

INSPECTION REPORT

FREDERICK GOUGH SCHOOL

Scunthorpe

LEA area: North Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 118097

Headteacher: Mr G Turner

Lead inspector: Alan Haigh

Dates of inspection: 9th – 13th February 2004

Inspection number: 258634

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: | 1203 |
| School address: | Grange Lane South Bottesford Scunthorpe |
| Postcode: | DN16 3NG |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Mike Galey |
| Date of previous inspection: | 30 th March 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Frederick Gough School is a larger than average sized 11–16 mixed comprehensive school. It is a specialist language college with strong international links. There are 1203 pupils and the balance of boys and girls is roughly equal. About 11 per cent of all pupils are eligible for free school meals, an average proportion. The socio-economic circumstances of the area the school serves are average. There are no pupils whose mother tongue is not English and the overwhelming proportion of pupils are from white United Kingdom heritage families. The proportions of pupils identified as having special educational needs and those with a statement of special educational needs are above average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is a little below average, especially in terms of their literacy skills. There is a smaller than average proportion of higher attaining pupils. About three-quarters of all pupils continue in full-time education after leaving the school. The school has received a range of awards in the past few years. These include the Healthy School's Award in 2001, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Sportsmark and the International Schools Award in 2002, and the European Language Award and Artsmark in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|
| 2630 | Alan Haigh | Lead inspector | |
| 13448 | Dawn Lloyd | Lay inspector | |
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| 3758 | Anthony Barringer | Team inspector | English |
| 2491 | Douglas Beaumont | Team inspector | Design and technology |
| 19026 | Brian Downes | Team inspector | Geography, special educational needs |
| 2628 | Jim Edwards | Team inspector | Citizenship, physical education |
| 10448 | Michael Elson | Team inspector | Religious education |
| 8873 | Charlotte Evers | Team inspector | History |
| 28101 | Andrew Lagden | Team inspector | Business studies, vocational education |
| 20767 | Jerry Royle | Team inspector | Information and communication technology, music |
| 24887 | Yvonne Salmons | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages |
| 3937 | John Seed | Team inspector | Science |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is **good, effective** and improving; much of its work is very good and some is excellent. There are some areas that need urgent attention. The school provides good value for money. Standards are generally average and achievements are good in all years. Pupils progress well in the main. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils like their school, feel trusted, try hard and are expected to do so. Overall leadership by the headteacher is very good and management and governance are good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's 2003 GCSE results, based on pupils' prior attainment, were well above average and their achievements in history and physical education were very good.
- Pupils' results in the 2003 National Curriculum test in English were well below average and in science were below average; however, the achievements of 14 year olds in those subjects are now good and standards are now average.
- Standards are below average in information and communication technology (ICT) and pupils achieve too little by the age of 14.
- The provision for religious education is poor and standards are well below average.
- The good teaching is enhanced well by the very good use of teaching assistants, enabling pupils with special educational needs to make clear progress.
- Leadership is very good and the headteacher's excellence of vision and drive, with the support of a very strong governing body and committed senior colleagues, is enabling the school to improve and raise standards.
- The school's provision beyond the classroom, particularly its outstanding international dimension and wide modern foreign languages provision, is excellent and the huge variety of activities involves many pupils.
- There are excellent links with other schools and colleges.
- All pupils are fully involved in school. Pupils learn well in a secure and caring environment. Academic tutorials are very successful but careers and options guidance is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness are unsatisfactory; a significant minority lack confidence and have too low self-esteem.

The school is improving and is more effective than at the last inspection (March 1998). Very good leadership and strong governance and good management have ensured continuing progress. Standards are rising more quickly than nationally at age 16 but progress at age 14 has been too slow in English and science although good in other subjects. Most of the key issues raised in the last report have been addressed well but ICT has not improved sufficiently and the statutory requirements for religious education are still not met. Monitoring did improve and was good but following a deputy head's departure 18 months ago it has now slipped and is satisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|--|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| | B | 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.

Pupils' **achievements** are **good** by the age of 14 and likewise by the age of 16. The standards of work are average overall. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds show that pupils' standards were average in mathematics, below average in science and well below average in

English when compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools (measured by pupils' prior attainment), mathematics results were average and English and science results were well below. The school's targets were not met and the improvement trend is slower than the national one. The GCSE results in 2003 were in line with the national average and much better than those of similar schools. There is a faster upward trend than nationally but the school's targets were not quite met. The school's value added score for improvement from 14 to 16 was a little above the national average. Boys have done relatively better than girls in the recent GCSE examinations but there is no clear pattern. Standards observed are average for 14 and 16 year olds and many achieve well and nearly all achieve at least satisfactorily. They are below average in ICT at 14 and well below in religious education for all. Results in business Spanish and Russian are very good and extra-curricular music is of a very high standard. The achievements of pupils with special educational needs are in line with those of other pupils. The gifted and talented pupils' achievements are also good. Pupils' **personal development** and their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** are **good**. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good and attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good quality of education**. Overall, the **teaching is good** at all stages and is a little better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well and establish a good working atmosphere in most lessons, enabling good learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and expect a lot from the pupils. Pupils work hard and get on very well with fellow pupils and their teachers. The good curriculum has some excellent aspects, notably the school's international dimension and language provision. Care and support for all pupils are very good but careers education and options guidance are unsatisfactory. There are excellent links with schools and colleges and parental and community links are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **very good leadership** supported by competent and hard-working senior colleagues. The senior team and other staff provide **good management** and quality assurance is satisfactory. A strong, committed and well-led governing body provides very good support for the school and **governance is good** but the school does not comply with the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship. The school's aims and ethos are very visible in its work. The school has a clear agenda for continued improvement. There is a very good team spirit – all staff and pupils are valued and respected.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with most of what the school offers. Pupils are proud of their school and most like attending. Parents feel that teachers expect their children to work hard and that the induction arrangements work well. Pupils agree with this. Parents and pupils say the school is run well and agree that teaching is good but expressed some concerns about behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests in English and science.
- Raise standards in ICT and improve the management of the subject.
- Improve provision for and standards in religious education.
- Increase pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness and ensure that all pupils attend a daily act of collective worship.
- Improve careers education and options guidance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' **achievements** are good overall by the ages of 14 and 16. **Standards** of work are average overall and, in Years 7 to 9, are now much better in English and science than the recent National Curriculum tests have shown. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievements or standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds in 2003 were well below average in English and below average in science but standards in both these subjects are now average for the current 14 year olds. Overall standards are average at this age.
- Pupils' achievements at age 14 are good in all subjects except religious education where they are poor, ICT where they are unsatisfactory and physical education where they are satisfactory.
- The 2003 GCSE results were well above the national average, based on pupils' prior attainment, and pupils achieved particularly well in history and physical education.
- Pupils' achievements at 16 now are good overall and particularly good in modern foreign languages.
- The standards of 16 year olds are below average in English and well below average in religious education.

Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 30.2 (31.2) | 33.4 (33.3) |
| Mathematics | 35.9 (34.1) | 35.4 (34.7) |
| Science | 32.8 (33.0) | 33.6 (33.3) |

There were 238 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- 1 Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds were average in mathematics, below average in science and well below average in English. They show that pupils achieved satisfactorily in mathematics but unsatisfactorily in English and science. The school's targets were almost met in mathematics but not met in English and science by a long way. The small upward trend is below the national one and progress was poorer than in most schools in these subjects in Years 7 to 9. The 2003 results, compared with national data, were average for mathematics, below average for science and well below average for English. There is no pattern in the relative performances of boys and girls but in 2003 boys' results were relatively better than girls'.
- 2 Pupils' achievements in Years 7 to 9 are good overall and better than would be expected when their prior attainment is considered in all subjects except religious education where they are poor, ICT where they are unsatisfactory and physical education where they are satisfactory. The standard of pupils' work is average overall although it is below average in ICT and physical education and well below average in religious education. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and make good progress in response to clear targets and effective specialist teaching and particularly good support. The gifted and talented pupils achieve well.

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 | 42 (41) | 52 (50) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades | 92 (91) | 91 (91) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades | 96 (97) | 96 (96) |
| Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects) | 32.9 (32.6) | 34.7 (34.7) |

There were 209 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- 3 The school does better at GCSE than it does in the Year 9 national tests. The GCSE results in 2003 were in line with the national average and similar to schools with the same proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. They were much better than those of similar schools based on pupils' prior attainment. The upward trend, based on pupils' average points scores, was faster than the national one for the past three years. The 2003 results were close to the school's targets and value-added data indicates that pupils' progress in Years 10 and 11 was a little above the national average. Taking a three-year average, boys have achieved relatively better than girls in GCSE examinations although there is no clear pattern.
- 4 Standards observed are average for 16 year olds overall and many achieve well; nearly all achieve at least satisfactorily. Standards are in line with those in most schools in all subjects except English, where they are a little below average, and religious education where they are well below average. Achievement at this stage is good overall and is better than would be expected in all subjects except English, mathematics, geography, ICT and citizenship, where it is satisfactory, and religious education where it is poor. Pupils achieve very well in business Spanish and their achievements in Russian are excellent.
- 5 The good achievements of pupils with special educational needs are in line with those of other pupils, a consequence of careful teaching and the skilful deployment and effective work of teaching assistants. The gifted and talented pupils also achieve well especially in design and technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and physical education.
- 6 Pupils' language and literacy skills are average overall. They listen attentively in the main and their reading is better than average. Written work is generally presented carefully and is of the expected standard. Oral work is satisfactory. Pupils' competence in mathematics is average. Data handling is a good feature of many pupils' work in geography, and in science pupils use formulae accurately. In design and technology, pupils are confident when measuring, weighing and estimating. Although there has been an improvement in pupils' competence in ICT since the last inspection, there are still some subjects where ICT is not being fully used to support learning. Pupils' limited skills are applied well in some subjects, particularly in mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. Pupils' ICT competence is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupil's attitudes to learning, their behaviour and punctuality are **good** overall. Attendance remains **satisfactory**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils have very good, sometimes excellent, attitudes to learning.
- Pupils show high levels of commitment to activities outside lessons.
- Very good relationships amongst pupils, and between pupils and teachers, contribute to effective learning.

- Occasionally, poor response and immature behaviour lead to unsatisfactory learning.
- Pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 7 Most pupils are enthusiastic learners, who are well motivated and keen to achieve good standards of work. When teachers have high expectations, pupils respond well by trying hard and doing their best to improve. In lessons, they listen attentively, maintain their concentration well and work diligently. Their behaviour and attitudes to work are often good and sometimes excellent.
- 8 Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are underlined by their involvement in a very wide range of activities outside lessons, many of which demand high levels of personal commitment. Attendance at homework clubs and booster classes show pupils' determination to improve their knowledge and understanding. Large numbers of pupils take advantage of extensive opportunities to develop skills in music, drama and sport, which serve to widen and enrich their educational experiences. Pupils are enthusiastically involved in such diverse activities as the Crossing Continents project, in which they are exploring similarities and differences between their own lives and views and those of their counterparts in Egypt and Nigeria. They are also involved in peer mentoring, where they learn how to support fellow pupils, and in the highly successful School Council, which allows pupils to play an active part in the running of the school.
- 9 Because the school celebrates achievement of all kinds, not least through the special merit assemblies that attract large numbers of parents, pupils are inspired to work hard and behave well. The eagerness with which most pupils participate in something additional to their normal lessons is indicative of their growing awareness and appreciation of the wider educational opportunities that the school provides, and of their developing maturity.
- 10 The very good relationships that exist amongst pupils themselves and between pupils and their teachers and other adult helpers contribute strongly to the positive learning that takes place. Teachers provide very good role models, treating pupils with courtesy and respect, so that pupils, in their turn, learn to show respect for adults and for one another. In lessons, pupils work productively because they co-operate well, while around the school building, pupils show care and consideration for others.
- 11 A small number of pupils, who lack self-discipline and have little interest in the consequences of their actions, sometimes limit the progress of the whole group by their poor attitudes and disruptive behaviour in lessons. The school has an effective discipline policy which is consistently applied by staff, so that appropriate action is taken to deal with pupils who misbehave. Certain offences automatically trigger a temporary exclusion from school, followed by careful procedures to supervise and support pupils when they return. The overall figures for fixed term exclusions are inflated because a few pupils have offended repeatedly. Numbers of pupils permanently excluded are low. Attendance is satisfactory but unauthorised absence is a little above average. The figures distorted by the poor attendance record of a small number of pupils, many of whom receive extensive support from the school's pastoral system.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 1161 | 172 | 3 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 22 | 0 | 0 |

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

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.2 | School data | 1.8 |
| 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.

- 12 Provision for pupils' personal development is good. The school promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development well. Teachers treat pupils with consideration and help them to understand other people's feelings, values and beliefs. The school helps pupils to develop their understanding of, and ability to apply, the principles that distinguish right from wrong.
- 13 The pupils' social development is good. The School Council works well and engenders in pupils a sense that they have a role to fulfil within the school and, through the school, in the wider community. Pupils report that they feel trusted and that the school values their views. A very high proportion enjoy school.
- 14 The school promotes pupils' cultural awareness well. Opportunities for pupils to develop a global perspective on the world through engagement with different languages and cultures are outstanding. English, and design and technology, provide further opportunities for cultural development, as do whole-school activities such as theatre productions.

- 15 Provision for pupils' spiritual development, identified as a weakness in the last two inspection reports, remains unsatisfactory. Modern foreign languages, history, geography and music contribute well to pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. In most lessons, however, teachers do not do enough to help pupils acquire reflective skills and develop a deeper awareness of life.
- 16 The school does not comply with the statutory requirements for collective worship in assemblies or in tutorial time. Without a school policy, these aspects of pupils' personal development are unplanned and easily overlooked. Similarly, without planning, pupils who have little direct personal experience risk growing up insufficiently prepared for the ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for all its pupils. This is a reflection of hard-working staff (teaching and non-teaching) working well together in providing good lessons and ensuring good learning takes place in a positive and caring environment where all are equally valued. The good curriculum is enhanced by very good opportunities for enrichment, and an excellent participation rate in a wide range of out-of-school activities together with an outstanding international dimension. Care and welfare arrangements are very good and the academic tutorials are a special strength but option guidance and careers education are unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and of learning is good and the assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are a little better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection.
- There is good or better teaching in nearly all subjects and that in history is very good. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory.
- Teaching assistants work very well with teachers and make a very strong contribution to ensuring lessons are successful.
- Interesting approaches and innovative methods are particularly successful in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 163 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 9 (6%) | 45 (28%) | 67 (41%) | 36 (22%) | 6 (4%) | 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.

- 17 Three quarters of the lessons observed were good or better and one third were very good or excellent. Fewer than four per cent were unsatisfactory and none were poor. There is a higher proportion of good or better teaching than in 1998 and a reduction in the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching overall is good in all subjects except drama and history where it is very good and ICT where it is satisfactory. There is much very good teaching also in design and technology and in mathematics.
- 18 Teachers have benefited from recent national initiatives and, in the more successful lessons, adopt up-to-date approaches. Lessons are soundly planned and methodology is good overall

and very good in Years 7 to 9. Although the teaching of ICT is not strong, many teachers make excellent use of interactive whiteboards and involve pupils well in their use also. All teachers have successfully participated in the national training for using ICT in their work but a significant minority still make insufficient use of it.

- 19 Teachers have strong subject knowledge and expect much from their pupils. The modern foreign language staff have excellent knowledge of their subjects. Music staff use their practical skills well. Occasionally work is not demanding enough across several subjects but the most able pupils are often given challenging work, notably in design and technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. The vast majority of teachers establish a very positive working environment in lessons, have good discipline and ensure in a caring way that pupils learn. All pupils are equally involved and equality of opportunity is promoted well.
- 20 Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and very hard working. They work very well with teachers and make a very strong contribution to ensuring lessons are successful. They are closely involved in planning and are skilled practitioners. Teachers and support staff have a good knowledge of pupils' special educational needs and use this knowledge well to ensure work meets pupils' needs closely.
- 21 Rarely do teachers need to raise their voices and pupils have much respect for their teachers. Time and resources are used well in lessons; lessons usually start promptly and occupy the full 60 minutes. Homework supports learning well and pupils mostly treat this aspect of their learning seriously. The amounts of homework are appropriate in the main. Pupils work hard in lessons, acquiring a good knowledge base and learning a wide range of skills.
- 22 The small number of unsatisfactory lessons arose because of inadequate class control, often by inexperienced or temporary teachers, but also because of unimaginative, poorly planned tasks that did not engage the pupils.
- 23 Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Where the specialist teachers teach pupils with special educational needs, teaching and learning are very good. Individual education plans are satisfactory. They contain suitably specific targets but the link between targets and strategies for teachers to achieve them is not always clear enough. The targets on individual education plans are often insufficiently subject specific.

Assessment

- 24 The quality of assessment is satisfactory overall. The school systematically collates assessment data, including value added indicators, as the pupils move through the school. This is used to set school targets and is available to heads of department to set subject and individual targets. The use of data within subject departments lacks consistency, and in a few subjects pupils have only limited understanding of their targets or what they need to do to improve their National Curriculum level or GCSE grade. However, there is good practice in mathematics, history and with pupils who have special educational needs.
- 25 The system of academic tutorials for all pupils is good and carried out conscientiously by almost all staff. Targets for improvement are set and reviewed regularly, but need to be more closely linked to specific subject targets, especially in Years 7 to 9. Art teachers assess the work of 14 year olds too harshly. Most teachers use assessment data well in their planning and the thoroughness and constructiveness of their assessments are good.
- 26 In most subjects marking is thorough and constructive, reflecting the school's marking policy. However, the policy lacks clear links with National Curriculum or GCSE grade criteria, and teachers' comments sometimes do not contain sufficient subject-specific guidance on how to improve. These criticisms also apply to the annual reports to parents. Virtually all pupils, however, feel that their work is assessed helpfully and that assessments indicate how they can

improve. There are very good assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs that help to raise standards.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is good, but statutory requirements for religious education are not met. A very extensive range of high quality extra-curricular opportunities is offered. Pupils are taught by well-qualified staff in good accommodation and resources are used well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and balanced.
- Extra-curricular provision in modern foreign languages is excellent and very good in physical education, music and drama.
- Provision for personal, social, and health education is good.
- Statutory requirements in religious education are not met and provision is poor.

Commentary

- 27 In Years 7 to 9, the breadth of the curriculum is good. All National Curriculum subjects are taught. There is ample provision for music, drama and personal, social and health education. However, there is insufficient time for religious education and time allocation for physical education is too low, resulting in standards that are too low. In Years 10 and 11, a good range of general and vocational courses is taught. There are four subjects offered in modern foreign languages, including Russian. A successful modular course in business Spanish is compulsory for all pupils as part of the personal, social and health education programme. Seven options are offered in design and technology, including manufacturing. There are also courses in leisure and tourism, business education and applied ICT. The school makes good provision for teaching citizenship. Pupils with special educational needs have equality of access to all areas of the school's activities and to the same curriculum as other pupils.
- 28 The arrangements for careers' education are unsatisfactory. There are good ongoing workplace learning opportunities, with a variety of providers including the local professional football club for some otherwise disaffected pupils. A small group of pupils also have half a day each week at a local college where they sample a wide variety of taster courses including painting and decorating in Year 10, prior to specialising in Year 11. Whilst the school has made useful inroads into alternative curriculum arrangements, there are currently problems such as timetable clashes. A more systematic approach has been planned for the next academic year. Statutory requirements for religious education are not met.
- 29 The school has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. This is shown by the totally open entry policy to study GCSE music that results in good achievement for all. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are able to choose three science subjects. This is not beneficial for a significant proportion who choose this route. Approximately 20 per cent of pupils do not participate in work experience and the school has not prioritised this area enough.
- 30 Enrichment is strong. The school has an outstanding international dimension including visits to China, Mexico, Russia, France and Germany. Pupils speak to fellow pupils in Egypt using video-conferencing. These links promote modern foreign languages well. The school offers very good music provision outside lessons and runs a training band for feeder schools. A music group has toured China, Germany and Switzerland. Theatre visits are extensive and the very good range of sports activities has encouraged a good proportion of pupils to achieve county standard and beyond. Study support outside the school day is good. It is very good in modern foreign languages for gifted pupils and those on the borderline of higher grades. In English, pupils make visits to hear poets read their own work. Mathematics provides an extremely effective range of support for all levels of attainment from Years 7 to 11.

- 31 Personal, social and health education is of good quality. Health education is particularly strong. There are clear policies for sex and relationships education and for drug education and the school makes very good use of outside speakers in providing a balanced and informative programme. Pupils enjoy this aspect of their curriculum.

Staffing

- 32 There are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. The match between qualifications and subjects taught is good. The support staff are of high quality and all of the learning support staff receive training. The latter are effective, particularly so in mathematics. Staffing arrangements in modern foreign languages are excellent.

Accommodation

- 33 The accommodation is good overall. The school has sufficient appropriate specialist accommodation. There are, however, some areas in which the accommodation is in need of refurbishment, and the school has plans in hand to make improvements in many of these areas. Two science laboratories and a food technology room do not provide suitable accommodation for current curricular needs and teaching methods. The acoustics in some rooms used for modern foreign language teaching are poor and so pupils cannot always hear clearly when teachers are speaking. The use of the medical room as an office is unsatisfactory; pupils are not in a quiet environment and the member of staff using the office cannot easily make confidential phone calls. Several corridors are narrow, and become congested at change of lessons. Standards in physical education are held back by inadequate accommodation.

Resources for learning

- 34 There has been a marked improvement in the provision of resources for learning since the last report. In almost all departments funding is good and resources are at least adequate and of good quality. In English, however, there is a critical shortage of set texts in Year 10 with pupils unable to take copies of *Romeo and Juliet* home for study. Textbooks in religious education are also in short supply. A priority has been placed on resources for ICT and provision is in line with the national median. Interactive whiteboards are widely and effectively used.
- 35 The resources centre has been totally re-furnished and now forms an invaluable facility. It achieves a good balance between book stock and computers. The provision of books for each pupil is still well below the recommended figure. The centre is very popular and well used and the number of books borrowed has risen dramatically since the modernisation. The facility is excellently managed and provides an attractive learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

The school's provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Support, advice and guidance are satisfactory overall with some very good academic tutorial support but unsatisfactory options and careers guidance. The school is very good at seeking pupils' views and acting on them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Form tutors provide very good support and guidance.
- The induction of new pupils is very well organised and effective.
- The school seeks pupils' views regularly and takes them very seriously.
- Options guidance does not ensure that pupils follow the most appropriate courses.
- Careers guidance is unsatisfactory; not all participate in work experience.

Commentary

- 36 The pastoral care for pupils is very good. Pupils learn in a caring environment, all receiving respect from their teachers. Pupils report that they feel safe in the school and get on well with their teachers and they and their parents are very positive about the induction arrangements for entering the school, which begins in the feeder schools. Pupils are cared for well by their form tutors who in turn are given very good support by the year heads. Pupils have individual after-school academic monitoring sessions once a term; these involve the setting of personal targets and are of high quality.
- 37 Careers education and guidance is unsatisfactory and not well organised. Pupils in Year 11 do not receive sufficient careers education nor do all have access to work experience. The post work experience review sessions are satisfactory. The option choice arrangements in Year 9 do not ensure that pupils make the best choice of subjects or achieve an appropriate curriculum. Links with colleges where pupils will go after Year 11 are excellent.
- 38 The school is successful in seeking the views of its pupils and there is a strong emphasis on pupils' self-evaluation. The school issues regular questionnaires to its pupils and their parents, and responds to their views well. The School Council is also an effective forum for this. The vast majority of parents said their children were not bullied or harassed at school. Virtually all pupils said, in a pre-inspection questionnaire, that there was an adult in school they could talk to if they had a problem.
- 39 Statutory requirement for health and safety are fully met. Supervision at break and lunchtime is good and safety issues are attended to well in lessons. Child protection procedures are now well established and have improved since the last inspection; they fully meet requirements. Health and safety arrangements are good and issues highlighted in the last inspection have been addressed fully. The interests of all pupils, including some who are wheelchair bound, are promoted very effectively. The headteacher and governors have been alerted to some areas of concern.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good**. The school provides **satisfactory** information for them and successfully involves them in its work. Community links are **good**, while links with other schools and colleges are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with other schools and colleges enhance the school's reputation and make an excellent contribution to pupils' social and cultural awareness.
- Mechanisms for the transfer of pupils from primary to high school are very good.
- The school takes very good account of parents' views and encourages their active involvement in pupils' education.
- Links with the local community are strong.

Commentary

- 40 The school has developed excellent links with others in the area, contributing its strengths to collaborative ventures that have overall benefits for the group. Both primary and secondary schools enjoy support from Frederick Gough School for modern foreign language teaching, including training for teachers and opportunities for pupils to use the school's specialist resources. Primary schools are particularly pleased with curricular links, which include regular teaching of French and support for after-school clubs. The strong emphasis on developing an international dimension to educational provision locally has drawn other schools into the frame,

so that many are now establishing links with schools in China, Russia, Egypt and Nigeria. As a result, the school has become a leader in the drive to change the perspective of the local community from inward to outward looking, as well as providing an incentive for more pupils to continue their study of languages beyond the age of 16.

- 41 There are also strong curricular links with primary schools through activities such as the Maths Challenge for Year 6 pupils, joint projects in design and technology, the Sports Leadership Award, through which secondary school pupils undertake coaching in the primary schools, and a summer school in dance and drama. Musical links are also strong. The school's bands regularly perform at other schools in the area and some primary school pupils are members of the training orchestra. Consequently, when the time comes for pupils from the primaries to transfer to secondary school, they are already familiar with the environment and with some of the staff and pupils, so that they can make the transition with confidence. In addition, the school organises the usual visits by senior staff, exchange of relevant information and taster days for primary pupils. Both pupils and parents agree that the arrangements for moving from the primary to the secondary school are very good.
- 42 The school is very conscious of the importance of its links with parents in ensuring support for pupils' learning, so it makes strenuous efforts to discover what parents think and to take note of their views. Questionnaires issued at parents' evenings have proved a useful way of finding out what parents see as strengths and weaknesses in the school and there have been consultations with small groups of parents on specific topics, so that parental views are taken into account when decisions are made, or policies revised, for example in relation to homework. The very active and effective Parent Teacher Association provides a good sounding board when new developments are under consideration and the school has recently introduced a simple mechanism for parents to contact governors with queries or comments. Day-to-day consultation with parents takes place routinely through the very effective pastoral system. Reports on pupils' progress are of a satisfactory standard, but teachers' comments sometimes do not contain sufficient subject-specific guidance on how to improve.
- 43 The school has a high profile in the local community. Pupils play an active part in the Youth Town Council and give musical performances at civic events. They are proud of the extensive fund raising that they undertake for both local and national charities and enjoy organising parties for elderly people. The school's facilities are used regularly by local people and the local press always gives good coverage of school events.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides **very good leadership**, supported by competent and hard-working senior colleagues. The senior team provide **good management** and satisfactory quality assurance. **Governance is good** and the governing body provides very good support for the school but does not ensure the school complies with the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's vision, sense of purpose and ambitions for the school are excellent.
- The governors provide very good support for the direction of the school but have not ensured that statutory requirements regarding acts of collective worship and religious education are met.
- The school's commitment to involving all pupils and meeting individual needs is very strong.
- Management is good overall but the quality of monitoring has slipped recently and is satisfactory.

Commentary

- 44 The headteacher's vision and sense of purpose are excellent. He introduced the motto 'aiming high' and has seen this achieved in many areas. Notable amongst these is the school's outstanding successes in its international work and the abundant success in involving all pupils in all aspects of the school's work during and beyond the school day. He provides very good leadership and is well supported by competent and hard-working senior colleagues who have taken on extra responsibilities in the past 18 months following the departure, and non-replacement, of a highly respected deputy head.
- 45 The senior team provide good management, and quality assurance is satisfactory. The extent of monitoring has, however, declined in the last four terms and action to remedy areas of concern, such as the poor provision for religious education, recent low standards in English and science in Years 7 to 9 and the unsatisfactory quality of ICT education, has been too slow and insufficient. Some progress in these areas is now being seen. The management provided by heads of subjects is good and staff in senior positions provide very good role models for others. There is a very good team spirit – all staff and pupils are valued and respected.
- 46 A strong, committed and well-led governing body provides very good support for the school and governance is good although the school does not comply with the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship. The school has not offered an explanation for its failure over many years to give pupils their minimum legal and educational entitlement in these areas. The new curriculum plan for religious education together with the department's action plan and new leadership offers hope for the future. Governors are attached to subject departments and several are regular visitors to the school. They have very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- 47 Strategic planning is good and reflects the school's ambitions well. Governors have a full involvement in the process and colleagues appreciate the headteacher's consultative style. The head has governors' support in enabling pupils to benefit from educational, cultural and social activities across the world. The school's aims and ethos are very visible in its work. The school has a clear agenda for continued improvement.
- 48 The co-ordinator for special educational needs and senior management have shown excellent leadership and management in bringing this area of the school's work to its present strong position. The school's implementation of the 2001 Code of Practice for special educational needs has been satisfactory. The unsatisfactory provision for special educational needs was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection. Statutory requirements for special educational needs are fully met.
- 49 Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are very good. Their progress is carefully monitored. There is a comprehensive programme of training sessions. Trainee and newly appointed teachers attend some of these. The school's practices have been adopted as a model by the local education authority. The performance of all staff is closely monitored and classroom observations occur regularly. There is much professional development addressing whole-school, department and individual needs. The school is very successful in both recruiting and retaining suitable staff. This includes teachers who cover for short-term absences.
- 50 Because the school's funding is very low in comparison with national figures, great care has to be exercised in the way resources are allocated. Everything possible is done to ensure that spending decisions relate to defined educational objectives. Close monitoring means that the budget is managed efficiently and effectively. The principles of best value are understood and applied very well. The school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Total income | 3,193,201 |
| Total expenditure | 3,295,874 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2858 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Balance from previous year | -54,910 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | -102,673 |

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, and, as a result achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour enable successful learning.
- Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average.
- In the GCSE for both language and literature in 2003, results were below average.

Commentary

- 51 Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below the national average and less good than those of the previous year, continuing the recent downward trend. Boys' results were relatively better than girls'. Performance in the GCSE for English language as well as English literature was below average. Boys were closer to their own national figure in language and girls to theirs in literature. When compared with pupils' prior attainment, however, results showed that achievement in English at the age of 16 was good. Standards of attainment in Year 9 are close to those expected nationally. Achievement by the age of 14 is good. Attainment in Years 10 and 11 is somewhat below the national expectation but achievement by the age of 16 is satisfactory.
- 52 The general standard of speaking and listening at the age of 14 is in line with that found nationally. Pupils listen attentively and work well and productively in pairs and groups. The quality of speaking is uneven but most pupils answer questions confidently and audibly. Some pupils, often high attaining ones, make articulate and coherent contributions. A few lower attaining pupils are less willing to answer and lack fluency. In Years 10 and 11, pupils generally express ideas maturely and responsibly. Their discussion of literature is increasingly mature and sensitive.
- 53 A significant number of pupils join the school with a reading age well below their actual age. These pupils receive effective specialist assistance and support and make good progress. The overall standard of reading comprehension at the end of Year 9 matches national expectations. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and are urged to use the excellent resource centre for pleasure and research. High attaining pupils in Year 9 used ICT skilfully in preparing a pamphlet on Shakespeare for Year 7 and at the same time extended their own background knowledge. Much attention is given to the appreciation of poetry. High attaining pupils in Year 8, for example, in response to excellent teaching, explored with commitment and enjoyment linguistic and imaginative elements in Lewis Carroll's poem *Jabberwocky*.
- 54 The overall standard of written work in Years 7, 8 and 9 is in line with that found nationally. Implementation of important aspects of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy has improved pupils' planning and structuring of assignments. Pupils draft their work effectively and write for a range of purposes and audiences. Some lower attaining pupils in all years continue to make frequent errors with sentence structure, paragraphing and the expression of ideas. The overall standard of writing in Years 10 and 11 is somewhat below expectations but final drafts of assignments show improvement in expression and accuracy. The best writing of pupils in Year 11 is well planned, skilfully crafted and has a sense of individual style.

- 55 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In Years 7, 8 and 9 it is always satisfactory, most is good or better and some is very good or excellent. Teaching in Year 10 and 11 is never less than satisfactory and is good or better in a majority of lessons; a little is excellent. Learning is also good at all stages. Lessons are, in the main, carefully planned and prepared. Very occasionally, however, pupils' response is not always fully anticipated at the planning stage. Lesson objectives are clear and successfully carried through. Tasks match closely pupils' level of attainment. Collaboration with support staff is very thorough and successful. Relationships are mostly positive and purposeful and pupils work hard. Questioning of pupils is robust and challenging, pressing for precise answers. Lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic performance. Pupils' work is marked consistently and conscientiously. On rare occasions, marking is not sufficiently diagnostic and fails to offer precise enough guidance for improvement.
- 56 The department is working with great energy and commitment to raise standards. Pupils' achievement is improving rapidly in Years 7 to 9. Half of the members of the department joined at the beginning of the current spring term and the head of department has been in post over the same period. Schemes of work have been completely revised to match National Curriculum requirements. There are some critical shortages of set texts for examination courses. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy is securely embedded in classroom practice, with marked benefits for teaching and learning. Team identity is strong and all members share the same aspirations for raising standards. The department is led very well with great vigour and professionalism, and management is effective and efficient. The subject makes clear contributions to pupils' cultural development.
- 57 Since the last inspection the resource centre has been greatly improved and is intensively used by the department. Members of staff are teaching the subject full time. GCSE results were still below average in 2003 but pupils achieve well compared with their prior attainment. National Curriculum requirements including attainment targets are now included in revised schemes of work. Satisfactory progress has been made and the department is well placed to sustain the recent significant improvements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 58 In all other areas of the curriculum pupils listen attentively. Standards are higher than in most schools in mathematics, drama and history. The quality of speech, although satisfactory, is more uneven. Spoken responses sometimes lack fluency and confidence. Group discussion is planned in some lessons but only in mathematics and drama are pupils regularly expected to feed back to the whole class.
- 59 The overall standard of reading comprehension is better than average in most departments. There is little evidence, however, that pupils are given guidance in developing a range of strategies to aid their reading. Some subjects make good use of the excellent resource centre for research and extension of knowledge but others have not yet developed this aspect of reading. Key words are displayed well in most subjects. The majority of pupils present written work carefully with legible handwriting. Pupils are helped to plan and structure their writing in design and technology, history and geography but there is little evidence of this in religious education. The impact of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy for literacy in the development of non-fiction writing has been patchy, with geography and history leading the way.
- 60 The current holder of the post of responsibility for literacy across the curriculum has recently been appointed. Staff training days have been held in the recent past but impetus has been lost and the school does not have a policy. There is good practice in some departments but, overall, the initiative to improve literacy across the curriculum lacks coherence and urgency.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department provides an extensive range of foreign languages for pupils to study.
- In Years 10 and 11, standards are rising in all languages, and in Russian standards are well above average.
- Setting arrangements in Years 7 to 9 are inappropriate for many abler linguists.
- Teachers have excellent language knowledge but they do not use the foreign language consistently in lessons, which substantially limits pupils' development in speaking, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- The department's very effective use of ICT enables all pupils to make good progress in reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent throughout the department

Commentary

- 61 The GCSE examination results in 2003 were average overall; in French, results were below average and in German they were slightly above average, showing significant improvement in both languages compared with 2002. GCSE Russian results were well above average. Pupils performed better in French than in many of their other subjects. Although girls performed better than boys overall in modern foreign languages, boys gained a higher proportion of A* and A grades in French and German. Most pupils achieved excellent results at entry level in business Spanish.
- 62 All pupils study French from Year 7 and in addition from Year 8, they study either German or Russian. By the end of Year 9, standards are below average overall, but pupils' achievement is good. In French, standards are in line with expectations and achievement is generally good; however, many able linguists make slow progress in French because they are not sufficiently challenged in the top sets – determined by their mathematics ability – in which they are placed. In German and Russian, standards are below average but pupils achieve well in these two-year courses; in German, they respond well to consistently good teaching, and in Russian, all pupils confidently use the challenging Russian alphabet, noun and verb forms.
- 63 In Year 10 and 11, pupils select one or more GCSE courses in French, German, Russian and Spanish, and additionally, all pupils study business Spanish. By Year 11, standards in modern foreign languages are average overall, and achievement is good. In French, the main language, standards are average, and all pupils achieve well; and in German, standards are slightly above average. In Russian, standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is excellent. All pupils achieve very well in business Spanish.

Example of outstanding practice:

Benefits of the language college status of the school contributed significantly to pupils' excellent achievement in a Year 11 Russian

64 Pupils make good progress overall in reading and writing in all years. In Years 7 to 9, teachers use the interactive whiteboard skilfully, emphasising spelling and sentence structure, contributing substantially to pupils' literacy development. However, pupils do not routinely write at length, to consolidate and extend their language knowledge. In Years 10 and 11 teachers' increased emphasis on extended writing, accuracy of grammar, and the excellent GCSE resources they provide, result in very good written coursework on, for example, work experience and home town. All pupils, especially boys, develop independent learning skills very well through the department's

extremely good use of ICT.

- 65 Pupils readily understand recorded extracts of native speakers, but most lack confidence in speaking, in spite of the good support of the three foreign language assistants. This is because teachers do not use their excellent language knowledge consistently in lessons as a model for pupils to copy, nor do they plan frequent opportunities for pupils to speak naturally, for example, in paired conversations. Pupils with special needs achieve very well, because of good support in lessons, particularly from the specialist teaching assistant. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well overall. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good.
- 66 Teaching and learning are good; half of the lessons seen were good or very good, and three excellent lessons were seen. However, in two unsatisfactory lessons, and in several satisfactory lessons, lack of clear purposeful lesson structure resulted in pupils' poor behaviour and lack of progress. Pupils' exercise books show that testing and marking is thorough in all languages, but in Years 7 to 9 assessment is not consistently linked to National Curriculum levels.
- 67 Leadership is very good, and management is good. The temporary departmental head contributes very effectively to the school's international dimension, and leads a highly committed team. Departmental planning is clearly focused on raising achievement. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' self-awareness and spiritual development. Areas for attention are monitoring of teaching, and revising schemes of work for Years 7 to 9. Since the last inspection there has been very good overall improvement. GCSE standards, pupils' achievement, teaching and special educational needs support, have all improved. Enrichment opportunities are now excellent under the language college status of the school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well by the age of 14.
- Much of the teaching is very good or excellent.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Resources, particularly ICT, are used effectively to promote some high quality learning.
- More able pupils in classes are often restricted to learning at the speed of the majority.

Commentary

- 68 National test results for pupils at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average in 2003. This continued the trend of recent years with mathematics results being better than those in English and science. Pupils' results in mathematics were in line with those of similar schools. GCSE results in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average. To its credit, the department managed to enter almost all pupils for GCSE with a pass rate better than the national one. Results have been broadly in line with the national averages over recent years with no significant differences between boys and girls. This represents good achievement from standards on entry to the school that have always been at best marginally below average.
- 69 Standards seen in lessons confirmed the examination results and good achievement by the end of Year 9. The higher attaining pupils calculate unknown sides in right-angled triangles using impressive knowledge of trigonometry and average pupils confidently use algebra to derive formulae for difficult sequences. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy and are confident with basic data-handling and number work. They achieve well and the gifted and talented pupils achieve particularly well.
- 70 By the end of Year 11, pupils maintain the improvement gained by Year 9. Achievement is satisfactory overall and occasionally good. The most able pupils match formulae to graphs for linear, quadratic and cubic functions. Pupils of more modest ability show very good achievement in plotting difficult curved graphs accurately, using ideas of symmetry and high quality ICT to help. Weaker pupils convert units of measurement accurately, showing sound progress.
- 71 Teaching is good overall but much is very good or excellent. It leads to good learning and is more exciting in Years 7 to 9, but is occasionally unsatisfactory because of difficulties with class management. The best features of teaching are the use of a wide variety of resources including individual whiteboards for pupils to respond quickly to be assessed by the teacher, and coloured card to sort key words. Teaching assistants, one in particular who is dedicated to the mathematics department, provide very good help, mainly to pupils with special educational needs. The use of interactive whiteboards by teachers to show prepared work and quickly refer back to previous work is particularly helpful in ensuring excellent pace and high levels of involvement and enjoyable learning. Teachers assess very well when groups of pupils are ready to move forward. However, some teachers rely too heavily on whole-class teaching and are too cautious in not allowing the more able pupils within classes to be stretched.
- 72 Leadership and management are very good. There is clear direction from the head of department in schemes of work to target work at the correct levels. Extra-curricular activities are extensive and very effective. Teachers and teaching assistants have been motivated and supported by the head of department, a very good teacher herself, to build up expertise and improve their teaching. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 73 Standards are average and are sufficient to allow good learning in other subjects where needed. Data handling is a good feature of many pupils' work in geography and in science where they also use formulae accurately. In design and technology, pupils are confident when measuring, weighing and estimating. There is less emphasis in art on mathematical skills than expected. Although pupils taking business studies are mainly lower achievers, they use spreadsheets accurately, handle data well enough and calculate finance to make decisions on profit and loss. Whilst there is no formal tracking of mathematics across the curriculum, there has been training provided for all staff and written guidance to departments on how mathematical skills might be enhanced in each subject area.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In 2003 the proportion of GCSE passes with grades A*-C was above that in similar schools.
- Results in the Year 9 national tests were below the national average and well below compared with similar schools.
- Most pupils achieve well and make good progress because of their positive attitudes and the good teaching.
- Not enough guidance is given to pupils in choosing GCSE courses.
- The subject is well led and managed; assessment is good.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop ICT skills.

Commentary

- 74 The results in the national tests for 14 year olds in 2003 were below the national averages. They were also well below those of similar schools. Boys have done slightly better than girls in four of the past five years. Apart from a dip in 2003, the results have been moving upwards, following the national rising trend. The proportion of pupils gaining at least a grade C in a science subject in the GCSE examinations in 2003 was in line with the national average and above that in similar schools. However, approximately only one half of those taking the three separate sciences gained at least a grade C compared with over four-fifths nationally. Girls performed better than boys in all of the science subjects in 2003. Pupils did better in physics than in their other subjects.
- 75 Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. By the end of each of Years 9 and 11 standards are now average. Irregular attendance of a small number of mainly lower attaining pupils hinders progress. Too many pupils choose separate sciences and some of them regret their decisions. Approximately one half of the Year 11 pupils taking the three separate sciences for GCSE, although achieving well, are unlikely to gain a grade C or above in each subject. Pupils develop a good range of skills by the end of Year 9. Those of analysis and evaluation are less well developed by the end of Year 11. Pupils have the numeracy skills required, applying skills in the use of formulae well. Overall pupils present work well and are careful to use correct terminology and units. In some lessons the support assistants are well briefed and are very effective. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and given extension tasks. They also achieve well.
- 76 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. All the teaching seen was at least satisfactory; much was good and some very good. It was better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes, responding well to the high expectations of teachers and consequently learning well. Management of behaviour is strong. Lessons are well planned and cater for the differing needs of pupils. By skilful targeted questioning, most teachers check understanding. However, in a few lessons teachers did not fully exploit their good knowledge of individuals. The questioning was not sufficiently targeted to individual pupils to involve and challenge them and to draw out information, and the pace of learning suffered. Occasionally time is not used efficiently, for example when pupils copy from the board. Teachers mark work regularly and often write encouraging comments but do not always suggest how pupils can improve. A few teachers make very effective use of computer programs projected onto a whiteboard.
- 77 The subject is well led and managed. An effective team has been established that has a common commitment to raising standards. Two laboratories are in need of refurbishment. Teachers are well qualified and are deployed well, making good use of specialisms. Too little is done to ensure consistency in the quality of marking, but assessment procedures are thorough

and comprehensive. Much use is made of the information in setting targets for individuals. Pupils know how well they are doing but do not always know what they can do to improve.

- 78 Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Performance in the GCSE examinations has improved although there has been little change in the national tests results for 14 year olds. Assessment procedures have developed well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils is much better. More use is being made of ICT but there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to gain 'hands on' experience to develop skills, particularly in data capture and logging.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good understanding of the communication element of their work.
- Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average and are too low.
- The management of the subject is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' understanding of the applications of ICT is too narrow.

Commentary

- 79 The teachers' assessment of 14 year old pupils shows that standards are below the national average. A GCSE applied ICT course was offered as a subject option in 2002 for the first time, therefore 2004 will be the first occasion that pupils will be entered for the examination. In the GCSE ICT short course examination in Year 10 in 2003, only 19 percent of pupils achieved an A*-C grade and these results were below the expected levels.
- 80 Pupils' previous ICT experience is varied, most entering the school in Year 7 with below average knowledge. Pupils only receive discrete lessons in Years 7 and 9. As a consequence achievement is unsatisfactory and pupils do not reach the expected level by the time they are 14. Pupils have good knowledge about presenting information. They use the word-processing application with confidence. They have a good understanding of multi-media presentations, producing slide shows with moving text and art images. These skills are consolidated in other subjects and pupils use these applications to produce coursework. Although pupils are taught how to use spreadsheets in ICT lessons, their overall understanding is low and few explain how formulae are established for mathematical calculations. Pupils know about data handling and that a computer is used to store information; however, they are vague about the advantages of its use and how to select specific information.
- 81 Although pupils are developing a basic understanding of control technology using the *Logo* program, (a simple control program), they have not had the opportunity to use more sophisticated programs, therefore this element is unsatisfactory. Pupils' knowledge of the use of ICT in its wider sense is too narrow; few give examples of where it might be used.
- 82 It was not possible during the inspection to observe a Year 11 lesson. Judgements on standards therefore have been made by examination of work and discussion with pupils. From this evidence pupils studying the full ICT GCSE examination are at the level expected and their overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are developing a clear understanding of handling data. They know how to retrieve information using the query facility and are confident to enter all the data into the appropriate place. They also know the benefits of using ICT in a work situation.
- 83 Teaching and learning are overall satisfactory. Teachers have established relationships with pupils, using their subject knowledge to guide pupils and create an ethos where they are confident to seek help. Learning, however, is slowed when pupils are not given clear targets at

the beginning of lessons, resulting in some pupils 'coasting' and not making the appropriate progress. Lessons generally start briskly with an explanation of the task but there are occasions when the pace is slowed by constant interruptions from a minority of pupils. There are occasions when teachers do not intervene enough, resulting in pupils not being challenged.

- 84 The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There is a clear vision about the future development of the subject and the need to raise standards. The management, however, is unsatisfactory. Planning is not co-ordinated and some work is inappropriate for the needs of the pupils. Many of the ICT teachers are not subject specialists and have major commitments in other areas. Consequently there are too few regular opportunities to discuss the strategy, exchange approaches or monitor teaching. The improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 85 At the time of the last inspection the report stated that the use of ICT across the curriculum was erratic and the management was unsatisfactory. Although there has been an improvement there are still some subjects where ICT is not being fully used to support learning. The co-ordination remains unsatisfactory. Interactive whiteboards are, however, used well across the school, particularly in mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. Graphic calculators and computers for number sequencing features well in mathematics also. In modern foreign languages, pupils make good use of the word processor, employing the appropriate techniques for accentuation, desktop publishing methods for presenting their work and the Internet for research. The frequent use of ICT in the dedicated modern foreign language computer suite is contributing positively to pupils' language development and an incentive to boys, who are making good progress. Use in other subjects is generally satisfactory. However, progress on occasions is inhibited as access to the well-used computer suites is limited and not always available when needed. This is presenting a problem for some departments that do not have the appropriate resources within their own areas. Use in art and religious education is unsatisfactory.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall, leading to steadily rising standards and improving examination results.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Pupils achieve well overall, but achievement is less good in Years 10 and 11.
- Boys achieve less well than girls.
- Relatively few girls opt to study geography in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

- 86 The GCSE results in 2003 were in line with the national average. Boys do significantly less well than girls in examinations. Results have improved steadily since the last inspection. Standards are average by the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. Pupils achieve well overall, but achievement is satisfactory rather than good in Years 10 and 11 where a little teaching is unsatisfactory. Boys achieve less well than girls. Pupils across all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, achieve equally well.

- 87 By the end of Year 9, pupils have acquired a satisfactory geographical vocabulary and understand patterns that exist throughout the world. Although pupils in Year 9 carry out some fieldwork, there is insufficient emphasis in Years 7 to 9 on building up a strong base of independent study skills through case studies and field courses. Pupils' geographical vocabulary is extended in Years 10 and 11. The strong focus on preparation for examinations enables pupils to develop good independent learning skills and make good progress in their last two years.
- 88 There is a focus in lessons on key vocabulary and on spelling and grammar in pupils' written work. As a result geography makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy development. Pupils use a range of graphs and tables to interpret and present evidence. This makes a good contribution to numeracy skills. The use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning is satisfactory.
- 89 Teaching and learning are good overall. There is a minority of unsatisfactory teaching, mainly in Years 10 and 11. Unsatisfactory teaching results from inadequate planning. As a result lessons are rambling and disorganised and pupils show little inclination to make a positive contribution. In the best teaching, lessons are carefully organised to ensure that work is challenging and pupils are actively involved throughout the lesson. Teachers have good class control that is achieved without fuss. Pupils are well behaved and show good attitudes to work so that the working atmosphere in lessons is relaxed and businesslike. Where available, teachers make good use of recently installed technology to enhance and enrich pupils' learning. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and insufficiently shows pupils how they can improve their work.
- 90 Significantly fewer girls opt to study geography in Years 10 and 11. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leadership and management are good and the subject has made good progress and clear improvements since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good; it leads to good achievement.
- Most pupils show much interest and enthusiasm in lessons and make good progress as a result.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Pupils do not make enough use of ICT to support their own learning.
- The grouping arrangements for pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not based on pupils' ability in history.

Commentary

- 91 By the end of Year 9, pupils' overall attainment is average. This is reflected in teachers' assessment of pupils' work over the past two years. The standard of work seen during the inspection was average, but a significant minority of pupils reach the highest standards. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress. The highest attaining pupils sometimes achieve very well because teachers set appropriately demanding work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers provide suitable work and use support assistants effectively.
- 92 Most pupils in Years 7 to 9 have good knowledge and understanding of the past. They recall work done in previous lessons so that teachers can quickly move on to new work. Most see and understand well the reasons for past events. Pupils in Year 7, for instance, evaluated successfully why the Normans won the battle of Hastings in 1066. High attaining pupils in Year

9 use sources well to test hypotheses, evaluating competently the reliability of the sources and writing very well at length. Although lower attainers use sources satisfactorily for information, they often fail to use the information to make valid deductions and their written work often lacks depth and detail.

- 93 The overall attainment of pupils at the end of Year 11 is above average. In 2003 the results in the GCSE examination were above average. For a significant number of pupils their examination result indicated very good achievement from their Year 9 standards. An above-average proportion of the girls who took the examination in 2003 gained an A or A* grade. The work seen during the inspection was above average overall. The majority of pupils achieve well and many achieve very well. Most pupils know the standard of their current work and understand what they need to do to improve it.
- 94 The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 have good knowledge and understanding of their work. They make effective use of historical sources, successfully evaluating their reliability and usefulness. This was especially evident in work by pupils in Year 11 on whether General Custer was a hero or a villain. The highest attainers write very well at length, producing essays in which points of view are backed up with valid evidence. The lower attainers explain causes of past events and use sources satisfactorily for information.
- 95 The very good teaching is a strength of the department. It is characterised by considerable subject knowledge, very effective classroom management, high expectations of behaviour and hard work, and a brisk pace. This leads to very good learning. Teachers invariably use a range of short, motivating activities which interest pupils and keep them actively involved in their learning. Teachers make very effective use of a wide range of resources, including an interactive whiteboard, to provide stimulating images for pupils to study. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their class teachers and by effective support assistants. The vast majority of pupils respond very positively to this good teaching, work hard and achieve well. Pupils' behaviour and attitude to work are usually very good. This is a significant factor in their good achievement.
- 96 The department is led and managed very well. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. The head of department carefully monitors the performance of the department to ensure high standards are maintained. The department work well as a team; they have been prepared to embrace changes in teaching styles and in examination topics in order to raise pupils' attainment. The subject is a very popular option in Years 10 and 11 and it makes a good contribution to pupils' self-awareness and spiritual development. Although the teachers make very good use of ICT for teaching, there are no computers in the department for pupils to use. This means that pupils do not make enough use of ICT in lessons to support their own learning.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school fails to provide religious education in accordance with the local agreed syllabus.
- Standards of work and examination results are well below average.
- Pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory and achievement is poor.
- The recently appointed head of department has clear vision and offers a good role model to other staff and to pupils.
- The action plan identifies current weaknesses and provides a very good basis for future improvement.

Commentary

- 97 At the end of Year 8 the school replaces the programme of study required by the agreed syllabus with the GCSE short course. This decision is not justified as pupils' work at the end of Year 8 is well below the standard expected. Standards of 14 year olds are well below average and their achievement is poor. On the one hand, pupils understand that religious belief and practice are important in human life and that belonging to a religion makes a difference to a person's life. On the other hand, pupils' understanding of religious belief and practice lacks depth and detail. When they explore religious meanings and motives they write briefly and their explanations generally lack the expected level of coherence. When pupils compare their own point of view with other people's their reasoning shows immaturity.
- 98 In Years 9 and 10 pupils follow the GCSE short course. They finish the course and sit the examination at the end of Year 10. The school enters them then, even though their work is still well below the standard expected at the end of Year 11. Pupils show only an elementary knowledge and understanding of the religions studied. They fail to make systematic use of specialist vocabulary. They make only simple connections between religion and people's lives. The reasons they give in evaluation are insufficiently supported by evidence and argument. In 2002, the first year of entry, results were well below average and pupils did much worse than in other subjects. In 2003 results were even poorer. Only one pupil in seven obtained an A*-C grade and one pupil in ten was ungraded. The trend so far has been downwards.
- 99 Achievement is poor. In Years 7 to 10 pupils make too little progress and in Year 11 they make none as the subject is not taught. Pupils lack knowledge about the religions studied. Their understanding of religious belief and practice is shallow. Pupils do not develop the critical skills of evaluation. They do not learn to write with fluency and confidence. In Years 7 and 8 pupils make insufficient progress because they are unable to complete three years' work in two years. In Years 9 and 10, progress is very slow not only because pupils lack a secure foundation from their previous years but also because they are not ready for the higher demands of the GCSE course.
- 100 Pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory. Pupils told the inspectors that they did not enjoy their lessons and found them boring. Attitudes deteriorate from Year 7 to Year 10. By then, pupils' resentment is openly evident in lessons. Not surprisingly, the contribution to pupils' personal development is unsatisfactory.
- 101 Teaching is good, reflecting a complete change of personnel this term but because pupils lack commitment learning is only satisfactory. Teachers generally show good command of the subject and their planning of lessons is effective although the impact on standards remains to be seen. They make good use of time and insist on appropriate standards of behaviour. Lessons, however, often fail to engage pupils or capture their imagination. The level of intellectual challenge is sometimes too low and so pupils feel little sense of reward for effort.

Their exercise books fail to show the expected gains in self-knowledge and spiritual awareness that come from the development of reflective skills.

- 102 Progress since the last inspection has been poor. Both previous reports have identified what is wrong and the last report made proper provision of religious education a key issue. The school knows what it has to do and has adopted a curriculum plan which when followed will ensure that requirements are fully met. The process will be slow, however. The school has recently appointed a new head of department. The new leadership within the department began in January 2004 and is already showing clarity of vision, a strong sense of purpose and high aspirations. The new leader offers a good role model to other staff and pupils and has begun to create an effective team. Leadership and management are both good. The department's action plan is not only a penetrating diagnosis of current weaknesses but also a very good basis for future improvement.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in the Year 11 systems and control course.
- A high proportion of very good teaching leads to good achievement by pupils.
- A good leadership team ensures consistent quality in all material areas.
- Gifted and talented pupils are successfully challenged to reach A* and A grades.
- The use of ICT for design and manufacture is weak in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

- 103 Formal teacher assessments at the age of 14 in 2003 indicate that standards were below the national average. Lesson observation and analysis of pupils' work shows that standards are currently in line with those found nationally at 14 and at 16. Pupils achieve well in all years because the quality of teaching is good and often very good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers support them effectively and provide appropriate resources. Standards in food and textiles technology are more consistently high than in workshop-based courses because learning objectives are more carefully defined. The use of ICT as a resource for learning is well planned and effective in food and textiles in Years 7 to 9. In workshop-based courses, the use of ICT as a tool for design and manufacturing is weak.
- 104 GCSE examination results in 2003 were below the national average. However, standards at GCSE have been at or close to the national average over the last few years. In 2003 standards in systems and control and in textiles were well above average, with a high proportion of A* and A grades. Lesson observation and analysis of standards on all five GCSE courses indicate that standards are at the national average overall and that on all courses high attaining pupils produce work of the highest quality. The design process is well established and practical skills are good. This is because pupils have had the benefit of continuity in teaching in all aspects of the subject from Year 7 onwards. Consequently achievement is good. Provision for equality of opportunity and providing for the needs of all pupils is good.
- 105 Teaching and learning are good overall. There was a high proportion of very good teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching. There is a very strong team of experienced teachers with considerable subject expertise. This is well used to set high standards for pupils' learning. Planning for learning is very strong in food and textiles, but in workshop-based courses planning focuses on tasks for pupils to do rather than what they are going to learn. Lessons are well resourced and supporting worksheets are well suited to the ability profile of the particular

class. The use of a range of teaching methods, including paired and group-work, enables good attention to be given to developing literacy and numeracy skills. Marking and assessment are given a high priority, especially for GCSE coursework. However, although work is marked in line with the school's marking policy, pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not sufficiently aware of National Curriculum levels.

106 Leadership and management are good. The leadership team has a clear management plan that identifies key areas for development. There are good policies and schemes of work that give good guidance to teachers in lesson planning. A very good team approach effectively utilises the complementary skills of an experienced staff. Monitoring is systematic but is insufficiently focused on learning objectives, project management and the use of ICT, in the workshop-based courses. Accommodation is adequate but facilities for food technology are old and in need of refurbishment. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

The overall provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the department is very good.
- The GCSE results are good.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are very good.
- Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of art history.
- Use of ICT is very limited.
- There is a lack of confidence in carrying out National Curriculum assessment in Year 9.

Commentary

107 The teachers' assessments of Year 9 pupils in summer 2003 indicated standards as below the national average. However, work seen shows that standards are in line with the national average with boys achieving just as well as girls. By the end of Year 9 pupils have developed a good level of artistic skill using a range of media, successfully applying their knowledge of the basic elements of art. Standards of work using print media are well above average. Pupils carry out research into the work of famous artists and have a good knowledge of the history of art. Standards of drawing are in line with the national average. Overall achievement is good at this stage.

108 Standards at GCSE have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with the national average for boys and for girls. The subject is popular with boys and their work is of a similar standard to that of girls. However, girls tend to get most of the highest GCSE grades. Standards of current work in Year 11 are average and pupils' achievements are good. Pupils make good progress in Year 10 and by the end of Year 11 have developed a range of skills in a variety of two and three-dimensional media. Highly individualised work is tonally strong with a sophisticated use of colour underpinned by good drawing standards.

109 The overall standard of teaching is good. In most lessons it was good, in some very good. However, a little teaching was unsatisfactory because of work lacking challenge and pace. In good lessons objectives were made clear to pupils and the lessons involved teachers demonstrating their skills. Although most lessons involved individual support this was made more difficult by overly large class sizes in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils respond well to the teaching, and behaviour is consistently good or very good. There is a good rapport and mutual respect between teachers and pupils and learning is good throughout. Too little use is made of sketchbooks. The department is fully aware of pupils with special educational needs and

provides appropriate individual support and resources to ensure their achievements are good. ICT is not used sufficiently for the production of teaching and learning resources, pupil research or the making of art.

- 110 Leadership of the department is very good. The head of department leads by example and provides inspiration to other staff. The management of the department is good. However, there needs to be a more informed approach to carrying out National Curriculum teacher assessments in Year 9 to improve confidence in the published results. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. All pupils now make at least satisfactory progress in Year 9 and homework is now regularly set and marked informatively.

Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and, as a result, pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated and learn very well.
- Achievement is good in all years.
- Results in the GCSE in 2003 were below average.

Commentary

- 111 The percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE in 2003 was somewhat below the national average. However, more pupils than average achieved grades A*, A or B. In Years 8 and 9 the standard of work is in line with that found nationally. Pupils work well in pairs and groups. They listen attentively and collaborate purposefully. Pupils respond positively to the creative and well-planned sequence of activities. They show rapid progress in the acquisition of a range of skills, including control over movement, gesture and facial expression. Pupils work at great pace and, in their presentations, demonstrate growing spatial awareness and fluent improvised dialogue.
- 112 Examination groups in Years 10 and 11, representing wide levels of general attainment, work with great enthusiasm and commitment. Their work is mature and sensitive, showing sympathetic understanding of those with whom they work closely. Studio discipline is very good and pupils are courteous and supportive when acting as an audience. The standard of work of several pupils already matches the highest GCSE grades. Overall standards at 16 are average and achievements at 14 and 16 are good.
- 113 Teaching is never less than good and in most lessons is very good. Lessons are very well planned with a sequence of interesting and connected tasks. Learning is very good and pupils respond positively to the brisk pace and inspiring style of teaching, which is underpinned by a high level of expertise and knowledge of the subject. Priority is given to familiarity with the specialist vocabulary of the subject and pupils are confident and accurate in their knowledge. Very good teaching results in powerful motivation of pupils who actively enjoy their studies.
- 114 The subject is very well led and efficiently managed. It makes valuable contributions to the cultural life of the school through its drama clubs and regular productions. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the overall quality of teaching has improved. Pupils now show thorough awareness of the audience in their presentations. GCSE examination results are nearer to the average.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use their practical skills well, enthusing pupils and contributing positively to their progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are positive and as a consequence they work hard.
- Teachers have good discipline, allowing lessons to proceed without interruption.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities is providing a rich musical experience for many pupils and standards of performance are high.

Commentary

- 115 The teacher assessments of 14 year old pupils indicated that standards were well above the national average in summer 2003. These assessments are generous and not a true reflection of pupils' attainments, which are average. Results in the most recent GCSE music examinations were similar to the national average. These results, however, exceeded predictions. Girls performed much better than boys at GCSE.
- 116 Pupils join the school in Year 7 with varied previous musical experience and have overall below average skills, in particular with composition. However, with the benefit of good teaching, teachers' high expectations and pupils' positive attitude to the subject, achievement is good and by age 14 standards are at the expected level. Pupils have good rhythmic qualities and this is contributing to their performance and improvisation skills. This was evident in pupils' Blues performances, maintaining a steady beat during improvised sections.
- 117 The good achievement continues and pupils in the GCSE groups work at the level expected. Pupils' composing skills are well developed. They have a good understanding of the appropriate structure of a piece of music incorporating an introduction and a coda. Higher attaining pupils use their well-established performing skills to compose and perform their compositions. School performances, as heard in the merit assemblies, are of a high standard. Pupils have sound knowledge of the historical developments in music; however, their listening skills are less good with many experiencing difficulty naming important composers of the different periods and describing the main characteristics of different styles of music. The department has a fully inclusive approach, welcoming pupils of all abilities to join the GCSE music course. As a consequence pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and make good progress.
- 118 The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject expertise, using their very good performing skills and their enthusiasm for the subject to motivate and quickly engage pupils' interest. Lessons are planned well to meet the needs of all the pupils, encouraging higher attaining pupils to use their performing expertise to develop composition skills. A strong feature of the teaching is the circulation of the teacher during lessons, advising pupils on how to develop their skills and improve, contributing positively to their composing development. Teachers have good discipline, insisting on quiet during performances, allowing learning to proceed with pace. There are occasions, however, when the pace of the lesson slows. This was most evident during assessments of performances. Here too many pupils were passive and not involved, missing the opportunity to appraise or comment on the performances of other pupils.
- 119 The leadership and the management of the subject are good. There is a clear vision about the future development and the need to maintain and raise standards. Teachers have a range of performing skills, work well as a team and are good role models. The wide range of extra-

curricular ensembles is providing a rich and varied musical experience with challenging activities for gifted and talented pupils. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' self-awareness and spiritual development. Although the development of the use of ICT is in its infancy, it is however beginning to be used effectively to support pupils' composition development. The revised assessment procedures now being trialled in Year 7 are providing a more accurate profile of progress and informing pupils what they can do to improve. The improvement since the last inspection is good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the GCSE examination are well above average.
- Teaching is good and relationships with pupils are very good.
- Leadership is good.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities offered to all pupils.
- Curriculum planning and assessment do not link with the National Curriculum.

Commentary

- 120 Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well above average. There was no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 showed standards just above average. Results in the short course GCSE in 2003 were good with a high number of pupils achieving A*-C grades.
- 121 By the end of Year 9 standards are below average mainly because there is too little time for the subject. Achievements are generally satisfactory. Pupils in Year 7 make good progress in hockey and achieve average standards but in Year 9 standards are well below average in basketball in terms of performance and knowledge and understanding of the game. Pupils know the importance of the effect of exercise on the body and know that a warm-up is important before exercise. By the end of Year 11 standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. In hockey, pupils in Year 11 demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the game and understand the tactics of attack and defence in a game. They dribble the ball with control and have achieved well in their work.
- 122 Standards in the GCSE course are average. Achievement is high in anatomy where pupils in Year 10 made very good progress in learning the main bones of the body. Pupils take pride in their written work, which is in line with expectations, but make insufficient use of word-processing skills to enhance this presentation. Pupils in Year 11 improve their leadership skills in the Junior Sports Leaders Award and this contributes to their personal development. They learn the skills of basic coaching and improve their knowledge and understanding of a range of activities. Many pupils have achieved success at local, regional and national level in a range of sports and school teams are successful, particularly in football and netball. Gifted and talented pupils achieve particularly well.
- 123 Teaching is good, with some very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 that is helping drive up GCSE standards. Teachers' knowledge of the activities taught is good but that of the National Curriculum is less good. This is notable in lesson plans. Teachers have a very good relationship with their pupils, who respond to the challenges presented in the lessons and learn well. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils know what is expected of them in lessons. Pupils with a special educational need are integrated well into all lessons and make good progress. More able pupils are catered for in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and team sports, and participation rates are high.

- 124 Behaviour is often excellent in lessons and pupils work co-operatively in pairs and in groups. Some pupils in Year 10 particularly, though, have an unsatisfactory attitude to their work and show little interest in the GCSE course. Marking of coursework is regular but it is unsatisfactory, as assessments are not matched to predicted examination grades at GCSE and pupils are not aware of the progress they are making. There are few comments from teachers to help pupils improve their work.
- 125 The head of department is a good leader and role model and a very good teacher. She sets high standards and all teachers share her enthusiasm and work well together. The prestigious Sportsmark award to the school reflects the commitment of teachers to the subject. Teaching is monitored well and examination results are analysed closely. There is no curriculum plan to ensure coverage of the curriculum and assessment does not reflect national recommendations. There has been a reduction in curriculum time for Year 9 pupils since 1998 and there is insufficient time in Years 10 and 11 to cover the National Curriculum. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. There has been an improvement in the quality of accommodation and resources; health and safety issues have been addressed. The accommodation is, however, still not good enough and this, together with insufficient time, is holding back standards, particularly in Years 7 to 9. The GCSE results have improved since 1998.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good standard of teaching and learning enables pupils to achieve well.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to apply ICT.
- Links with business are not strong and there are few opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt in real life situations.
- The head of department is focused on developing strategies in order to improve GCSE results.

Commentary

- 126 The subject is not studied in Years 7 to 9. Results in GCSE examinations were well below average in 2003 and pupils did less well than in their other subjects. Current standards are below average for pupils following the GCSE course. Pupils demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of sales promotion strategies but find it more difficult to apply it to business situations when writing a report on advertising. However, this represents good achievement for those taking this course, as pupils make advances in developing their knowledge and understanding of business terminology especially to make effective contributions to the class discussion.
- 127 Pupils achieve well in lessons because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Good subject knowledge is used to explain issues well and check pupils' understanding of business topics, particularly in questioning sessions. A range of teaching methods ensures pupils' concentration throughout lessons and there are good opportunities for pupils to apply ICT, particularly in completing coursework assignments. There are too few links with business and consequently insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt in real life situations. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good because of effective classroom management skills, good relationships and the support given to them on an individual basis.
- 128 The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There is clear departmental documentation and the head of business studies is focused on developing

strategies, including examination revision techniques, in order to improve GCSE results. This subject was not inspected in 1998.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP (including personal, social and health education)

Citizenship is taught within the school's personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum, sometimes as a discrete topic. It is taught in Year 7 by form tutors and in other years by teams of teachers, some of whom are specialists in particular areas.

The provision for citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management ensure the good quality of teaching.
- Very good progress has been made in the introduction of citizenship.
- The international dimension is strong.
- There are no reports to parents or assessments of pupils' progress in citizenship.

Commentary

- 129 By the end of Year 9, standards are average. Pupils have good subject knowledge and understanding of a range of issues such as human rights; they know the importance of the need for rules in society. By the end of Year 11 standards are average, but in Year 10 pupils' understanding of the law and human rights is not good enough. In a Year 11 class pupils discussed the plight of refugees from Bosnia and most were able to understand why refugees sought asylum. In Year 9 pupils discussed the positive and negative effects of cannabis and realised that not all drugs are harmful to the body. Other subjects make a positive contribution to citizenship. In geography the international dimension is covered well. Pupils discussed the reasons for Japan's economic success in a challenging and good quality lesson. Pupils' achievements by the ages of 14 and 16 are satisfactory.
- 130 The school is successful in providing a programme that enables pupils to become informed citizens. Knowledgeable teachers are supported well by outside speakers and the school's international work is also significant. Pupils' enquiry and communication skills are developed well and their views are valued well by the school. The personal and social education and tutorial programme gives pupils responsibility and develops their skills of participation well. Pupils show the benefits of these in School Council and community activities.
- 131 The quality of teaching is good overall, but in Years 10 and 11 is only satisfactory. Learning is mostly good but some pupils' poor attitudes to the subject and occasional unsatisfactory behaviour slows progress at times. Lesson planning is good and some is very good. Learning objectives are clear and teachers use discussion effectively to ensure pupils have the opportunity to state their views and opinions. Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards and *PowerPoint* to aid presentation of lessons. Good use is made of visiting speakers and the police are regular contributors to the subject.
- 132 The school has made very good progress on the introduction of citizenship in the curriculum, particularly in the lower school. This is due to the very good leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and produces a wide range of supportive materials for all teachers. There are no reports to parents or assessment procedures on the progress pupils are making in citizenship. The international dimension of the school contributes well to the citizenship curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 4 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 4 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 4 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 1 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| 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).