar standards in Year 9. However, they represent average achievement compared with those same pupils' standards when they entered the school in Year 7. GCSE results have remained at similar levels for the last three years and this trend in results is broadly in line with the national picture. The strongest performing subjects are art, drama and physical education. Pupils have achieved results which are in line with their predicted grades. These grades are based on tests taken when they entered the school in Year 7. Results fell just below the targets set by governors. Although boys achieved better grades than girls in 2003 these differences in performance reflected their relative abilities.
- Current standards are average overall in Year 11 and represent satisfactory achievement. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science. They are average in all other subjects apart from design and technology, music and geography where they are good and art, drama and physical education where they are very good. Standards in history are unsatisfactory. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in mathematics, science, ICT, religious education, languages and business studies, good in English, technology, history, geography, physical education and music and very good in art and drama. Pupils' ICT skills develop well as they move up the school and in Years 10 and 11 they use these skills productively to support their learning in other subjects.
- The school has taken action to raise all pupils' achievement by setting them challenging targets, carefully tracking their progress and critically evaluating the work of subject departments. These strategies are working well and, in those departments that are applying these strategies rigorously, good achievement was seen in lessons. However, poor attendance continues to affect achievement negatively.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are **very good**.

Overall, behaviour is **very good** in lessons and around the school.

Pupils' willingness to take responsibility within the school community is **very good**.

Pupils' social and moral development is **very good**. Their cultural development is **good** and spiritual development **satisfactory**.

Attendance is **poor**. Punctuality is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is poor and has declined over recent years.
- Pupils are interested in their lessons and very much appreciate the range of activities the school provides.
- Almost all pupils behave very well and form very good relationships with others.
- The social and moral development of pupils is very good.
- The level of exclusions is high but is reducing.

### Commentary

#### Attendance

##### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	10.0	School data	1.0
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

6. The level of attendance has declined over recent years and is now well below that typically found in secondary schools nationally. However, the level of attendance is broadly comparable with that at other local high schools. Most parents ensure that their child attends regularly but the attendance of a significant number of pupils is below 80 per cent. This number is small in Years 7 and 8 but increases through Years 9 and 10. In Year 11 it is unacceptably high. The school has good procedures in place to encourage good attendance and to follow up all unexplained absences. However, over recent years the support it has received from the education welfare service has been inconsistent. This has had a major impact on the school's ability to address the very poor attendance of a minority of pupils. The school recognises the need to improve attendance. Most pupils arrive on time in the morning and lessons begin promptly.

#### Attitudes and behaviour

7. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their learning. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers make a significant contribution to their enthusiasm. The reward system is very effective in motivating pupils of all ages to work hard and behave well. Pupils are very willing to work and they settle quickly in lessons. They particularly enjoy the many opportunities they have to learn through practical activities. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and try hard to achieve their best. They listen well to their teachers and to one another. Pupils of all ages are very appreciative of the effort teachers make to provide the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Many pupils are actively involved in clubs and other activities outside the school day. In particular, the regular school productions and the team sports involve a large number of pupils and are very successful. Pupils take a pride in their achievements, both in lessons and in other activities.

8. The school is very successful in creating a strong sense of community characterised by high levels of mutual respect and trust between pupils and staff. Almost all pupils respond very positively to the very high expectations the school sets for their behaviour. Those pupils who find it difficult to behave appropriately are generally very well managed so that their behaviour does not affect the learning of others. The high standards of behaviour achieved help to ensure that pupils are able to learn well. Incidences of bullying are rare and are dealt with very quickly. Pupils in Year 10 are proud of their contribution to dealing with bullying through a mentoring scheme and are developing a website to make their work more widely accessible. The relationships between pupils, their peers, teachers and other adults are very good. The school is a community in which every individual is known and valued. Pupils are very proud of their school. During the inspection, an incident occurred that pupils rightly felt had let the school down. They were deeply upset by it and strongly supported the staff's efforts in resolving the concerns that the incident raised. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is generally very good and they have positive attitudes to work, persevering well and trying hard in lessons. They have good relationships with their fellow pupils and teachers and they are well integrated into their classes. This helps them to make good progress and achieve well.
9. Provision for pupils' moral and social education is very good and for their cultural development it is good. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to develop and explore feelings and beliefs. They reflect when given the opportunity in assemblies and lessons, and empathise with others. For example, in drama, Year 8 pupils responded with maturity and sensitivity to a role play about a missing child. Older pupils in particular are confident to voice and defend their opinions on issues such as poverty and war. Teachers' respect for their pupils' views and their willingness to listen help develop pupils' self-confidence and awareness. However, some opportunities for spiritual development are missed. For example, in some daily tutor meetings the 'thought for today' is noted superficially and not all assemblies focus on spiritual development or fulfil the requirement for an act of collective worship.
10. Pupils display a strong sense of right and wrong. Their involvement in establishing the school's values and rules is evident in their commitment to an orderly school community. For example, pupils of all ages were quick to condemn the appearance of graffiti in a public area and showed genuine dismay and annoyance. They are developing a sense of justice and have opportunities to consider consequences, for example in personal development lessons considering human rights and pollution, and such concerns as global economies and sustainable development in geography.
11. Pupils' social skills are developed very well and throughout the curriculum pupils display the ability to co-operate and collaborate in lessons, which makes their learning more effective. In physical education lessons, for example, pupils evaluate and applaud each other, praising effort rather than just success and in modern foreign language lessons pupils contribute and perform, without fear of ridicule from their peers. Pupils develop decision-making skills such as considering how to respond to peer pressure to take drugs in a drama-based personal development lesson. They take part in debates and vote for which charity to support, and respect others' views. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take responsibility as prefects, peer mentors or in directing initiatives such as the school's contribution to the Nepal Project.
12. There is a good range of cultural and aesthetic experiences provided in lessons and in extra-curricular activities, for example, by teachers in art, drama, music and geography. In modern foreign languages pupils can join the lunchtime Spanish club, or participate in exchange visits to Germany and other trips abroad. Year 9 pupils undertake work on 'fusion foods' in food technology and Year 11 pupils study poetry from other cultures. Personal development courses offer many experiences which develop pupils' understanding of their own and others' cultures. During Eid, pupils of the Moslem faith raise funds for charity, for example by selling foods from their heritage culture which are avidly purchased and consumed. Pupils show interest in and compassion for other peoples. However, this often focuses on deprivation and poverty in underdeveloped countries: the school does not at the moment develop further pupils'

understanding of the contributions other cultures make to our global society, at home and abroad, as well as their needs.

13. Provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is monitored largely through checking departments' schemes of work. This needs to be extended, to give the school a clearer picture of the impact teachers are making in these areas of the pupils' development.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll 954	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	924	70	7
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	11	2	1
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

14. The school does not tolerate physical or verbal violence to staff or pupils. This has resulted in a level of exclusions that is higher than that found nationally, although it is comparable with the rate of exclusions in other local high schools. The school follows appropriate procedures in all exclusions and records show its effectiveness because very few pupils are excluded more than once. During the current academic year the rate of exclusions is falling, as is the number of days lost to exclusion.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided overall by the school is **satisfactory and is rapidly improving**. Teaching and learning was good in seven out of ten lessons seen; the curriculum and the approaches to assessing and reporting pupils' progress have been effectively revised and good opportunities are given to extend and enrich pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and the quality of assessment are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are secure and confident in their subject knowledge and establish good relationships with their pupils.
- Learning is supported well through the encouragement of high standards of behaviour in lessons.
- There are examples of excellent or very good teaching and learning in most subjects.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and attainment are good.
- Lesson planning does not always meet the needs of the more able pupils in the group.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' work are inconsistent; pupils are not always provided with sufficient advice that would enable them to improve their performance.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 151 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
6 (4%)	30 (20%)	69 (46%)	39 (26%)	7 (4%)	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.

15. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning are good in all subjects apart from science, religious education and modern foreign languages where they are satisfactory. In all subjects, however, there are examples of good or very good and sometimes excellent teaching and learning. For example, excellent teaching takes place in art, drama and physical education. A small number of examples of unsatisfactory teaching and learning were found in German, mathematics, ICT, religious education and science. The school's commitment to the implementation of the national strategy for pupils in these year groups is having a positive impact and is resulting in improved teaching and improved learning opportunities for pupils. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning in most subjects are good. They are satisfactory in science, modern foreign languages, religious education and business education. There are examples of significant strengths across a wide range of subjects and further examples of excellent teaching in art, drama and physical education. Good teaching is confident, knowledgeable and challenging, rigorous in its questioning of pupils and it ensures good pupil involvement and pace to the lessons. For example, pupils in science are challenged to investigate factors that affect yeast in the bread making processes and in mathematics pupils are encouraged to evaluate each other's answers to problems about the mathematical relationships of co-ordinates. Where teachers give clear explanations and learning outcomes are shared, pupils' learning is underpinned and supported well. Pupils enjoy working in groups; they are enthusiastic about their learning in most subjects and are very willing to participate in class discussions. Overall, teachers establish a good working ethos and there are very good relationships between both teachers and pupils.
16. Where teaching and learning is just satisfactory, and sometimes unsatisfactory, it is because the work lacks sufficient challenge and is not planned well enough to meet the needs of the more able pupils in the group. Frequently learning is restricted because teachers talk at the pupils too much and do not give them sufficient opportunity to become involved in the lessons. Pupils do not always fully understand what they need to do to improve because the marking of their work in some subjects is not sufficiently diagnostic.
17. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, with good support from the teaching assistants and special needs teachers. This helps them to achieve well in relation to their past results. The work usually stretches them well and their individual education plans contain suitable academic and personal targets that help the pupils to make good progress in their learning. Support is available in all areas of the curriculum and is effective where deployed, but the amount of support available is not always enough to cope with the demand. Support assistants are deployed where it is felt the need is greatest.
18. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and attainment are good. The school has established a well-structured system for the recording and tracking of pupils' progress through the school. Target setting is being used effectively by most departments to monitor pupils' progress towards their National Curriculum or GCSE expected grades. There are good links between pastoral and academic teams to target potential areas of underachievement and to enable teachers to modify their teaching, although this practice varies in consistency between subjects. The quality of marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall but there are significant variations. In the best practice, pupils' work is regularly marked and good constructive subject

specific advice is provided. Where marking is unsatisfactory it is because it provides very limited advice to the pupils as to how they can make improvements and does not follow up sufficiently on poorly presented or missing items of work.

## **The curriculum**

Provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Many pupils benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school and from the additional support provided for pupils learning outside school hours.
- The curriculum has been revised and improved well since the last inspection.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Links with colleges have enriched the curriculum opportunities for older pupils.
- Accommodation and timetabling difficulties restrict the provision for music.

### **Commentary**

19. Since the last inspection the school has reviewed the curriculum provided for all pupils and it now meets all the statutory requirements missing in 1998 and the recommended teaching time for Years 10 and 11. Opportunities to study a wider range of subjects that better meet the needs of pupils, particularly the older ones, is now available and pupils' entitlement to information and communication technology studies is now provided for well. The lack of arts opportunities after Year 9 is no longer a concern although the access to a full music curriculum in Years 7 and 8 is problematic because of timetabling and accommodation difficulties. An additional hour is given to support English and mathematics for all pupils in Year 7 and to English in Year 8 for lower attaining pupils. The highest attaining pupils in Year 8 are able to study a second foreign language.
20. The breadth of curriculum offered for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good and those pupils interviewed felt the school did as well as it could, given the constraints of size and accommodation. No parent raised option choices as a concern.
21. In addition to a good range of academic courses on offer the school is developing an innovative programme of vocational courses, which is providing an improved provision for all pupils. In particular, the health and social care course meets the needs of the whole range of ability and allows all students to achieve well in examinations. This and other vocational options in engineering, hairdressing, catering and ICT provide good opportunities for these pupils to prepare for the world of work beyond school.
22. Provision has also been improved for students who have become disaffected with school. Attendance and achievement have been much improved by the inclusion of more practical activities such as vehicle construction and an extensive programme of community service and leisure activities including rock climbing.
23. The school has been able to undertake this significant programme of curriculum change because it has forged excellent links with local education providers. It has been at the forefront of working in partnership with the local college of further education and other schools and this has enabled this 11 – 16 school to make very good provision for the full 14 to 19 age range. Pupils are thus enabled to make better informed career choices and the school is able to make best use of limited accommodation and resources in extending curriculum provision.
24. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum, apart from a number who are disapplied from modern languages in Years 10 and 11 in order to allow them to follow a course that is more suited to their needs. Pupils at all stages on the special educational needs register are well provided for and the school's procedures comply with the Code of Practice. The teachers and teaching assistants use their knowledge of pupils' achievements in

order to plan future targets for learning. Individual education plans are reviewed twice a year to ensure that these targets reflect the progress made. The class teachers and teaching assistants help pupils with learning difficulties to understand their work, sometimes providing modified worksheets and other materials.

25. Provision for pupils identified as being particularly gifted or talented has been affected by staffing difficulties but a new co-ordinator for this work has now been appointed and the original cohort of these pupils, now in Year 10, have had some enrichment activities, including a visit to Oxford University. Some further initiatives are planned but the school recognises that this is an area that needs further development.
26. The school has a very successful personal development programme, taught by form tutors. This incorporates personal, social and health education, citizenship, study skills and careers education. The programme covers all the main strands and topics are re-visited in greater depth as pupils move up through the school. Very effective use is made of external agencies to support this; for example, Year 8 pupils have a well planned 'Health Day'. Pupils receive good careers education and guidance from Year 8 onwards and so they are able to make informed decisions about their own futures.
27. The school has a very good programme of additional activities and enrichment that helps many pupils to do well. Pupils with specific gifts and talents, especially in physical education and drama, achieve particularly well as a result of additional coaching and opportunities to perform to a high level. The range of extra-curricular activities is wide and open to all. Most pupils find something that appeals to them. In order to extend the options at GCSE, the school runs an additional media studies course after hours for pupils studying English literature who wish to study both subjects. Many pupils benefit from the additional support they receive in revision classes, helping them to succeed in examinations. Pupils with special educational needs take part in a range of clubs and activities outside the normal school day. Many of the pupils take advantage of the opportunity to do paired reading with older pupils at lunchtimes in order to improve their reading skills. This helps them to progress faster.

### Care, guidance and support

The school's procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Pupils receive **very good** support, advice and guidance throughout their time in school. Pupils are involved **very well** in the life and development of their school. The induction procedures for pupils new to the school are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well informed about their learning so that they can improve.
- Very effective systems are in place to ensure that pupils receive very good support and guidance throughout their time in school.
- The school provides a very safe, caring environment in which pupils feel secure.
- Pupils are confident that their views matter and that they make a very strong contribution to the life and improvement of their school.
- There are good arrangements in place to support pupils when they join the school.

### Commentary

28. The school has revised its approach to assessing, recording and reporting pupils' achievements. It has established a very effective system for tracking pupils' progress to ensure that pupils know what level they are working at and what their target level is. In most subjects, particularly in Years 10 and 11, pupils know what to do in order to improve because they are well informed about National Curriculum levels through displays in classrooms and corridors. Individual tracker books remind all pupils and inform their parents of their current and expected levels of achievement. Pupils state that work is regularly marked and that teachers discuss with them how to improve the standard of their work. There are some inconsistencies in marking

practice which the school leadership is addressing in the aim of making marking more diagnostic and thus helpful to the learner. Pupils speak highly of the support they receive from teachers. Pupils' academic progress is monitored through regular individual reviews and mentoring is available to those at risk of underachieving. The school aims to remove any barriers to learning so that pupils are able to achieve their full potential. Pupils receive well targeted support to improve their behaviour, attendance or punctuality or to deal with a personal problem.

29. Methods of assessment for pupils with special needs are clearly outlined in the special educational needs policy and guidance. They undergo all the routine assessments that apply to other pupils in the school, with a range of other assessments to monitor academic and personal development. Up-to-date records show that the full range of assessments is used to get a rounded picture of each pupil's progress. Where necessary, the school has access to specialist help in order to meet the needs of some pupils. The arrangements for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' development help to ensure that they make good progress in achieving the targets set for them.
30. Throughout their time in school, pupils receive very good individual support, advice and guidance. Form tutors monitor pupils' personal development and have a clear overview of their academic progress. This ensures that pupils' problems are identified and addressed quickly so that they can concentrate on their work and their progress is not adversely affected. Pupils appreciate that teachers are willing to listen to them and help them through difficulties. From Year 9 onwards pupils have a good programme of careers education and guidance. In Year 11 they benefit from well-organised work experience. The careers library is part of the learning resource base and the school provides pupils with a wide range of good quality computer programs to help them research information about careers and qualifications.
31. The school is a safe, caring community in which pupils can focus on their work. Pupils feel safe in school because they appreciate that their safety and welfare have a very high priority. Procedures for child protection fully comply with legal requirements and are made known to all staff. Very clear systems are in place to meet health and safety requirements. Arrangements for first aid are good.
32. The year and school councils are well established and encourage pupils to put forward their suggestions for improving the school. Councillors take their responsibilities seriously because they know that their views are taken into account when changes are planned. The council is an articulate and thoughtful group. They particularly appreciate the dedication of their teachers, the facilities and activities on offer and the reward system. One commented that the school was 'a community. We all work together to achieve things'. The council has contributed to the school in many ways, for example, the menus in the canteen have been changed to offer more healthy options, benches have been provided in the recreation areas and toilets refurbished in response to council suggestions. Pupils contribute to the school in other ways. For example, some Year 10 pupils are trained to act as mentors for younger pupils and help to address bullying. Prefects have a wide range of duties and help staff to supervise corridors at breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils' involvement in the life of the school increases their pride in being part of it.
33. The induction programme is well organised and appreciated by both pupils and their parents. Pupils in Year 6 have a good range of opportunities to visit their new school as was seen during the inspection when a group from one of the primary partner schools had a mathematics lesson and were able to use the computers. Staff from Park High visit all the primary schools to meet the pupils in Year 6 and to discuss their attainment and needs with their teachers. When pupils enter Year 7 they are confident because they have already met their form tutor and are familiar with the school building. Prefects acting as mentors are linked to Year 7 form groups, helping them to settle in and become familiar with the building and school routines.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a **very good** partnership with parents.

Links with the community are **satisfactory**.

**Good** links with other schools and local colleges are well established.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides parents with a wide range of useful information about school life and their child's work and progress.
- Parents are well involved and consulted.
- The school works well with other local schools and colleges to extend the opportunities on offer to pupils.

### Commentary

34. The school works hard to keep parents very well informed about its life and work. The prospectus, governors' annual report and newsletters provide the necessary information about the school, its routines and expectations. The contact book is a particularly useful communication between school and home. As teachers record any concerns in every lesson, parents are made aware on a daily basis of any problems with, for example, behaviour or homework. Form tutors and heads of year follow up ongoing or serious concerns with parents either by letter or telephone. The system of form tutors and heads of year remaining with the group from Year 7 to Year 11 leads to the development of very good relationships with parents. Target reports are sent to parents twice a year, with one full annual report. Target reports present a great deal of useful information in a very accessible form and are very popular with parents and pupils. The annual report follows a similar format but provides more detailed information. There are good opportunities for parents to consult with their child's teachers. Parents are also very well informed and involved in the choices their child has to make about what to study in Years 10 and 11 and after leaving school.
35. The school arranges regular parents' consultative groups to inform parents about aspects of its work, such as its programme of drugs education and its work with the Connexions service. These meetings are also used to gain parents' views of the provision and any changes that they might wish to see. Questionnaires are also used to gain the views of parents. Parents are supportive of the school and speak well of it. Most parents ensure that their children attend regularly, check and sign the contact book and support the school over disciplinary matters. They appreciate that the school keeps them well informed about their child's behaviour, work and progress. However, a small minority value education less positively. This inhibits the school's attempts to increase attendance, and the aspirations and achievements of some pupils are consequently also lowered.
36. The school's policies and procedures in relation to special educational needs are made clear to parents and the arrangements to inform and involve them are good. They are invited to all reviews and most of them choose to attend. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through the review process, through the normal consultation appointments and through informal contact with teachers. For pupils in Year 11 who are due to transfer to post-16 education there is effective liaison with receiving colleges to discuss their needs. There is also good liaison with the primary schools that the pupils have previously attended, so that teachers at Colne Park are well aware of the needs of pupils entering the school.
37. The school has satisfactory links with the community. Senior staff attend local residents' meetings to build a supportive relationship with the local community. A range of visitors including the police and health service workers contribute to the personal development programme. The school works with outside agencies, such as the Trident organisation and the Connexions service, to support pupils. However, opportunities for pupils to meet and work with members of the local community are not well developed and the school could further extend its community use. The school recognises that this is an area for improvement.

38. The school has very good links with other local schools and colleges that extend pupils' learning. Strong links are established with the local primary schools and are used well to ease the transition from primary to secondary education. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to visit to experience lessons, for example in mathematics and information and communication technology. The school works closely with local colleges to extend the range of courses open to pupils in Years 10 and 11. These courses are well chosen to interest pupils and provide qualifications in areas that the school cannot, such as engineering and catering. Very good use is made of opportunities to attend college and university 'taster' and open days to make pupils aware of the wide range of options available to enable them to continue their education beyond the age of sixteen.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. He has the strong support of the governors, senior and middle managers and staff in trying to bring his vision to reality for the benefit of the pupils, who are central to his aims for improving the school. Apart from ensuring the provision of a daily act of collective worship the governors fulfil all their statutory requirements and are closely involved in the school's developments.

Leadership and management are **good** and the governance of the school is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and he has built strong teams to support the realisation of his vision for the school.
- Governors are very committed to furthering the success of the school.
- New systems of school self-review, professional development and assessment have been introduced and are beginning to have a positive impact.
- The leadership of other key staff is good but management of the science department is weak.
- The effectiveness of the management is good and financial matters are very well managed.
- The management of the pastoral provision is very good with a strong emphasis on inclusion.
- Some departments have yet to implement fully the new self-review systems.

### **Commentary**

39. The school benefits from the work of a well informed and very active governing body which works closely with the headteacher and other staff to further the success of the school. They undertake training regularly and take seriously their monitoring roles as governors through a well defined committee structure. Several governors are also parents and this gives them a very good insight into the daily effectiveness of the school and how well it is managed. The headteacher has ensured their involvement in all the key developments in school self-review and policy changes. He uses their critical inputs to refine proposals and to ensure they are well informed about and share his commitment to the many changes brought about since the last inspection.
40. The headteacher leads the school very well and has a clear vision for the school based on the aim of enabling every pupil to fulfil his or her potential as fully as possible and to do so within a climate of mutual trust and respect between all in the school community. He has been very successful in bringing the staff to share this vision and has built strong leadership and management teams to help him realise it. The result of this is seen in the busy, purposeful and increasingly successful profile of the school which is notable for the very good relationships and pupils' attitudes found during the inspection and which are praised by parents and pupils alike.
41. Extensive new changes have been made through the involvement of the recently strengthened senior management team and a very thorough, analytical view of pupils' and staff performance and of the effectiveness of the curriculum introduced. The impact of this work is now beginning to be realised and although some departments are more advanced in adopting these changes

there is a shared commitment across the school to see them flourish. The leadership and management of art are excellent and are very good in English, ICT, geography, history, drama, music, design technology, physical education and vocational education courses. They are satisfactory in all other subjects apart from science where leadership is unsatisfactory.

42. The day-to-day operation of the school is very good. Most systems run smoothly despite the pressure on the accommodation. The school is an orderly, friendly establishment. Pupils feel secure, staff feel affirmed and parents are very approving of the openness and accessibility of the senior management and other staff.
43. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management for the teachers and support assistants who work very well together to ensure that provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Documentation is informative and each department has a link teacher for special educational needs and special needs issues are raised at departmental meetings through a newsletter and through regular agenda items. Pupils with statements receive the support they are entitled to. Planning is good and records are kept up to date.
44. Extensive staff training for teachers and support assistants has taken place. The special educational needs governor is well informed and is conscientious in supporting the school. The school has sufficient specialist equipment and funds are used appropriately. Computers are available for use by pupils with special needs, for example to help those with reading and writing difficulties to access the curriculum. Access for wheelchair users is possible in most of the school and the school is doing what it can to improve this through its access plan. A bid to improve access has been submitted to the local education authority.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,696,624
Total expenditure	2,656,033
Expenditure per pupil	2,792.88

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40,591
Balance carried forward to the next	185,194

45. Financial management is very good. The headteacher and governors ensure that spending is geared appropriately to the strategic plans they have for the school. The school benefits from the expert knowledge of the finance manager and from members of the governing body, who are used fully to monitor and approve all strategic spending. This ensures that best value principles are applied. This is particularly important because the school does not qualify for any additional grants above its normal budget unlike many other schools in the area. All points raised in the most recent auditor's report have been dealt with efficiently. Given the level of funding, the below average attainment of pupils on entry, the overall quality of teaching, the results gained in examinations and the achievement of pupils, the school provides good value for money.

# **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **English**

Provision is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards by the end of Year 9 and at GCSE have been stabilised and the department is working hard to improve standards further.
- Good teaching and learning lead to good achievement in lessons.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- The very good relationships between teachers and pupils create a positive ethos for learning.
- Some pupils are not yet clear about the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.
- There is not enough extended writing in Key Stage 3 particularly in Year 7.

#### **Commentary**

46. Standards at Key Stage 3 have risen steadily over the last two years to match the national average in 2003. At Key Stage 4, GCSE results in English language and literature were also very close to the national average in 2003. Girls' achievement in English at GCSE was better than boys', as it is nationally. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory because attainment at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 has remained in line with the national average. However, there was a dip in standards between this inspection and the last which has now been stabilised by good teaching and learning and more rigorous assessment systems.
47. Achievement in lessons throughout the school is good as a result of a determined effort by the department to raise standards. In addition, the department has introduced GCSE media studies this year for the average and lower attaining groups to give an alternative to English literature and to capture the interest of boys. The signs are that this is succeeding. Indeed, the interest in media studies is such that pupils in the higher attaining group have chosen to take GCSE media studies as a one-year course in time outside the normal school day. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and are able to participate as a result of good matching of work to their abilities and interests. The good support they receive helps them to achieve well. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated into the English classes and achieve in line with their abilities. No support is needed for those pupils for whom English is an additional language.
48. The teaching of English is good. Lessons are well planned, well structured and well resourced and normally have a variety of effective activities to improve learning. Very good relationships between pupils and teachers create a positive ethos for learning. Teachers use questioning very effectively to test existing knowledge, help pupils to expand their answers and extend their understanding. Most lessons begin with consistently effective 'starters' on grammar, parts of speech and other language skills. Learning is more effective when the teacher shares the objectives of the lesson with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and consolidates them at the end. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs are well taught and well supported by teaching assistants.
49. Learning in English is good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are attentive and participate in lessons positively and with enthusiasm. They respond confidently to challenge and encouragement, work well in groups and particularly well in pairs. They are often eager to share their work with others. Reading is generally good and pupils can identify evidence in written texts in order, for example, to interpret character or unravel a piece of Old

English. Pupils are rapidly learning to make similar interpretations of media texts, such as newspaper front pages and extracts from soap operas. In Years 7 to 9 there is a good variety of writing but there are not enough extended pieces of writing, particularly in Year 7. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of writing, particularly for coursework, improves. Information and communication technology is used well by pupils for the presentation of work and research.

50. This is a rapidly improving department thanks to the quality and enthusiasm of the staff and the head of department's very good leadership and management. He has a clear vision of what he wants to achieve and high aspirations for the department and for the pupils. The professional development of English staff is good and they are establishing effective policies and planning, curriculum mapping, assessment systems and schemes of work. Systems are not fully in place to ensure all pupils are clear about the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve at any one time. The department is well resourced with good access to ICT. Most English classrooms are spacious and well-equipped but they are spread all over the school, which prevents some of the benefits which can be derived from a team of staff working close together.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

51. The school has a good policy for literacy across the curriculum which is pursued in all departments. All teachers have had intensive training in improving pupils' literacy. Senior staff regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning in literacy by classroom observation, scrutinising pupils' work and an annual literacy audit. However, the quality of literacy teaching across the school is variable. In some subjects like design technology, art, geography, history, drama and music, it is good. In other subjects like science, information and communication technology and physical education, literacy skills are underdeveloped. In religious education, insufficient emphasis is placed on helping pupils to complete extended pieces of writing.

### **Modern foreign languages**

The provision is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Almost all pupils study a foreign language and a significant number are able to learn two languages because the department has well qualified and committed staff.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in most lessons, because of effective teaching and positive attitudes amongst learners.
- The secure, positive ethos created in classrooms ensures that pupils feel safe to participate, take risks and make mistakes. Consequently, they learn more effectively.
- In many lessons pupils make valuable gains because of their ability to collaborate well and support each other.
- Teachers speak mostly in English, which slows pupils' progress in speaking and listening.
- The range of strategies teachers use to support lower attaining pupils is limited.
- The development of pupils' speaking skills is constrained by limited repetition and practice in some lessons, so that many pupils lack confidence and pronunciation is often inaccurate.

### **Commentary**

52. In 2003 at the end of Key Stage 3 standards were below average in German and slightly below in French. Standards in lessons by the end of Year 9 are currently in line with the national expectation because of better schemes of work, resources and assessment practices. Most pupils make satisfactory progress and higher attaining pupils generally make good progress. Some lower attaining pupils and some with special educational needs do not achieve their potential because of insufficient support strategies. There is no noticeable difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
53. By the age of 16 standards meet national averages. This represents an improvement since 2003, when standards were below national averages especially the ratio of those attaining

higher grades in GCSE, in both French and German. Improvements in schemes of work and changes in planning to meet examination criteria are having a positive impact on standards, particularly in French. 'Catch-up' sessions after school are also helping pupils to improve their work. Most pupils make satisfactory gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills and many higher attaining pupils make good progress. For example, in Spanish pupils are achieving at higher levels in only their second year of study. Lower attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress in some lessons because work is not well matched to their abilities. Boys' attainment is sometimes lower than girls' as they cope less confidently with the pattern and structure of the new language and its vocabulary.

54. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and in a third of lessons teaching was good. In two lessons it was unsatisfactory because the work asked of pupils was inappropriate for their abilities and interests and so pupils did not make enough gains in learning. In the best lessons, teachers plan a sequence of activities which helps pupils to achieve challenging objectives systematically. Pupils work together effectively to practise new language. Instructions are clear and tasks often modelled so pupils know exactly what to do. Teachers constantly check pupils' understanding and target questions carefully. Relationships with pupils are very good and pupils collaborate well, which supports progress. Sometimes tasks are merely a series of textbook exercises lacking coherence and purpose. Teachers often cater for differing abilities by varying their support to individuals, but do not use other strategies, such as 'writing frames' or prompt sheets which help pupils plan their work more precisely. This diminishes learning, especially amongst lower attaining pupils. In all classes, teachers do not use the target language enough.
55. Leadership is satisfactory and the head of faculty has a clear vision and commitment to improving standards. Her management is good, with particular strengths in using assessment data and tracking pupils' progress and in self-evaluation. She works hard to give a clear lead to the team and knows their strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring is not effective enough currently to enable them to focus on the achievement of challenging but manageable priorities.
56. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Schemes of work and resources are now good. Assessment practice has improved greatly and teachers have a better understanding of criteria and levels. Marking does not help pupils enough to understand what they need to do to improve and the monitoring and evaluation of lessons are not used effectively enough to share good practice, particularly in developing speaking skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have high expectations with realistic levels of challenge.
- Good questioning and structured teaching lead to effective learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and relationships in class are very good.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in most lessons.
- Teaching lacks variety particularly where class sizes are small.
- Assessment for learning is not fully developed.

### **Commentary**

57. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, results were in line with the national average. Since the attainment of pupils on entry in 2003 was below average their achievement was satisfactory. In 2003 GCSE results at A\* - C grades and A\* - G grades were in line with the national average. This represents satisfactory achievement overall for pupils of all abilities.
58. Teaching is good and in a quarter of lessons it is very good. Teachers, for example, get pupils thinking mathematically as they enter the class by good use of starter activities. Very strong subject knowledge helps most teachers plan well to develop pupils' skills and understanding.

Very good relationships ensure the complete engagement of pupils of all abilities in their learning. Many teachers have good questioning strategies which they use to great effect in promoting learning. Typically they lead pupils along a carefully planned learning path. In a Year 8 lesson on approximations pupils responded very positively to searching questions which led to a thorough understanding of the concept and also made links with other areas of mathematics. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement, behaviour and presentation. This leads to pupils receiving a lot of encouragement, which supports learning in most lessons. Year 11 pupils studying circle properties at a high GCSE level, using a geometry programme on the computers in their classroom, developed their understanding of circle geometry at a very good pace. This was due to the excellent support and guidance and very good questioning by the teacher. Careful, well structured lessons are a feature of the good teaching in the department. Pupils' application and enjoyment are generally high. There are some weaknesses in teaching, leading to some under-achievement. This occurs when activities are not well chosen to challenge pupils or when the teaching is too challenging, or explanations are not clear so some pupils become confused. They then lose interest in the work.

59. Teaching assistants are very well managed and deployed so they contribute well to learning. The number of pupils in lower ability classes is made small so these pupils have good support for learning. However, the seating arrangements in some classes restrict effective group work so opportunities are missed for pupils to discuss with others the mathematics they are learning.
60. Learning is good and in a quarter of lessons it is very good. The 'Learning for Understanding' initiative, which helps pupils appreciate how much progress they are making, is effective. It often involves whole class, collaborative, paired and independent work. All pupils are treated with respect and encouraged to do their best with their contributions being well received, even when not correct. Pupils make good progress. Their knowledge, skills and understanding develop at a good pace because teaching is well structured; explanations are clear and teachers show how pupils should set out their work. Pupils respond particularly well to stimulating teaching and very focused questioning by the teacher. In group work they deepen their learning by sparking ideas and questioning each other. This was especially good in a Year 10 class discussing direct proportion. Pupils are conscientious and engage willingly in their work. They take a pride in their work, including its appearance and presentation.
61. Teachers are aware of their pupils' targets and plan work accordingly. Pupils know the level that they have attained. The department uses a range of assessments and is now more able to monitor pupils' progress than previously. However, full implementation of the new assessment practices has not yet been achieved. Marking follows the school system but only very rarely gives constructive comments which would help pupils to improve to meet their targets.
62. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. All staff know and use the clearly defined systems for planning but the quality of lesson planning across the department is inconsistent. The head of department has high aspirations for pupils and firmly and conscientiously leads the efforts of her team to raise standards.
63. There are very good role models for teaching in the department, including a leading mathematics teacher, but their skills are not effectively shared. Monitoring of teaching is systematic but is insufficiently rigorous to ensure the improvements in teaching are consistently adopted by all staff. Staff development is insufficient to bring all teachers up to best practice seen. The range of extra-curricular activities which support examination performance and also raise the aspirations of pupils is good.
64. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Information and communication technology is better used than last time, although this remains an area for development. Systems are now in place to monitor pupils' work regularly from their entry to school and so identify any under-achievement as they move up the school. The department is in a good position to support the school's bid for specialist school status.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. Mathematics across the curriculum is good. Pupils who have entered school in the last two years are confident with number and many prefer to use mental calculation, which they do successfully. They use a range of numeracy skills well when required. For instance in design and technology pupils confidently weigh and measure accurately to a fine level. Pupils also use a variety of graphs and spreadsheets. In science, graphical skills are used well. The mathematics department has identified where mathematics skills might be used in other departments and a successful staff training day to raise numeracy awareness has been held.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Year 11 have improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils enjoy their science lessons and are making satisfactory progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- The leadership and management provided by the head of department, in order to bring about further improvement and change, are unsatisfactory.
- More able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged in all lessons,
- Marking is of variable quality and does not always provide helpful advice for pupils as to how they may improve on their attainment.

### **Commentary**

66. In tests at the end of Year 9 attainment has been steadily rising and is in line with national figures. However, attainment is still below that of pupils with similar prior attainment in other schools. Attainment in GCSE has also been steadily improving in recent years and virtually all pupils who were entered for the examination secured a grade in their recent examinations. The number of pupils achieving the higher grades in this examination has also risen and it is now very close to the national norms for this age group.
67. Inspection findings are that standards for pupils in Year 9 and Year 11 are currently in line with those expected for pupils in similar schools. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well and are making satisfactory progress. However, progress of the most able pupils is less secure as they are presented with insufficient opportunities to extend and enhance their learning. Younger pupils are acquiring a good range of skills and are beginning to understand what makes a good scientific investigation. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are making steady progress with their modular courses and are demonstrating increasing confidence in their investigative work.
68. Teaching is satisfactory within the department and on a number of occasions is good or very good. Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and have a good understanding of their subject. Relationships between the teachers and pupils are good. In the best lessons there is a good pace to the teaching, appropriate challenge and there are high expectations of the pupils. In these lessons pupils are encouraged to broaden their understanding and scientific thinking. For example, a group of Year 8 pupils are investigating yeast in order to determine the best conditions for bread making, whilst another group of pupils has been considering the wider social and environmental issues associated with their work on ecology and other groups have been encouraged to think creatively about the solar system. Teachers use a wide range of questioning to test prior knowledge and understanding and to check on progress. Some teachers are making good use of ICT resources to enrich the learning experiences of the pupils but in several lessons teachers control the direction and pace of learning too much. This results in an insufficient variety of activities to meet the needs of the pupils, particularly those of the most able pupils who could be challenged still further. Pupils' work is regularly marked and in many cases well marked but there are inconsistencies in the quality of guidance given to the

pupils as to what is required in order to improve their grade or level. There is a heavy reliance within the department on the use of worksheets to enable pupils to make notes in their workbooks. In a number of lessons the use of these worksheets limits the opportunities for pupils to undertake extended pieces of writing and to write creatively. Teachers are supported very well by the technical staff who ensure that resources are in place at the start of each lesson.

69. Pupils mainly enjoy their science lessons and demonstrate a positive approach to their work. They undertake practical work carefully and sensibly and they work together well in groups. Most pupils are prepared to join in class discussion and to volunteer answers to questions. The majority are becoming increasingly confident in undertaking a scientific investigation.
70. This is a department that has the potential to raise the standards of the pupils much further through a more consistent approach both to teaching and to monitoring and evaluation. However, there has been a failure by the leadership to establish an appropriate shared vision of high expectation and agreed values for the teaching of science within the department. These are necessary for the further raising of standards at both Year 9 and Year 11. Leadership of the department is, therefore, unsatisfactory. The Key Stage 3 co-ordinator is managing the introduction of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy well and effective use is being made of the local authority consultant to support this development. The management of systems for monitoring and evaluation has not been firmly established by the head of department to ensure consistent practice throughout the department. Insufficient opportunities are taken to share good practice amongst the department. Since the last inspection progress has been made in a number of areas. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are now making progress and standards have improved at GCSE. However, a number of significant issues still remain, including issues relating to marking, providing opportunities for pupils to undertake more extended writing and liaison with contributory primary schools. Very little work was made available initially to enable inspectors to be confident about judging the standards of pupils in science and more had to be sought. Management of the department is, therefore, also unsatisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision is **good and improving**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The introduction of the National Strategy in Years 7 to 9 is raising standards.
- Good teaching and a more structured approach are raising standards in Years 10 and 11.
- Good leadership and management are driving the department forward.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting targets and assessing their own progress.

### **Commentary**

71. Teacher assessments in 2003 at Year 9 indicated results that were above average. These need to be treated cautiously as they were based on the previous less demanding syllabus. GNVQ results in 2003 for Year 11 were below average though an improvement on previous years. The introduction of the National Strategy in Years 7 to 9 provides a wider range of ICT experiences than at the time of the last inspection and the standards of work at Year 9 are now in line with those usually achieved nationally by the majority of pupils. All Years 10 and 11 students have one period of ICT a week following a short GCSE course and about a quarter of the year is taking an applied ICT, double award GCSE course. Standards are now rising in line with national averages due to a more structured approach to these courses. Achievement is satisfactory at Year 9 and Year 11 and both boys and girls make satisfactory progress.
72. Pupils extend their skills in using ICT in a wide range of activities. In Year 9 an integrated project strengthens basic understanding so pupils can apply ICT in a number of applications. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 undertake a number of different ICT activities involved in a small business. Their work is generally well planned, although pupils rarely write detailed criteria for effectively

evaluating the success of their projects. Higher attainers show a good understanding of how to create useable ICT documents, though the lower attainers are less secure in their understanding of the appropriate contents of this work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

73. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers care that pupils succeed and generally use their good knowledge of the subject to plan successful lessons with structured worksheets, but do not always fully involve students in discussions. Explanations of lesson tasks sometimes lack detail so pupils are not sure of exactly what they have to do. As a result, in these lessons they do not develop individual learning skills nor achieve as well as they could. In good lessons, planning is sharp with lesson objectives fully explained so that pupils can undertake the challenging tasks with a degree of independence. Good individual support encourages pupils to manage their own projects. Where lessons are well presented pupils have a very positive attitude and so are productive in extending skills as well as understanding. Where extension activities are provided for higher attainers, they produce good quality work and care is always taken to ensure that all pupils achieve in line with their abilities. The homework set does not always consolidate learning in lessons nor prepare pupils for the next lesson.
74. The leadership of ICT is good and management is very good. There is a clear understanding of what has to be done to develop ICT provision further to raise standards. The department is efficiently managed with all essential procedures in place. The curriculum is suitable to the pupils and now provides good opportunities for raising standards. Pupils' progress is satisfactorily monitored but pupils are not yet fully involved in the setting and assessment of their targets. There are some concerns about co-ordinating work programmes given the current timetable arrangements for Year 10. The school is aware of these and is to address them in the future.
75. Improvement since the previous inspection is good and the department is in a good position to support the school's bid for specialist status. The number of computers per pupil is better than expected nationally and there is an appropriate number of specialist staff to teach the subject. Teaching rooms for specialist ICT provide a good environment for learning and relevant courses ensure all pupils now receive the access to the subject that is their statutory entitlement.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

76. Provision is **good**. The number of computers is better than national expectations and their distribution around the school allows greater access to more departments. All staff have been trained and an audit ensures that future training is properly focused. Pupils are receiving a wide range of ICT experiences in other subjects and teachers are enhancing learning by using the good ICT facilities productively.
77. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science all pupils use effectively ICT to develop their understanding of topics. In physical education the use of digital cameras enhances appreciation of performance analysis and good quality reports are produced using imaging techniques. Some outstanding use of ICT is made in music, including where data projectors allow the teacher to display music as it is played so pupils can recognise the impact of changing notes, rhythms and chords. In history and geography the use of the internet is extending pupils' skills in research and presentation of findings. Drama lessons and pupils' portfolio work are supported well through the use of a wide range of ICT facilities, while modern foreign languages provide pupils with some similar opportunities to enhance their work. In design and technology students experience a range of ICT through computer-assisted drawing and modelling programs, and scanners and digital cameras are extensively used.
78. Pupils are confident in using ICT and their competence develops well as they progress through the school. In Years 10 and 11 pupils select suitable software packages to improve their

coursework. Since the previous inspection there has been good improvement in the wider use of ICT and in the pupils' skills in using it well.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are above the national average.
- Good teaching leads to pupils' good achievement.
- The leadership of the department is very good and there is a very clear vision for future improvement.
- The opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to develop their enquiry skills through fieldwork are underdeveloped.

#### **Commentary**

79. Pupils' standards are average at the end of Year 9 in 2003. In 2003 GCSE examination results were above the national average and pupils did as well in geography as in many of the other subjects they took.
80. In work seen in the inspection pupils' standards in Years 7 to 9 are average and their achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they get good individual support from teachers and classroom assistants. Opportunities for pupils to improve their enquiry skills through fieldwork are presently underdeveloped in Years 7 to 9. In Year 11 the standards of the relatively small number of pupils studying geography are above average and their achievement is good.
81. Teaching and learning are good and an increasingly wide range of teaching methods, including the use of information and communication technology engages pupils' interest. Lessons are well structured and pupils move efficiently from one task to the next so no learning time is wasted. Working relationships between teachers and pupils are good and teachers manage classes well so that most pupils are kept on task. Teaching is carefully tailored to examination requirements. For example, most pupils in Year 11 produce well-structured coursework about the land use in Colne which contributes well to their GCSE examination grades.
82. The new leadership of the department is very good and as a result the department is poised for further improvement. There is a very clear vision for future development and appropriate priorities have been identified. The management of the department is good. Systems are being put into place for the accurate testing and moderating of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9.
83. Targets are set for pupils so that they know how to improve their work and marking is thorough and consistent. Teaching and learning are monitored very effectively.
84. Improvement since the previous inspection is good because development planning is now more detailed and the use of information and communication technology to support learning is increasing. The department has both the capacity and the commitment to improve further.

## History

Provision is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership by the new head of department is improving teaching and curriculum planning.
- GCSE results are too low.
- Good teaching and positive attitudes lead to good achievement for most pupils.
- ICT is used effectively to enhance teaching and learning.

### Commentary

85. Standards in recent years have been below expectations due to a period of instability in departmental leadership. Consequently the curriculum has not provided pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop the historical knowledge and skills needed to attain the highest National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. Standards in Year 11 are still well below average but are improving in all other years as a result of good teaching and curriculum planning.
86. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment in history. By Year 9 the majority of both boys and girls have made sufficient progress to be working close to expectations. This, together with the hard work, enthusiasm and good behaviour of almost all pupils, represents good achievement. The achievement of the small number studying history in Year 11 is no more than satisfactory, given the limited progress made in producing the more complex arguments and critical evaluation of sources required by GCSE examinations. In Year 10, however, the subject is more popular and pupils are achieving well in responding to the varied teaching and learning styles of a new examination course. This includes pupils with special educational needs who made very good progress in a Year 11 lesson on Victorian murderers and others who were well supported in a Year 7 lesson on rival claims to the throne of England.
87. Overall teaching is good and in about a third of lessons is very good. Lessons are well planned and managed, with stimulating materials and a range of challenging activities for pupils of all attainment levels. Teachers know pupils well and give them good individual attention, particularly those with special educational needs, who nevertheless would benefit from more support by learning assistants. Discussion is a feature of most lessons and many pupils are able to express their understanding much better orally than in writing. Literacy is well supported. There are good opportunities for independent enquiry and ICT is used effectively for presentation and research. In many lessons the interactive whiteboard provides a good visual focus. Learning is less good where learning objectives are not clear, with pupils unsure of how the work they do builds on that done previously, or where the pace of lessons is slow. Good assessment procedures keep pupils informed of their progress and of how they can improve, though more use could be made of target-setting. Pupils have good opportunities to evaluate their own learning.
88. Very good leadership and effective management are bringing stability after a period of decline. Curriculum planning is much improved; new schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 meet National Curriculum requirements and provide a solid foundation for GCSE. Teaching is closely and critically monitored and the priority given to developing accommodation and resources is having a positive impact on pupils' motivation and enjoyment of the subject.
89. The subject now has a higher profile, with rising standards, better teaching and a more suitable curriculum. This represents good progress since the previous inspection.

## Religious education

Provision is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Members of the department use a variety of teaching strategies well to improve pupils' performance.
- Units of work and individual lessons are planned thoroughly.
- A strong, supportive team ethos exists within the department.
- Results for the short course GCSE examination in 2003 were well below the national average.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures are under-developed and not impacting on progress.

### Commentary

90. Standards and achievement are satisfactory. The standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with typical national expectations in Years 9 and 11. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls or ethnic groups. Boys and girls, including pupils with special educational needs, do as well as expected and their achievement is sound overall.
91. In the short course GCSE examination, results have fluctuated over the past two years. In 2002 they were above the national average, but in 2003 results fell to well below average. Boys and girls have performed in a similar manner. However, the level of performance of current pupils who are following the short course indicates that they are generally working above the low standard reflected in last year's results.
92. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge and a variety of teaching strategies to deepen pupils' understanding of the themes studied. Teachers plan their lessons very carefully and provide pupils with the opportunity to reflect upon and offer their own viewpoints on the meaning of important aspects of the religions studied. In most lessons, relationships are positive and pupils relate well to each other and to teachers. Sometimes, insufficient attention is given to ensuring that pupils have learned properly before the teacher moves on to the next activity. Although teachers are aware of the shortcomings in pupils' ability to provide detailed written answers to questions, they do not always provide adequate guidance on how extended pieces of writing might be structured in order to fully reflect pupils' level of understanding of an issue.
93. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The common commitment to examining new ways of developing pupils' learning, the thorough planning of lessons and the strong team ethos all reflect a shared sense of wanting constantly to improve pupil achievement. Teachers spend an enormous amount of time assessing pupils' work and offering encouragement in their comments: there is less consistency in the amount of advice that is provided for pupils on how they might improve their grasp of the subject. The department lacks a comprehensive assessment policy and processes for monitoring and evaluating its effectiveness are under-developed and do not contribute significantly to pupils' learning.
94. Progress in the issues identified for the subject in the last inspection has been good, apart from the ineffective use of ICT to develop pupils' learning.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

Provision is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership and management provide the faculty with a clear sense of direction and a drive for improvement.
- Consistent and effective practices are in place for assessment and monitoring.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 enables all pupils to achieve well in all subjects and courses.
- Excellent facilities provide a wide range of resources and support all aspects of the curriculum.
- Boys' results in 2003 GCSE examination are below average.

#### Commentary

95. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is above average representing very good achievement because standards on entry to the school are below average. Results in the 2003 GCSE examination were average in terms of A\* - C grades and above average in terms of A\* - B for girls. Grades A\* - C were below average for boys. Attainment in the current Years 10 and 11 is above average representing good achievement.
96. Pupils in Year 9 achieve well in lessons. The courses in food, textiles, graphics, electronics and resistant materials are modular and provide pupils with a range of practical activities that develop their skills well using a variety of materials and tools. These courses are reviewed regularly and updated to take account of new developments and to improve its relevance to, and enjoyment for, the pupils in Key Stage 4. There is access to a wide range of well co-ordinated courses for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. The standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are fully included in the lessons and given individual support.
97. Teaching and learning are good. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and understand what pupils need to do to improve their learning. Pupils learn well because the work is well matched to their ability and practical work is well resourced and planned. Pupils work hard and contribute willingly to discussions. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are reminded of the literacy and numeracy skills needed for weighing and measuring. Homework is set and marked on a regular basis and written or spoken comments by teachers show pupils how to improve their standards and achieve better results. The structure and delivery of modules are similar in all the faculty subjects. Simple skill-based activities are completed before pupils start design and make projects. In Years 10 and 11 lessons are well paced and have clear learning outcomes. Pupils work confidently with ICT and teachers make outstanding use of ICT to support teaching. The high standards of work expected by staff from pupils are shown in portfolio work, displays in teaching rooms, on boards and in cabinets around the faculty corridors.
98. Assessment of pupils' attainment is very good. Pupils review their work regularly and teachers use pupils' profile scores well to identify underachievement in subjects. Individual interviews with every pupil at the end of each module in Years 7 to 9 ensure new targets for achievement are agreed for the following module. Pupils are identified in Year 9 if they are underachieving and action targets set. Boys are a focus for this initiative. Homework and recording projects fully are issues for development.
99. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Priorities for development are carefully agreed and schemes of work are planned thoroughly. Subject audits and the monitoring of performance data to raise standards are very good. Staff in the faculty work hard and support well the work of the head of faculty. Extra time is spent during lunchtime and after school by all the staff to support and help pupils carry out work on projects, or work on

computers for their GCSE portfolio work. The faculty has excellent teaching rooms and resources.

100. Links with the education business partnership, Nelson and Colne College and participation in the Regional Young Chef of the Year competition provide pupils with opportunities to study a comprehensive range of activities in this subject.

101. The faculty has made good improvements since the last inspection. Standards have risen, as has the quality of teaching and provision for ICT is now excellent.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision is **excellent**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent.
- The achievement of students of all abilities is very good.
- Leadership and management are excellent.
- The standard of artwork and results at GCSE are well above average.
- Art rooms are visually stimulating and the display of work around school has a very positive impact on the environment.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped in the subject.

102. Standards at the start of Year 7 are in line with national expectations. Year 9 teacher assessment results are in line with national averages for both boys and girls. However, work seen shows standards to be well above national expectations.

103. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above the national average and this is reflected in GCSE results, particularly in the percentage of students obtaining the highest grades. Girls outperform boys at GCSE with the difference in performance greater than experienced nationally. However, boys do achieve to their maximum potential and obtain their target grades. Students perform much better at art than they do in other subjects.

104. Finished artwork shows that students can use the basic elements of art very effectively. In particular, work shows a strong use of colour and tone with above average standards of drawing. Very innovative pieces of high quality work are created by the combination of two and three-dimensional media. Students gain inspiration and integrate new techniques into their own work from close study of the lives and work of a wide range of famous artists.

105. Teaching is very good with some excellent teaching also seen. The objectives and skills to be acquired in each lesson are made clear to all students by expert whole class demonstration supported by large visual aids. All students are then supported individually and as a result work with pace and purpose within carefully structured lessons. However, there is insufficient variety in the use of plenary sessions. Homework is effectively used for research, collection of resources and to reinforce what has been covered in lessons.

106. The art rooms provide a rich, stimulating and creative environment where both teacher and students are constantly referring to displays of work and other written and visual information relevant to current lessons. Additional resources and alternative approaches are used effectively for students with special education needs, including those identified as being more able and talented. As a result, the achievement of students of all abilities is very good and on occasions excellent.

107. Assessment linked to National Curriculum levels is very thorough and students are able to describe how they can improve. Sketchbooks are used very well to develop personal ideas. Students are currently not benefiting sufficiently from information and communication technology either as a tool for art making or for research.
108. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The high quality of lessons is clearly attributable to the standard of leadership and management. The staff in the department are extremely hardworking and conscientious with efforts clearly focused on maximum student achievement in all lessons.
109. Schemes of work are meticulously produced and ensure a wide range of topics and activities to be studied, including a significant contribution to the development of literacy skill. Development plans covering both subject specific and whole school priorities are regularly reviewed. The impressive range of work displayed throughout school has a very positive effect on the interior environment of the school.
110. Improvement since last inspection has been very good.
- Accommodation and resources are now good.
  - Students now gain much inspiration from a detailed study of famous artists.
  - Development plans are now very detailed.
  - However, information and communication technology is still not used enough.

## **Music**

Provision is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- The timetable provision for music in Years 7 and 8 is inadequate and this limits achievement.
- Accommodation and resources are inadequate to support pupils' learning in Years 7 to 9.

### **Commentary**

111. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is below average. This represents satisfactory achievement because standards on entry to the school are below average. Results in the 2003 GCSE examination were average in terms of A\* - C grades and above average in terms of A\* and A grades. Attainment in the current Years 10 and 11 is above average representing good achievement.
112. Pupils in Year 9 have limited performing skills and are insecure in their knowledge of music terminology. They recognise simple features of music heard and create short pieces in groups using acoustic instruments, keyboards and ICT. Pupils achieve well in lessons but their progress from Years 7 to 9 is only satisfactory because in Years 7 and 8 they have a weekly lesson for only half of the year. In Years 10 and 11, pupils develop their own compositional styles and make very good use of computer software to help them. Their work shows confidence and individuality and, through well-structured support and feedback from the teacher, they skilfully refine and evaluate what they have done.
113. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11. Outstanding use is made of ICT to support teaching. Lessons always start well because short, imaginative activities engage pupils' interest. Pupils learn to work collaboratively, and well-explained rules and short timescales for practical work mean that they apply themselves sensibly and make good progress. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. More able pupils are not always sufficiently stretched. Pupils' learning in Years 7 to 9 is impeded by the confined space in which they have to work and the poor quality of the resources available to them.

114. Leadership and management are very good and the department works well within the expressive arts faculty. There are well-planned priorities for development and schemes of work are being planned thoroughly. Instrumental tuition receives full financial support, although currently the number of pupils learning is below the national average. Freelance tutors and teachers have insufficient opportunities to undertake training to develop their practice. Musical productions make a positive contribution to the ethos of the school and other extra-curricular activities have been refocused to ensure that pupils gain the maximum benefit. The department is available to pupils who wish to organise their own music performance groups and GCSE pupils make good use of the resources at lunchtimes and after school to develop their coursework. The lack of facilities restricts the number of pupils who can benefit from this provision.
115. The department has made satisfactory improvements since the time of the previous inspection. Standards have risen, as has the quality of teaching. However, the standards that can be achieved are still being severely hampered by the shortage of curriculum time. The accommodation remains inadequate and instrumental resources for use in the classroom are poor.

## **Drama**

Provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are above the national average and among the best in the school.
- Teaching of drama is very good so that pupils achieve very well.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- Drama work includes all pupils and offers them equal opportunities to achieve well.
- Drama is a significant contributor to the personal development of pupils.
- There is considerable pressure on the accommodation for drama.

### **Commentary**

116. Standards are above average and pupils achieve very well throughout all years because of very good teaching across all the years. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress and in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress. The drama results at GCSE were among the best in the school at the last inspection and, although for the first time there were no A\* grades in 2003, they remain so.
117. Supported by a very well devised and resourced scheme of work in Years 7 to 9 the pupils acquire a wide range of theatre skills and techniques. This enables them to grow in confidence, which is seen in the very positive attitudes pupils show towards the subject across the school. Pupils are willing to work in challenging ways to devise new dramas and to perform the written works of others. The pupils are very supportive of each others' work and, because they have been given the technical language to do so, evaluate their own work clearly and critically and assess constructively the work of their colleagues.
118. When following the popular GCSE course the pupils build well on the knowledge, skills and understanding they acquired in the first three years of learning about and using drama. The work seen and the above average results in examinations are clear evidence of this secure foundation. The course is chosen carefully to suit the attainment of the pupils and they are very well prepared for both the practical and theoretical aspects of the examinations. Portfolio work based on productions seen is of a high quality and examples are used well from the work of previous students to model the expected outcomes in which ICT is used extensively and successfully. Pupils perform confidently in improvisation work. They tackle emotionally charged subjects maturely and movingly. They assess their work thoroughly and maintain a very high level of involvement and effort.

119. Most of the teaching is the responsibility of the head of the faculty in which drama is one of the performing arts. This teaching is particularly strong and is at times excellent, particularly when the teacher is working in role.
120. Drama was judged to be an 'enriching presence in the school' in the last inspection and this remains true. It is very well led and is a model of inclusive approaches. Irrespective of gender, ethnic background or academic ability all pupils have the opportunity to be equally involved in drama work and performances. Impressively, this includes pupils from a special school which lacks the facilities found in Park High for examination level work.
121. Accommodation pressures caused by the lack of a school hall restrict some activities but do not significantly affect standards. Drama is also undertaken in English lessons in addition to the specialist provision. This means there is a very good coverage of the work and this, with the regular high quality public performances produced annually, all adds considerably to the general social, emotional and personal development of pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupil-teacher relationships are excellent and, as a result, pupils are keen to work hard in lessons.
- The planning of lessons is of a consistently high standard and enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress, despite inadequate accommodation.
- GCSE results are well above the national average because the quality of teaching is very good.
- There is a high level of support for extra-curricular activities from pupils of all abilities.

### **Commentary**

122. Pupils join the school with standards that are below average. By the end of Year 11 pupils make good progress. Standards seen at the end of Years 9 and 11 are in line with the national average. Pupils in the GCSE groups make very good progress.
123. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is good. In an excellent Year 9 rugby lesson, the planning ensured a consistent focus on higher achievement for pupils of all abilities. Questions and teaching points were closely linked to the level descriptors in the National Curriculum and this questioning encouraged equally good responses from pupils of different abilities. The complex concept of strategy was introduced as a problem-solving task and this inspired pupils to create their own, effective defensive techniques in team play.
124. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is very good. A good range of teaching methods reinforces learning and pupils are also encouraged to develop their understanding of concepts through working independently on holiday and homework tasks. In a Year 11 physical education lesson for pupils not following the examination course, pupils readily assumed different team roles when working in small teams to improve their decision-making skills. The more able players helped the others to succeed through team talks and communicating clearly when under pressure in the game. Consistently high commitment and co-operation throughout the lesson led to all pupils making very good progress. The quality of the work files of the examination groups was very good. A good range of teaching methods reinforces learning and pupils are encouraged to develop their understanding of concepts through working independently on holiday and homework tasks. Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour help to create a productive learning environment.
125. The quality of leadership and management is very good. Leadership is firmly committed to ensuring high standards and achievement, reflected in the development plan. The curriculum offers all pupils a wide range of learning opportunities despite inadequate accommodation. All

staff provide good role models for pupils and the excellent pupil-teacher relationships are promoted further through the flourishing programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. There is a strong commitment to staff development and several student placements are supported throughout the year. Self-evaluation is well established and staff regularly share ideas and good practice.

126. Indoor accommodation is inadequate and there is no dedicated learning space for the examination groups. Outdoor accommodation is in urgent need of refurbishment and upgrading.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business education**

Provision in business education is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Enthusiastic teaching motivates pupils to do well.
- The business course provides good opportunities for pupils to develop a better understanding of their local community.
- Self review is not used systematically to further improve teaching.
- Pupils are well prepared to meet examination requirements.
- Insufficient attention is devoted to developing key business skills.
- Not all lessons are sufficiently challenging.

#### **Commentary**

127. Business studies GCSE is a popular option for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and examination results are in line with national expectations. However, pupils in Year 11 showed a poor understanding of basic financial concepts so that achievement is satisfactory overall.

128. Examination success in this subject is largely attributable to enthusiastic teaching. Teachers show good subject knowledge, the ability to explain business concepts clearly and have excellent relationships with their pupils, who value the insights given into how the local and national economies work. In some lessons expectations are not high enough and pupils are given too little responsibility for their own learning. Course work is used to enable pupils to draw together their understanding of different aspects of business, but a greater range of topics could be investigated. Students in Year 10 are encouraged to become more confident in their oral work but less emphasis is placed on the development of the wider range of skills required for success in business. Overall both teaching and learning are satisfactory.

129. Good accommodation enables pupils to discuss and consider business concepts and provides easy access to ICT facilities which are well integrated into both teaching and learning. Teaching rooms are well decorated with examples of pupils' work. The head of business provides good leadership, including helping develop very good teaching skills in less experienced colleagues. Management, however, is unsatisfactory. Longer term planning is superficial and little evidence was provided of the use of self-review to refine and develop more effective teaching strategies. Assessment data is not used to develop learning plans. Schemes of work are directed to ensuring that the course content is covered but insufficient attention is given to helping pupils develop the wider range of skills required for improved attainment in business.

### **Health and social care**

Two health and social care lessons were observed and samples of student work were scrutinised.

130. This new vocational course is popular with students and enables those from the whole range of ability to achieve well. The course provides opportunities for lower ability students to attain good

examination grades, improving their self-confidence and resulting in very high levels of achievement. Teaching and learning are both very good.

131. The course is taught by an experienced teacher with an excellent understanding of the social and learning needs of the students. She is authoritative yet shows great sensitivity in meeting the learning needs of a group of students with widely divergent needs. High standards are set and all students respond keenly. They are supportive of each other and show good skills in working independently. Many have decided on careers in health and social care and all find that the course gives them a far better understanding of the challenges facing health service professionals.
132. These vocational courses, together with those that the inspection was only able to sample too lightly for a full report, add considerably to the personal development of pupils. One lesson seen in the community service and leisure provision was of the highest quality and involved off-site opportunities for pupils to experience rock climbing. It fully met its intended aim of developing confidence and skills in a new area for the pupils and generated considerable enthusiasm in them and raised their self-esteem well.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

An extensive programme of personal, social and health education is taught weekly but the constraints of the timetable for the inspection prevented this area from being inspected. The focus of the inspection was on citizenship.

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The ethos of the school strongly supports the aims of the citizenship curriculum.
- The programme of study delivered through personal development lessons is well matched to the National Curriculum.
- Explicit links are not made consistently between citizenship and other curriculum subjects.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to participate and take responsible action in many aspects of school life and the wider community.

#### **Commentary**

133. Standards seen at the end of Year 9 are above average and evidence indicates that these pupils make good progress. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements on standards or achievement for the end of Year 11.
134. Through their personal development lessons, pupils in Year 9 acquire a good understanding of global and ethical issues and their skills of enquiry and communication are well developed through activities such as group discussion, role play and group presentations. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in activities that support the curriculum. These include peer mentoring, the school council and 'off timetable' days that cover aspects such as health, drugs and alcohol. The local Member of Parliament visited the school to speak to Years 10 and 11 and this stimulated much discussion about issues such as election processes and the war in Iraq. The school celebrates pupils' achievements through many displays around the building and a well-publicised system of rewards.
135. The quality of teaching and learning across all age groups is satisfactory. In the teaching of other subjects there is evidence of links made with the citizenship curriculum, but these are not always made explicit. Consequently the three areas of the National Curriculum are not consistently incorporated through this teaching. In a good Year 9 art lesson the teacher drew out certain environmental and philosophical issues from the background of a chosen artist,

making specific reference to the links with citizenship. Similarly, in a Year 11 design and technology lesson pupils considered the impact of Asian food on their own diet and the wider issues of healthy eating for citizens of different countries.

136. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory and has several good features. Links with outside agencies serve to give strong support to the teaching of citizenship and through these pupils have become actively involved with bodies such as the Youth Council. The programme of study for all years is well planned and closely matches the content and structure of the National Curriculum. However, links are not made consistently with other subjects to ensure that all departments incorporate citizenship into their schemes of work.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*