

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HARTSHILL SCHOOL**

Hartshill, Nuneaton

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125766

Headteacher: Mr R Turner

Lead inspector: A Briggs

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 258650

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

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### **Terms used in this report**

*Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at Key Stage 3, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at Key Stage 4 of their education. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils of all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) or the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). A very small number of pupils may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (AS), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard.*

*Inspectors judge the standards reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The judgements about pupils' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those whose pupils have similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.*

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1074
School address:	Church Road Hartshill Nuneaton Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV10 0NA
Telephone number:	01247 639 2237
Fax number:	01247 639 4641
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Twidle
Date of previous inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hartshill School is a similar size to most other secondary schools. It has almost equal numbers of boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16. The school serves the community of Hartshill, which adjoins Nuneaton. Pupils come from areas which, overall, are below average in social and economic measures compared to the national average. The pupil population is stable with few leaving or joining part way through the year. The attainment of pupils coming into Year 7, as shown by their end of Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science, is average. Their attainment in other subjects ranges from well below average to average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and there are hardly any whose home language is not English. A bigger than average proportion of pupils have identified special educational needs although the proportion with statements of need is broadly average. Most pupils are on the register for specific and moderate learning difficulties, there are nine pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school achieved Technology College status in 1995. It has Investors in People and the Sportsmark awards. The school currently occupies two sites separated by a congested road. A large and increasing proportion of pupils continue in education when they leave the school at the age of 16.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15208	A Briggs	Lead inspector	
19693	S Hall	Lay inspector	
28199	P Lawley	Team inspector	English; English as an additional language
31238	G Clubb	Team inspector	Mathematics
32367	J Pike	Team inspector	Science; Art and design
33018	A Read	Team inspector	Geography
15163	N McDonough	Team inspector	History
30128	S Stanley	Team inspector	Music; Religious education
29364	C Tapley	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT); Special educational needs
32208	D Aitken	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages; Citizenship
15163	E Deeson	Team inspector	Design and technology
33131	G Hayes	Team inspector	Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

**e-Qualitas Limited**

Langshaw  
 Pastens Road  
 Limpsfield Chart  
 Oxted  
 Surrey  
 RH8 0RE

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>38</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a poor school providing poor value for money.** Teaching and learning are poor so pupils significantly underachieve. Standards have declined over the last three years. The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory and governance is poor.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Teaching is poor overall and pupils are badly underachieving as a result. In physical education, design and technology, art and design and in English in Years 7 to 9 teaching is good so pupils currently achieve well in these subjects
- The headteacher has a clear and appropriate vision for the future direction of the school but there is a lack of consistency and rigour in many aspects of the school's work as a result of unsatisfactory management and poor governance
- The care and welfare of pupils are good
- The school has reacted too slowly to changes in its circumstances because it does not analyse data sufficiently to check it is identifying and tackling underachievement or ensure relevant new ideas are followed through
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory because most subjects are providing an inadequate education for pupils and important statutory requirements are not met but the range of extracurricular activities is good
- Specialist support for pupils with special educational needs has improved very recently but is unsatisfactory because provision is inconsistent across the school

**Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.** The school was judged to have serious weaknesses previously. Progress has been slow and many of the key issues have not been adequately dealt with. Standards have fallen. Teaching is now of a worse quality and pupils are underachieving in most subjects.

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

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

**Achievement is poor.** Pupils' standards when they come to the school are average. Standards are below average by the end of Year 9 and pupils' achievement is poor. Standards are well below average by the end of Year 11 and achievement is poor. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to their classmates. Pupils identified as gifted and talented achieve better than others but their achievement is still unsatisfactory overall. Boys and girls achieve similar standards but girls standards have dropped considerably in many subjects because of the increased focus on raising the achievement of boys.

**Pupils' personal qualities and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory.** Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory but their attendance is below average. Behaviour has improved and is now satisfactory in nearly all lessons. Punctuality is unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a poor quality of education.**

**Teaching and learning are poor** because of the very high proportion of lessons that fail to reach a satisfactory standard. Pupils learn well in art and design, design and technology and physical education and in Years 7 to 9 in English because teaching is good. In all other subjects it is unsatisfactory with the exception of mathematics where it is satisfactory and history where it is poor. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching is a result of teachers underestimating what the pupils are capable of achieving and failing to modify work to meet the needs of all pupils.

The quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory; many subjects give a less than satisfactory level of provision. Extracurricular activities support subject learning well and provide many very good sporting opportunities. Good attention is given to the care and welfare of pupils, with good support for those who need help because of behavioural difficulties, child protection concerns or other personal circumstances. Pupils' receive good personal guidance, but advice to help them reach their learning targets is unsatisfactory. Satisfactory partnership is developed with parents and with the local and wider community. Links with other schools are good and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and their achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory.** The headteacher provides clear vision and sound leadership but not all staff and governors share his commitment to improving the quality of teaching. The leadership and management of other key staff are unsatisfactory throughout the school. The systems for ensuring consistency in the school are not working. Governance is poor; governors are not taking firm enough action to address the school's weaknesses and do not meet their statutory requirements.

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

Parents' confidence in the school has declined since the previous inspection but is satisfactory overall. They are particularly concerned about behaviour and the quality of teaching. In their questionnaire responses, they feel their children are making good progress but teaching is not good. Parents also have concerns about the way in which the school keeps them informed about the progress of their children. Pupils were generally positive about their school, which they thought was a good school to be at and one where they were taught well and expected to work hard. They were more self-critical about their behaviour than the inspection team. Discussion with pupils showed that bullying did occur but that it was not a concern for them as, once identified, it was effectively resolved.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Raise pupils' achievement by improving the quality of teaching, particularly the expectation of what pupils can do
- Ensure governors carry out their roles in checking the work of the school and taking appropriate actions
- Ensure that policies are implemented consistently at all levels and that data is analysed fully to drive whole-school improvement
- Ensure managers apply monitoring systems more consistently and rigorously and tackle underperformance fearlessly

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Ensure all pupils have their full entitlement in ICT and religious education, provide reports to parents on their child's progress in citizenship and provide a daily act of collective worship

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' standards on joining the school are average but by the time they leave Year 11 their standards are well below average. Their achievement is **poor** because they do not reach anything like the standards of which they are capable.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCSE examinations have declined over the last three years and in 2003 were well below average
- In Year 9, pupils achieve well in English, art and design, physical education and design and technology because they are taught well. They underachieve in all other subjects except mathematics where achievement is satisfactory
- In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well in art and design, physical education and design and technology. They underachieve in all other subjects except mathematics
- Pupils do not make enough progress in the development of their literacy and mathematical skills
- Pupils underachieve significantly in history, and in Spanish, citizenship and religious education in Years 10 and 11

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.6 (32.2)	33 (33)
Mathematics	33.4 (32.1)	35 (35)
Science	32.8 (33.0)	34 (33)

*There were 220 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Mathematics results are strongest while those in English are weakest. Comparatively fewer pupils reach the higher levels in English, than in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, that is schools whose pupils gained similar end of Year 6 test results, results in Science were above average, in mathematics were below average and in English were well below average. Overall, results were below average but have been improving at a rate that is above the national trend.

2. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average in art and design and average in physical education. They are below average in all other subjects with the exception of music and religious education where they are well below. Pupils achieve well in English, art and design, physical education and design and technology because of the good quality teaching they receive. They achieve satisfactorily in mathematics. Pupils underachieve in all other subjects because of unsatisfactory or poor teaching. The improved standards in English are as a result of much improved teaching that incorporates the strands of the national initiatives really well. Overall, standards are below average and boys and girls achieve poorly.



### 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	31 (32)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	75 (95)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	90 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	26.5 (28.5)	35 (35)

*There were 202 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. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well below average. This was lower than those noted in the previous report. Results have declined over the last three years even though the attainment of pupils on entering the school has risen. Girls' results dropped to similar levels as those of boys and were much worse than at the time of the last inspection. The proportions of pupils gaining five or more GCSE passes at A\* to G dropped significantly in 2003 and was much lower than at the time of the last inspection. Only three quarters of the pupils entered for GCSE examinations left school with five or more passes. The proportion of pupils leaving school without any GCSE or GNVQ passes rose dramatically in 2003, with 10 per cent of pupils leaving school without any formal qualification. One reason for this was that the school endeavoured to enter as many pupils as possible even if they were predicted to fail the examination. Results in science have improved since the last inspection while those of English and mathematics have dropped. However, all three core subjects' results have improved upon those of 2002. The school failed to meet the targets that it had set for 2003.

4. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average in art and design and in the ICT GNVQ course. In design and technology they are average. They are below average in all other subjects with the exception of history, Spanish, music, citizenship and religious education where they are well below average. Pupils achieve well in art and design, physical education and design and technology as a result of good teaching. In Years 10 and 11, attendance and punctuality, whilst improving, still impacts negatively on areas such as coursework and continuity of learning. Pupils underachieve badly in history because of poor teaching. Pupils do not follow a course of study in religious education that meets the Agreed Syllabus and their achievement is poor. Standards in several subjects are currently higher than at the time of the 2003 examinations but are well below average overall. Achievement is poor overall; girls and boys achieve similarly.

5. Pupils have poor literacy and mathematical skills because of an inconsistent approach across the school to developing these skills. Pupils' competence in ICT is unsatisfactory because not enough use of computers is made in lessons. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are provided with some opportunities to really excel such as the 'Brainybox' initiative. This, coupled with the chance to enter mathematics and art and design early enable them to make better achievement than their classmates. However, in many lessons they are not stretched enough because teachers do not modify work and do not realise that these pupils are capable of much higher standards. Overall, their achievement is unsatisfactory. Lower-attaining pupils generally make proportionally better progress than others as they are able to cope with the low level of work set as a result of the teachers' general low expectations. The support provided by subject teachers for individual pupils is therefore variable. The school has focused on raising boys' achievement since the last inspection but this has not worked and as a result of the increased focus on gearing lessons to boys, the achievement of girls has dropped.

6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is poor. The provision for their education is inconsistent across the school. Pupils make better progress where lessons are taught by specialist teachers or where learning support assistants are effectively used. Achievement in reading is improving, especially in years 7 and 8 due to the withdrawal support developed over the last six months. In many classes the use of different materials to suit pupils' capabilities is inconsistent; behaviour management is not always secure; and extra support is lacking in large

classes containing significant numbers of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. A significant minority of pupils underachieve because of poor attendance.

### Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are **satisfactory**. Pupils' personal development is **satisfactory**. Attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**. There has been insufficient improvement in these aspects since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance levels are below those found in similar schools and information about attendance is not always recorded accurately
- Pupils often arrive late to lessons and so miss out on important information
- Pupils respond well when teachers expect high standards of work and good behaviour
- A few teachers are not effective in managing disruptive behaviour and this has a detrimental effect on learning
- Although pupils often tolerate mundane teaching, they sometimes switch off and learn very little
- Incidents of bullying have reduced and are dealt with effectively
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about living in a multi-cultural society

### Commentary

7. At the time of the last inspection the systems for recording attendance accurately were not in place and this is still the case. Not all staff know how to complete the electronic registers correctly. Others do not have access to computers at the time of morning registration and complete paper copies instead; details are entered onto the system later in the day. The education welfare service has recently conducted a detailed analysis of the situation and its report provides a comprehensive list of recommendations to improve the recording and monitoring of attendance. The school is now in a good position to move forward on improving its procedures.

8. The school's reported attendance levels for the past year show no improvement on those at the time of the last inspection. Reported unauthorised absence is very high compared to other schools mainly because, for six months of the year, the school failed to record the reasons given by parents when their children were absent from school. An attendance assistant has now been appointed and has made a good start in ensuring that reasons for absence are recorded. Useful information for staff is now provided and unexplained absences are followed up. The school celebrates and rewards good and improving attendance.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	4.8
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

9. Too many pupils are not arriving to their lessons on time. Teachers either wait until they think everyone is present or have to repeat instructions several times as pupils enter the room up to 10 minutes after the start of the lesson. In either case, valuable learning time is lost. The situation is at its worst when pupils have to cross a main road as they walk from the main building to the annex for their mathematics and religious education lessons. Although a few pupils are late for school, pupils' punctuality at the start of the day has improved since the last inspection. This is because a member of the senior management team now stands at the gate chivvying pupils along and pupils are rewarded for punctuality and sanctioned for persistent lateness.

10. Nearly all pupils are well behaved and enthusiastic about their work, but their attitudes and behaviour range from excellent to very poor. This is because of the variation in the teacher's expectations. A few teachers are skilled at creating a stimulating environment for learning. They

challenge pupils of all abilities to think for themselves whilst creating an atmosphere where pupils have no fear of failure. In these lessons pupils are enthusiastic and confident learners. They listen carefully, are keen to answer questions, sustain concentration and really try their best. As a result, they achieve well. There are very few behaviour problems in these lessons because the pupils know that the teachers will not stand for any disruption and will deal swiftly with any minor issues.

11. At the time of the last report the inspectors found that ‘throughout the school, many pupils are fairly undemanding as learners and passively accept what is provided’. This is still the case; in many of the dull lessons pupils sit quietly bored as the teacher talks for long periods, take their time when copying work off the board and only answer questions when they are asked directly. These pupils are not learning enough and are underachieving.

12. In lessons where dull teaching is combined with the teachers’ inability to manage behaviour, some pupils become very disruptive. They chat when the teacher is talking, call out, make silly noises, move around the classroom and misuse equipment. Some teachers ignore this behaviour and carry on regardless even though very few pupils are paying attention; others spend fruitless time trying to control the class. Hardly any learning takes place in these lessons and very little is achieved.

13. Overall spiritual awareness is satisfactory and is promoted well through thought-provoking assemblies and through subjects such as art, English and music. In most other subjects there are very few opportunities for pupils to think about their feelings and the meaning of their lives.

14. Provision for moral and social development is satisfactory. Although the school has worked hard to develop clear procedures to manage behaviour and improve pupils’ social development, they are not used effectively by all teachers and a minority of pupils do not feel they are always treated fairly. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem in school and that the members of senior management deal effectively with anti-social incidents. Permanent exclusions are lower than in similar schools as the school does not give up easily on its pupils. The number of fixed term exclusions is higher than other schools. Numbers peaked around the time of the last inspection and are now decreasing. Most of these exclusions were sanctions for defiance and verbal abuse.

***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	979	78	2
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	1	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	76	0	0
Information not obtained	6	0	0

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

15. Pupils' respect of others beliefs and values are sound. They study other faiths in religious education and other world cultures in art, music and English, but, as at the time of the last inspection, opportunities for pupils to consider issues which face young people living in a multi-cultural British society are poor.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **poor** quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is poor overall and has declined since the last inspection. The learning opportunities provided for pupils through the curriculum are unsatisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The quality of support and guidance for pupils is good and has a positive effect on personal development. The school works well with other schools and colleges to support pupils' achievement and satisfactorily with parents and the community.

### Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching is poor and leads to poor learning. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is poor.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Around one lesson in four fails to reach a satisfactory standard
- There is not enough teaching that is of a really good standard
- Teaching is good in art and design, physical education, design and technology and in English in Years 7 to 9, as a result pupils achieve well
- Much of the unsatisfactory teaching results from teachers setting their sights too low and trying to teach material that is too easy for the pupils concerned
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and fails to inform them how well they are doing or what they need to do to get better
- There is too much inconsistency of teaching and in the use of effective teaching methods throughout the school and even within departments

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 123 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (2%)	13 (11%)	32 (26%)	46 (37%)	26 (21%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)

*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.*

16. Teaching is good in art and design, physical education, design and technology and in Years 7 to 9 in English. Teaching is satisfactory in mathematics, English in Years 10 and 11 and unsatisfactory in all other subjects except history where it is poor. Parents feel that teaching is less than satisfactory and the inspectors agree. The quality of the teaching is not monitored rigorously enough and the senior leadership team need to re-evaluate what constitutes 'good' teaching.

17. The biggest reason for teaching being poor is that pupils' low aspirations are matched by the low expectations of many teachers. The cause of the poor learning is not the behaviour or attitudes of the pupils, it is the poor teaching they receive. Much of the unsatisfactory teaching results from teachers trying to teach material that is too easy for the pupils concerned. This, in turn, leads pupils to become bored and to mess about in response to the dull, uninspiring lessons. This misbehaviour usually takes the form of pupils simply not doing as they are told; they rarely disrupt others but will not follow the teacher's instructions.

18. Pupils significantly underachieve because the pace of learning is frequently slow, or there is not enough variety in the activities, so that pupils' concentration becomes patchy and their learning less efficient. For example, in a Year 9 drama class pupils were required to draw costumes and

colour them in for nearly an hour. They were bored by the mundane low-level task and became distracted. In the poorest lessons, teachers condone pupils' low aspirations and poor standards are praised, rather than criticised. In one Year 11 GCSE history lesson a boy slept for twenty minutes without the temporary teacher even noticing. When the teacher finally realised, he did little to interest the boy in the lesson, so the boy returned to sleep. Whilst this was not typical of the quality of teaching from permanent staff, it was part of the pupils' daily diet.

19. The other main weakness is inconsistency. Marking is good in some subjects but poor in others. Some teachers use computers and interactive whiteboards well while others do not use them at all. In fact, for almost all aspects of teaching there are examples of both good and unsatisfactory practice in the school. The methods for teaching literacy and mathematics as basic skills in all subjects are poor, even though some progress has been made since the previous inspection. It is the lack of consistency that is of real concern.

20. However, whilst teaching is unsatisfactory in the vast majority of subjects, this picture masks a situation where there are pockets of excellent teaching in some subjects such as English and art and design. These examples of excellence show clearly that the pupils are able to respond really well to exciting and imaginative teaching. Many teachers within the English department have taken useful ideas and approaches from national initiatives and their lessons have a variety of tasks that are well matched to the pupils' needs and keep them focused and motivated. This style of teaching is just what the pupils want and they really enjoy lessons where they are actively involved and contribute to their own learning. Much can be learnt from these teachers, throughout the school.

#### **Example of outstanding practice in a Year 11 English lesson**

##### **This exemplifies how to teach persuasive language and the use of rhetorical devices.**

The lesson featured high teacher expectations, varied lesson activities, high quality computer-based resources and teacher questioning. Pupils explored the persuasive techniques in a speech by President Bush given just after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Pupils were exposed to a number of newspaper headlines from the period immediately after 9/11. Through rigorous questioning, the teacher focused pupils' attention on the individual words of each headline. Pupils' comments reflected the demanding nature of the questions explaining the precise emotional reaction of readers to each word. Teacher and pupils interacted at a rapid pace, clearly enjoying the intellectual challenge. As they did this, they absorbed voice and language patterns from the audio recording. They went on to assess each other's analyses, before drawing their own conclusions. A cunningly-devised succession of paired work, small group discussion and whole-class question and answer sequences confirmed two clear outcomes. Firstly, pupils reflected on their own work in a cooperative manner. Secondly, their level of skill in documenting and diagnosing the use of rhetorical language was extended really well. Thorough planning, excellent subject knowledge and expert use of resources were at the heart of this lesson. This led to an atmosphere of strong pupil commitment, huge confidence in volunteering and sharing ideas, and excellent achievement because all were inspired by the teacher to participate fully. Perhaps more importantly, it resulted in articulate, confident pupils who could relate their learning to the world they live in.

21. When pupils with special educational needs are taught by specialist support staff they make good progress. In most lessons they are given work that helps them to achieve in line with other pupils. On occasions, they achieve better than their classmates because they cope well with the low level tasks set by teachers. Teaching assistants are used effectively in design and technology, geography and mathematics but at best this support is patchy, overall. Where a department takes on a unified approach to teaching pupils with special educational needs the teaching of these pupils is good, as is the case in the physical education department where skills are carefully broken down into manageable chunks to make them easier to learn. Although individual education plans are now in place they are not used by all teachers in the planning of lessons.

22. The quality of everyday assessment of pupils' work and the information about how well they are doing are poor and are having only a limited impact on pupils' progress and raising standards. A substantial amount of data is collected on the pupils when they enter the school but the current systems do not accurately record this information so the school is unable to provide reliable data for many areas of its performance. Although the school has a common assessment policy, it is used inconsistently. Assessment is used very well in art and design, where marking is thorough, involves

pupil input and relates to the examination criteria. However, in most other subjects pupils have an increasing awareness of their potential grades and levels but less idea of how to achieve them because teachers do not always tell them what to do to improve their work. In religious education there is no evidence of assessment having taken place.

### **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is **unsatisfactory**. Many subjects fail to provide an acceptable level of coverage of the main requirements. There is a good range of extra clubs and activities. The school does not provide a statutory daily act of collective worship or meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The school has sufficient learning resources but not enough specialist teachers, accommodation is unsatisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils do not cover the requirements for citizenship and not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive their entitlement to religious education and the National Curriculum requirements for ICT
- A good range of vocational courses meets the needs well of pupils aged 14 to 16
- A good range of extracurricular activities to enhance pupils learning
- The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is unsatisfactory because it relies too much on individual teachers rather than concise planning

### **Commentary**

23. Pupils are not given access to the National Curriculum for citizenship in all years, and in Years 10 and 11 many pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop their ICT skills or to meet statutory requirements in this subject. In addition, the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Years 10 and 11 are not met.

24. There are several strengths in the curriculum. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is enhanced by a wide range of vocational courses within the school day, an improvement since the previous report. In Years 10 and 11, higher attainers are stretched by taking some GCSE examinations early. Subject planning does not always identify how teaching is to meet the needs of higher and lower-attaining pupils and this leads to some instances, for example in history and modern foreign languages, where work and teaching styles are not well matched to the needs of the pupils and their achievement suffers.

25. A real strength of the school is the good range of extracurricular opportunities provided to enhance pupils learning. Pupils really value the range of activities offered. The range of sports-based activities is very good. Several subject areas enrich their provision by providing 'drop-in' clubs which offer study support and extension activities for pupils to gain extra help with their subjects outside the school day; this is particularly strong in mathematics. A significant number of pupils participate in instrumental and vocal music lessons provided by visiting teachers and pupils can join choirs, ensembles and keyboard groups. Pupils also benefit from the provision of a range of subject related excursions, as well as foreign exchange visits including sporting trips to the U.S.A. and Wales.

26. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is unsatisfactory because it is not planned well and the quality of teaching is variable and dependent on how interested the teacher is in the topic and if they have actually read the scheme of work. This results in a patchy coverage of the topics and some uninspiring lessons.

27. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory overall. They are supported particularly well by an imaginative school-initiated project using the Internet, and regular weekend classes. This enables them to meet and communicate with similar pupils in other schools, to help each other, bounce off ideas, and extend learning through friendly competition and cooperation. Elsewhere, provision is often left to subjects, so the implementation is patchy and not always monitored to see if there has been any impact on standards. Provision in physical education is good because outside expertise is brought in to help advanced pupils. In mathematics and art and design

pupils can take their GCSE examinations a year early and then follow the Advanced Subsidiary award (AS) in Year 11. Whilst this is the kind of thing a specialist technology college should be doing, most of the pupils only achieve a grade C in the GCSE examination and could possibly gain a higher mark with a further year of study.

28. Overall the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory because it varies greatly according to the subject or particular lesson attended. Sometimes the curriculum is well adapted whilst at other times their special needs are not addressed at all or they are given mundane and unchallenging tasks to complete as alternatives to the class activity. Provision is improving in Years 7 to 9 but in Years 10 and 11 there is not enough variety of courses to suit pupils with special educational needs although plans for more appropriate courses are now being made.

29. In a significant number of areas, the quality of temporary or unsuitably qualified staff is such that pupils badly underachieve. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school is based on two sites, divided by a narrow, congested road. Crossing is difficult and dangerous, and curriculum time is curtailed because pupils frequently arrive late when moving between the sites. A number of dilapidated, temporary huts with leaking roofs have a dispiriting effect on pupils and teachers. Nevertheless, teachers do their best to make the most of them by placing attractive displays on the walls. The library is too small and there are not enough books. However, it is well managed and presented as an attractive place to learn.

### **Care, guidance and support**

This is a strength of the school. **Good** attention is given to the care and welfare of pupils. Guidance given to pupils is **good** overall. There is good support for those who need help because of behavioural difficulties, child protection concerns or personal problems. The school takes good steps to find out about pupils' views and to act upon them.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school makes very good use of outside agencies to enhance its guidance and support for pupils
- The risk involved when pupils cross the road which separates the two school sites is high
- Good use is made of data to set personal development targets for pupils and to track their progress against them
- Careers education and guidance is restricted by the curriculum provision and pupils' access to information

### **Commentary**

30. The overall standards set for the care, protection and safety of pupils are good. A suitably trained and experienced person has overall responsibility for child protection matters and the school has a clear policy, with procedures that comply fully with those used by the local Area Child Protection Committee. The school provides regular whole-staff training sessions. Records of child protection cases and of those pupils in public care are stored securely, and liaison with other agencies that work with these pupils is sensitive and professional. There are effective safeguards for protecting pupils when they are using the Internet.

31. The health and safety policy provides comprehensive guidelines about what is required. The person with overall responsibility has a good working knowledge of the requirements and takes advice from the local authority who monitor regularly. Procedures relating to risk assessments, fire drills, first-aid training and the testing of equipment are regularly carried out. The school provides information about road safety to Year 7 pupils because it is aware that pupils are at high risk when crossing the busy road that separates the two sites. From discussions and observation of behaviour it is clear that the pupils themselves do not share this understanding. Insufficient staff supervision and the number of crossings required by the timetabling and location of lessons, make the road a higher risk situation than it need be.

32. Good use is made of data to set personal development targets for individual pupils and to track their progress against them. Pupils' academic progress is reviewed on a regular basis and is shared with parents but the procedures are not accurate and are used inconsistently. Most pupils are aware of the level at which they are working. Pupils who are working at a level that is below their target are normally mentored by their form tutors. Targets are also set for pupils' personal development, particularly those with problems of anti-social behaviour. These systems are much better and progress is carefully monitored by heads of year. The twenty-minute tutorials observed at the beginning of the day were predominantly social occasions for the pupils and provided little in the way of care and guidance. Pupils sat around doing very little of value in these sessions. Pupils generally have a high regard for their form tutors and feel they can take problems to them. Pupils can also get confidential help and advice on any sort of problem from the counsellor weekly, and from Connexions, which has two well staffed offices in school. Pupils with behavioural problems are well supported at school by a member of staff. Youth workers from the local community give valuable help to those Year 9 pupils who are particularly disinterested in school life.

33. Careers education and guidance is satisfactory overall and is part of PSHE. Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 receive thorough and impartial careers education and guidance through the school's programmes for work experience and outside speakers, and of the high quality input from Connexions staff. The latter was seen in action in a Year 10 lesson that introduced the work of Connexions and established a very positive relationship with pupils. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 currently receive no careers education. A real weakness is that pupils throughout the school do not have any access to a library of careers information because all resources are kept in offices which, because of pupil records, are kept locked when not being used by Connexions staff. There is no careers policy in use at present. An action plan shows intent to improve provision by producing schemes of work, extending work-related activities and doing formal evaluation.

34. The school's arrangements for welcoming new pupils into the school are very good and were praised by parents and both older and younger pupils. Pupils' views are sought through occasional questionnaires and through the school council. The school takes pupils' views seriously and a recent outcome was the creation of a chat room for Year 7 pupils to talk to those in Year 11 about any problems to do with being new. This has improved since the last inspection.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents and the community are **satisfactory**. Links with other schools are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Through its technology status, the school has strengthened its links with other local schools
- Despite the school's efforts to reach out to parents, parents' views of the school are less favourable than those found in other schools
- Pupils' annual reports do not contain enough information about how pupils can improve their work or inform parents of their child's progress in citizenship

### **Commentary**

35. Through its technology college status, the school has successfully developed its gifted and talented 'Brainybox' initiative which provides opportunities for higher attainers to participate in a wide range of activities designed to improve their thinking skills. Pupils from neighbouring secondary schools meet together for specialist sessions and communicate through e-mail, for example to share ideas and evaluate each other's work. This has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and achievement. Through the appointment of a transition manager, the school has established good links with local primary schools. By working closely with staff and pupils, he has developed beneficial arrangements for the transfer of Year 6 pupils, and encouraged liaison in various subject areas. For example, Hartshill teachers have observed literacy lessons in the primary schools and Year 6 pupils use the sports facilities at Hartshill. The primary schools value these opportunities and feel that Year 6 pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. The school has satisfactory links with local colleges though its work related programmes.



36. The school has worked hard to involve parents in the life of the school. The newsletters keep parents informed about future events and give them good information about how to support their children at home. In his weekly column, the headteacher readily celebrates the school's successes, but does not shy away from writing about issues such as isolated incidents of poor behaviour outside school or lateness. The school consults parents on topics such as homework and pupil behaviour through meetings and questionnaires. The recently re-launched parent teacher association acts as a sounding board for parents' views as well as organising fundraising and social events.

37. The school recognises that a significant minority of parents do not view the school in a positive light. Parents have concerns about behaviour and bullying which are not shared by the findings of this inspection. The school acknowledges that some staff are reluctant to contact home and that the school telephone system can result in excessive delays in answering incoming calls.

38. A significant minority of parents who returned the questionnaire were not happy with the information the school provides about how their children are getting on. The issue was also raised at the recent governors' annual meeting with parents. Pupils' annual reports are generally satisfactory. However, they do not contain enough information about what their children need to do to improve their work. Parents also receive a helpful progress sheet which gives a good overview of how their child is getting on in all subjects except citizenship. The school invites parents to an annual consultation to discuss their children's progress. In Years 7 and 8 this meeting is with tutors, not the subject teachers and this can limit the opportunity for detailed discussion about progress. The school has plans to resolve this in the very near future in response to parents' views.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **sound** leadership through a clear, purposeful vision for developing the school. The leadership of other key staff is **unsatisfactory**, as is the school's management. Governance is **poor**. Many weaknesses identified in the previous report continue to be present in the school or have declined.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors fail to meet their statutory responsibilities and are not rigorous with monitoring the school's work or supportive enough of the headteacher in tackling weak teaching
- Weaknesses in leadership and management at middle and senior management level and by teachers in the classroom mean systems and policies are not applied rigorously enough
- The vision of the headteacher provides a clear, appropriate direction for improvement but not all governors and staff share it
- School self-evaluation procedures are good and provide an honest account of the strengths and weaknesses
- The school development plans identify the real problems and give clear ideas on how to tackle them; unfortunately, subject leaders do not pay enough attention to them
- Systems for analysing statistical information are not effective and result in inaccurate information being distributed and relied upon throughout the school

### Commentary

39. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the improvements needed and has done his utmost to share this with the governing body and the staff. He is committed to improving standards. His determination, combined with his honest and accurate self-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school shows he understands what needs to be done. He is not complacent and aims for the school, to provide the best possible education for its pupils. He has not received the necessary support from key members of the governing body or from managers within the school to achieve his vision. There has been a lack of support from governors and subject leaders to implement the difficult decisions necessary to replace weak staff and improve the quality of teaching.

40. Leadership at senior and middle levels is not having the necessary impact on improving teaching and learning even though the monitoring systems are well structured. Leaders are not effective in ensuring that the school's policies and procedures are applied consistently across the school. Improving the quality of teaching is a high priority and staff are involved in lesson observations and target setting as part of performance management, but leaders do not prioritise in enough detail to make sure that classroom practices are fully monitored. The school's own analysis of teaching indicates much room for improvement. Guidance about what constitutes good teaching is provided for teachers but is largely ineffective because there is a lack of rigour and decisiveness with its implementation. Improvement since the previous inspection has not been fast enough. There are still staff who are complacent about being placed in 'serious weaknesses' at the time of the previous report. This further underpins the general lack of commitment to the improvement so urgently needed.

41. Since the previous inspection the governors and the headteacher have developed a new vision for the school aimed at the care, welfare and achievement of pupils. The school has made satisfactory progress in developing its 'Caring and Sharing' ethos which has resulted in an improvement in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The necessary improvement in teaching identified in the last inspection report has not yet been achieved. Within the governing body there are key members, including an ex teacher from the school, that are friends with a number of current teaching staff and this makes tough decisions regarding staffing issues difficult to carry out. The governing body misunderstand their fundamental role of ensuring the best quality education for the pupils, and fail to set a clear direction for improvement and give the headteacher the support he needs to deal with the problems with weak teaching. Governors are provided with sufficient documentation and information by the school. However, there is a lack of monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school and insufficient rigour in holding the school to account for the quality of its education. There is a resistance to change particularly if it involves replacing staff. In terms of the curriculum, governors know the subject areas which are strong but are not aware that important statutory responsibilities are not met. Although aware of the school's declining results, there is no clear understanding of the standards achieved in the classroom.

42. The school development plan has exactly the right objectives and identifies many of the weaknesses noted in this report. Where actions have been taken, such as tackling bad behaviour throughout the school, there have been clear benefits. Data used to assess pupils' attainment on entry to the school has been incorrectly analysed by the staff concerned and then relied on to inform future plans. Other data such as GCSE results in each subject, and how it relates to individual teachers has not been analysed sufficiently to show the declining trends, but the trends are there. The correct roles and responsibilities of key staff have been identified by the headteacher and responsibilities delegated, but the staff have not delivered the goods.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3724948	Balance from previous year	237408
Total expenditure	3464911	Balance carried forward to the next	260038
Expenditure per pupil	3226		

43. Financial management is unsatisfactory. Governors play a part in setting a budget but do not monitor accurately the impact of funding sources such as the school's technology college status and the resources for pupils with special educational needs. Spending is prioritised in line with the school improvement plan but systems are unreliable and do not track all finances accurately enough. Financial resources allocated for pupils with special educational needs are distributed to departments but their use is not monitored or audited. This has resulted in inconsistent approaches throughout the school and some departments spending the money on other things. The school receives above average funding per pupil and there has been a sizeable carry over budget for the last two years that was originally earmarked for a new building project. This is no longer the case

and the surplus is now being spent on staffing. This has not been planned well and lacks coherence. Given the funding the school receives and the poor education provided, it is providing poor value for money.

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

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

In addition to English, lessons in drama and media studies were sampled. Provision in drama is unsatisfactory. GCSE results in 2003 were below average. Teaching is undemanding, sluggishly paced and too accepting of bad behaviour. Teachers have very low expectations of what pupils can do and work is not modified to ensure all pupils achieve as well as possible. Pupils are too often distracted and bored in lessons. Learning and achievement are unsatisfactory as a result. Provision in media studies is satisfactory. GCSE results in 2003 were below average. Satisfactory teaching engages pupil interest and helps them to collaborate well. Pupils make good use of computers to organise their projects, retrieve information and to manipulate images, for example when working together to produce a magazine.

#### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visionary and committed leadership which has improved greatly since the last inspection and has raised standards of teaching and learning
- Pupils' achievement is increasing as a result of improved teaching methods
- Examination and test results are well below national trends
- Advice given to pupils on how to improve is not always specific enough so they do not know what to do to get better
- A lack of teacher focus, throughout the school, on improving variation in sentence structure and eliminating spelling and grammatical errors

#### Commentary

##### Examination results

44. Results in national tests taken at age fourteen were well below national averages and the proportion reaching higher levels (5 and 6) was below average. Girls did better than boys, following national trends, but both were equally behind the national picture. Results were below those found in similar schools. They rose in 2002 but fell sharply in 2003. In GCSE English and English Literature, results were well below average. Girls' results have declined considerably.

##### Standards and achievement

45. By the end of Year 9 standards have picked up from the 'glitch' in the 2003 examination results. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average and better than their reading and writing. They explain sensibly and clearly what they read, for example by analysing the differences between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. Higher attainers control handwriting and presentation carefully. Most pupils order their thoughts well into paragraphs to communicate with the reader, because teachers have given the right kind of support and assistance with this basic skill. At the same time, middle and lower attaining pupils use short, repetitive sentences structure, which makes their writing

dreary to read. Their spelling and punctuation are weak, and they do not vary their style or vocabulary to produce interesting writing, because teachers have not focused on this requirement sufficiently. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve well because of the recently improved teaching and exciting variety of activities they now receive.

46. By the end of Year 11, pupils recognise the main events in books they read, in response to thorough teaching. Higher attainers deal judiciously with advanced ideas and themes in books and plays. Following on from authoritative teaching, they write about underlying themes in books such as 'Lord of the Flies' with insight and detailed attention to the language used to build tension and create suspense in the reader. Lower attainers show great enthusiasm for the poetry they read, although their written responses are limited to recounting surface detail with many grammatical errors. Pupils' achievement is improving because the standard of teaching has risen in a very short space of time. The previous alarming drop in the quality of learning during a period of staff absence and temporary cover has now been checked completely. However, the full impact of the improved teaching and the use of the national strategy have not yet had full effect on pupils' achievement in Year 11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates because they rise to meet teacher expectations of what they can do.

### **Teaching and learning**

47. Most teachers use a variety of activities to hold pupils' interest and engage their concentration. Higher attainers in Year 9 and 11 benefit from excellent teaching. Here, teachers use all the latest technology to absorb their pupils in images, sounds and text. While some excellent lessons contain multi-media presentations which are remarkable in themselves, the teachers combine this with tried and tested methods of questioning and discussion to stimulate pupils' curiosity. All the time, they insist on total concentration and a high work rate. In return, they get enthusiasm and really hard work from their pupils. Throughout the department written assignments are marked conscientiously with useful comments about how well pupils are doing and why. However, the advice pupils receive on the way their performance relates to national criteria and what they need to do in order to improve, is variable and often not specific or consistent enough. In the weaker lessons, teachers underestimate what the pupils are capable of and the pace of learning is slow because tasks are dull and unimaginative. The impact of the national strategy is considerable and is ensuring pupils learn really well. It has yet to permeate the structure of all lessons in Years 10 and 11 as well as it has in Years 7 to 9, so older pupils are not yet achieving as well as the younger ones.

### **Leadership and management**

48. There has been a significant improvement in leadership and management since the last inspection. Leadership has made an astute analysis of the current situation, and the reasons for underperformance in last year's tests and examinations. It is visionary, resolute, and a very good example of how to confront the problems of a subject department suffering from long-term underachievement. It has made a shrewd analysis of what needs to be done in order to secure a rapid increase in standards, and bring up the level of achievement. As a result, the planning, content and sequencing of lessons have been greatly improved. This is yielding results very quickly, although many changes have been implemented too recently for the full ambition of leadership to embed itself in mature consistent practice at every level.

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

49. Standards of literacy across the different subjects are well below average due to the inconsistent focus on the development of key skills. History and music attempt to support pupils' skills in speaking and listening but in too many subjects, pupils' ability to articulate a well thought out response is limited by teachers' poor questioning skills. Despite many classrooms displaying important subject words, pupils are not given enough guidance on how to use terms accurately to explain their learning; the exception to this is mathematics where teachers model the use of such words but limit pupils' opportunities to use them. In ICT, pupils make many mistakes entering data because of their poor spelling and writing skills. Throughout the school pupils do not receive enough help with structuring their writing, spelling accurately, or in building up an extended vocabulary.

Many teachers insist on pupils copying large chunks of information from the board or books, and then fail to check the accuracy of their writing. Senior managers have provided plans to develop literacy, and some good ideas for teaching, but these are not put into action vigorously or consistently enough to make their full impact.

### Modern foreign languages

Spanish is the main language taught. French is currently being phased out; there is one class in each of Years 9 to 11. During the inspection the focus was on Spanish and French was sampled. Standards in French are very low and pupils do worse in French than any other subject. Teaching in the French lessons sampled was unsatisfactory and pupils underachieve as a result.

### Spanish

Provision in Spanish is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

### Main weaknesses

- GCSE results have declined since the last inspection because of unsatisfactory management and weak teaching
- The cumulative effect of unsatisfactory teaching results in poor achievement for pupils in Year 11
- Pupils' attitudes to work are unsatisfactory because teachers' expectations are much too low
- Disruption to staffing over recent years has affected pupils' achievement
- Curriculum planning is weak and pupils are not given the opportunity to improve and achieve well

### Commentary

#### Examination results

50. Teacher assessments show that standards by the end of Year 9 have been below average for the last three years. GCSE examination results over the same period declined and only one pupil attained a GCSE pass at grade C or above in 2003; results were well below average.

#### Standards and achievement

51. Pupils' speaking standards are well below average. They lack confidence and competence in oral work because teachers' questioning does not equip them with the necessary skills. Few pupils can answer spontaneously without reference to written notes and pronunciation is halting and often very anglicised. Writing skills are a little better but even higher attainers in year 9 have difficulty in writing in any depth and their work contains frequent errors. The very limited use made of ICT denies pupils the opportunity of improving their work through redrafting. Literacy skills are not well developed because too much time is spent routinely copying vocabulary from books and the board and not enough focus is placed on the acquisition and use of grammar or the practice of vocabulary in useful contexts. As a result boys and girls in Years 10 and 11 make little progress because too much time is spent continually going over the basics of language. The needs of the higher attainers are not catered for in the GCSE classes which contain a wide spread of ability, so they significantly underachieve. By the end of Year 11 pupils have had a diet of unsatisfactory teaching for years which results in them not achieving anything like the standards they are capable of.

## Teaching and learning

52. Teachers have introduced a clearer outline to their lesson planning and marking of pupils' work is now more regular. Guidance to pupils on how to improve their work is provided informally in lessons. This has limited effect because its positioning at the start of lessons undermines the use of Spanish as the language of the classroom. Teaching is unimaginative and dull. Textbook exercises are varied but selected with insufficient regard as to how they will improve learning. Teachers make too little use of asking questions in Spanish which encourages pupils to be passive. Teachers have low expectations of their pupils so work set is often far too easy. Questioning styles are too monotonous or elementary to enable pupils to think or use language independently. Assessment of pupils' learning is shared with pupils but not used to improve their skills. The mundane teaching results in loss of concentration and strains relationships between teachers and pupils. Weak attitudes reflected in pupils' lack of self-organisation and low aspirations further slow the pace of learning. The consistent unsatisfactory teaching results in pupils who are turned off and disinterested in the subject.

## Leadership and management

53. Subject leadership has identified some priorities for departmental development but lacks the capacity to bring about the major improvements needed. Although external support has frequently analysed the work of the department, insufficient training has been produced to equip staff to teach good lessons. Problems in maintaining good teaching and management over several years have hampered progress so many of the key weaknesses outlined in the previous report remain.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of mixed ability classes in Year 7 is limiting the achievement of the higher-attaining pupils
- Some teachers expect too little work from pupils
- Pupils have the opportunity to discover mathematical rules and relationships by practical methods; this raises levels of understanding well
- The mathematics clubs are well attended and are raising standards
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and as a result pupils spend less time studying mathematics than is intended

## Commentary

### Examination results

54. Test results at the end of Year 9 have risen over the last three years. In 2003 they were well below average. Boys do better than girls. Boys do worse in mathematics compared with their other subjects and girls do much worse. GCSE results in 2003 were significantly below average. Results fell between 2000 and 2002. They rose in 2003 even though the ability of the pupils in 2003 was below that of the pupils in 2002.

## **Standards and achievement**

55. Pupils' achievement, from below average standards on entry is satisfactory. By the end of Year 9 higher attainers can manipulate algebraic equations but some of them cannot remember the correct order in which to use mathematical operations. Pupils' numeracy skills are below average. Their understanding of space and shape is average. Pupils of all abilities are able to enlarge plane figures by a given factor. Lower attainers have trouble finding the necessary words to articulate their understanding. They have problems remembering many of the mathematical terms used in the lessons and this is limiting their achievement. Higher-attaining Year 11 pupils passed their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10. They are able to understand the connection between velocity and acceleration using calculus. All mathematics lessons are taught in the annex. This means that every pupil in the school has to walk between sites and cross the busy road several times a week. Teachers are unable to have a punctual start to their lessons. This is reducing pupil achievement.

## **Teaching and learning**

56. Teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Common strengths in the teaching include the stating of learning objectives and breaking a lesson into three purposeful sections. In the less successful lessons some pupils lose concentration for significant periods of time. The limited quantity of work that many pupils produce in the lessons was evident from examining their exercise books. In some lessons teachers do not modify work for the higher attainers. In Year 7 lessons the mixed ability nature of the groups is limiting achievement as the teachers have difficulty in setting work which challenges pupils of all abilities. ICT is little used to support learning in mathematics so pupils miss out on this important aspect. In the better lessons use of resources, such as interactive whiteboards and practical equipment, involved all pupils in their learning. This active involvement in discovering and applying mathematics meant that pupils learnt better. Use of a new marking policy, which questions the pupils about their work, is helping to raise achievement as it is making pupils think about their mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

57. Staff work well as a team and are mutually supportive. They meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss how to improve achievement. Lessons are monitored and evaluated, however the frequency of these observations is restricted. Various strategies have been used to try and raise standards. They have not all been successful. For example, encouraging the present year 11 high ability pupils to enter for the GCSE examinations a year early has resulted in underachievement. Some whole school decisions have had an adverse effect on raising standards. For instance, the change to mixed ability classes in Year 7 and the rooming of a core subject away from the main school are both lowering standards. Since the last inspection teaching has deteriorated, standards have dropped and the accommodation has deteriorated.

58. Attendance at the mathematics clubs is very good. The work undertaken at these meetings is relevant to the pupils and is raising achievement. Teachers give their time to organise the clubs and to encourage the children to attend, even by providing the Year 7 pupils with breakfast. This provision is very good.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Within the last term responsibility for mathematics across the curriculum has been reassigned. A training session for subject teachers on how they can incorporate mathematics into their teaching has since been held. At present, there are few examples of pupils being asked to use their mathematical skills in the wider context; however they are asked to use graphical representations in science, and to measure within design and technology. In ICT, Year 7 pupils realised that the computers would not accept fractional values and managed to change a half into 0.5. There has not been enough progress in encouraging subjects to focus on developing numeracy skills so mathematics across the curriculum overall is poor.



## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils underachieve because of the patchy quality of teaching and low expectations
- Weak management has resulted in many issues remaining since the previous inspection
- Marking does not consistently support learning so pupils do not know what to do to get better
- Higher-attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily because of good quality enrichment activities

### Commentary

#### Examination results

60. Results in the Year 9 national tests for 2003 were below average. GCSE examination results in 2003 were also below average. Over the last four years GCSE results have improved very slowly. The number of pupils gaining the highest grades is well below the national average. Boys perform slightly better than girls in both GCSE and the national tests at the end of Year 9. Girls' results have dropped over the last three years.

#### Standards and achievement

61. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, higher attainers reach standards in line with the national average. In Year 9, pupils know the main stages of plant reproduction, and can calculate speed using the formula. They can draw simple conclusions from their investigation of physical changes. In Year 11, pupils know the constituents of blood, and what each constituent does. They can balance chemical equations. Pupils know some of the factors affecting the rate of chemical change. Boys show a better understanding of science overall. Middle and lower attainers in Years 9 and 11 are hampered in their learning by large amounts of incomplete or missing work. Overall, boys and girls underachieve in relation to their attainment on entry.

#### Teaching and learning

62. The quality of teaching varies across different classes and within some lessons. In many lessons teachers set their sights too low and use dull and mundane tasks which results in bored pupils. Pupils spend considerable time copying information and answering questions from worksheets and text books. In a Year 8 lesson on sound waves, after pupils had copied information from the board, the teacher gave a good demonstration of the wave patterns of different sounds. By the end of the lesson, although pupils had learnt new facts about sound, there were many gaps in their understanding because they had not been given the opportunity to be actively involved in drawing their own diagrams and explain what was happening. Tasks are not always well matched to the needs of low attainers. Teachers provide higher attainers with more opportunities to present their ideas, both orally and in writing, and this results in their learning being satisfactory. Where teaching is good, tasks encourage pupils to participate actively. Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding, build up knowledge and give pupils the chance to explain their thinking. Pupils' mathematical skills were supported well in one lesson by the teacher's effective explanations using the interactive whiteboard, and the well-designed resource sheets.

63. Pupils' literacy skills are below average and opportunities are missed for improving these during science lessons. Marking rarely picks up spelling errors of key scientific words and does not ensure that missed or unfinished work is completed. Errors are not always spotted and this leads to misconceptions. Pupils know their grades or levels, but they do not know how to improve because not enough specific advice is given.

### Leadership and management

64. Leadership is committed to improving achievement, and the development plan identifies relevant priorities. Appropriate strategies have been introduced too recently to show any impact yet but the way forward is clear. Monitoring of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work lack rigour and have yet to reduce inconsistency in teaching. Schemes of work are well written and cover the requirements of both the National Curriculum and the GCSE examination. Although the plans include worksheets, with some designed for lower-attaining pupils, they are not always appropriate. Lower attainers follow an appropriate non-examination course, leading to a certificate. Higher attainers and those that are gifted have good opportunities to attend enrichment events such as a forensic science presentation. Many issues raised in the last inspection remain and as a result management is unsatisfactory.

### INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ICT is taught throughout the school in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 pupils can choose to follow a vocational GNVQ examination course. Those following the vocational course achieve well and standards are above average. The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not use computers enough in the subjects they study and consequently underachieve.

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory teaching has led to below average standards and unsatisfactory achievement
- The management of ICT across the school is unsatisfactory and results in many Year 10 and 11 pupils underachieving because they are not taught the requirements of the National Curriculum
- Teaching by subject specialists on the GNVQ course is good and pupils achieve well

### Commentary

#### Examination results

65. Results of a small group of pupils in the GNVQ ICT in 2003 were above average.

#### Standards and achievement

66. By the end of Year 9, although the majority of pupils are able to make use of the school's main ICT software packages with confidence, their ICT capability is below that normally seen. By the end of Year 9 Higher attainers can incorporate ClipArt and WordArt imaginatively into their word processing documents. Lower attainers find inputting text difficult because of their low level literacy skills; they frequently make spelling mistakes which slows their progress. By the end of Year 11, pupils following the vocational GNVQ Intermediate course produce good quality presentations and have well-developed project management skills that they use to solve spreadsheet-based problems.

They demonstrate the use of evaluative techniques, such as annotation, the use of screen prints and an understanding of the uses of databases and spreadsheets, when constructing multi-media presentations. They are weak at checking their work for errors and modifying it. However, there are many pupils in Years 10 and 11 that underachieve because they do not have ICT lessons and do not cover the requirements of the National Curriculum.

### Teaching and learning

67. Where specialist teaching is evident, subject knowledge, flexibility of approach and effective classroom control ensure the pupils learn well. In many lessons, however, where teachers strictly follow the departmental lesson plan without deviation, the teaching is often mundane and unchallenging. Occasionally this leads to bored pupils and poor behaviour, which reduces the learning taking place. Teachers often set their sights too low by making tasks too easy for the pupils. All lessons are comprehensively planned but often without work being adapted for the specific learning needs of the individual or group. Although individual education plans were often attached to planning sheets there was little evidence to indicate that these have been taken into account when planning the lesson. As a consequence, lower attainers and pupils with identified special education needs make little progress and gain very little from the lessons.

68. Pupils often arrive late and this disrupts the learning of other pupils, as does the constant interruptions caused by pupils and staff using the ICT rooms as a thoroughfare or as a route to the technician's room situated between the two main ICT rooms. The use of the library as a teaching room, often noisy and distracting, inhibits effective learning.

### Leadership and management

69. Leadership of the department is firm and competent demonstrating secure knowledge of the subject and some strategic thinking for the future. Leadership acknowledges that there are problems within the department but has not yet devised strategies to improve the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 leadership and management of ICT across subjects is weak and results in many pupils underachieving because nobody monitors if they are covering the requirements of the National Curriculum effectively.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Since the last inspection the use of ICT across the curriculum has made little headway. In most subjects the use of ICT is unsatisfactory. In music, good use was seen of computers and midi-keyboards. The physical education department also make good use of ICT as a learning aid, and in English and Science interactive whiteboards are used effectively. Although there has been some progress, statutory requirements for the use of ICT across the curriculum have not been fully met. In Years 10 and 11 many pupils have large gaps in their ICT knowledge and skills because they do not get enough opportunities to build on the skills they gained in Years 7 to 9.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils underachieve when the pace of teaching and learning is affected by those who misbehave
- Marking and assessment do not give pupils enough help in organising and improving their work
- Teachers are aware of the needs of individual pupils and work hard to respond to them in lessons
- Pupils achieve well in fieldwork because they enjoy the opportunities to study outside the classroom
- The subject is growing in popularity and more pupils are opting to take GCSE geography

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

71. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were significantly below the national average. The small size of the group prevents meaningful comparison of boys' and girls' performance. Uptake for GCSE geography has increased this year.

### **Standards and achievement**

72. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11 are below the national average. Scrutiny of pupils' recorded work showed that achievement over time is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and 10. Pupils are not making enough progress in acquiring geographical skills and this is holding back the development of knowledge and understanding. Year 11 pupils have crammed a lot of work into the last few months and are becoming competent geographers. For example, in a lesson on international trade they investigated inter-related issues by asking geographical questions, considering different viewpoints and analysing information.

### **Teaching and learning**

73. In Years 10 and 11 the teaching observed was good but over time has been clearly unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory and very poor teaching was seen in a few lessons in Years 7 to 9. Better lessons were characterised by enthusiastic and exciting activities that caught the pupils' interest and channelled their energy into active learning. Teachers begin lessons by sharing objectives with the pupils and lessons have a clear structure. Teaching is ineffective in some lessons because teachers underestimate what pupils can do and too much time is spent managing behaviour rather than ensuring pupils learn. High noise levels and loss of concentration result in pupils not learning what they are supposed to.

74. The use of the local area to provide varied fieldwork opportunities that link in with lesson work is a strength of teaching, and pupils achieve well in this aspect of geography. ICT skills are used in the presentation of some fieldwork but little Internet research is done by pupils. The marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory because it is not done accurately or regularly, thereby hindering learning and revision. Pupils often leave corrections undone and work unfinished, and teachers do not tackle this. Information on handout sheets is often not stuck into exercise books and becomes part of the wrong topic. Comments are often brief and terse, giving pupils little explanation of the standard of their work. Assessment is used to set some targets for improving pupils' work, but the practice is not formalised or well established.

### **Leadership and management**

75. Approaches to marking and assessment, and to the control of pupils' behaviour, are not consistent or rigorous enough. The development of schemes of work and the structure of lessons is an area which is managed well. Meeting the needs of individual pupils within lessons, especially those with special educational needs, is a feature of the department's work that has improved. The department now provides a poorer quality of education than at the time of the previous inspection. The unsatisfactory leadership has not sufficiently addressed all the issues raised in the previous report. Standards have remained the same but teaching is worse.

## History

Provision in history is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Well below average
Achievement	Poor	Poor
Teaching and Learning	Poor	Poor

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since the last inspection	Poor

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils underachieve significantly due to the poor teaching they receive
- Standards drop as pupils progress through the school because management is poor and schemes of work are unsatisfactory
- Where teaching is satisfactory, lessons cater for all pupils but in unsatisfactory and poor lessons teachers do not plan properly
- Marking of pupils' work is not used constructively so pupils do not know what to do to improve their work

### Commentary

#### Examination results

76. GCSE results in 2003 were significantly below average. Nearly a quarter of pupils gained no grade and none achieved an A or A\*.

#### Standards and achievement

77. Pupils enter the school with average standards. By the end of Year 9 pupils have learnt to work in groups and to discuss a range of historical topics. However, discussions mainly focus on facts without developing skills of analysis or explanations for historical events. Written work comprises of copying and giving short sentence answers without reaching a conclusion. Pupils draw and label diagrams but do not follow this with explanations. By the end of Year 11 pupils have not developed the skills necessary to successfully answer examination questions. Although they have developed some skills in research, they are unsure about selecting appropriate information to answer questions at an average level. They are able to relate facts about sources but do not show sufficient analysis of information in interpreting historical events. Pupils with special educational needs are not given appropriate support, so badly underachieve.

#### Teaching and learning

78. Where teachers are knowledgeable in the subject they are able to give satisfactory explanations to pupils' questions. In Years 7 to 9 explanations from teachers are far too superficial. Expectations are too low and teachers do not use questioning which interests or stretches pupils. Lessons are lacklustre. Teachers will readily tell pupils that their answers are excellent when they lack depth or substance. This prevents development of critical thinking skills and speaking skills. In a Year 7 class, groups of girls and pupils with special educational needs were ignored by the teacher who concentrated on teaching the boys.

79. Pupils find the subject boring because teachers do not produce tasks to stretch pupils. Far too often teachers accept work of a low standard. Boys are content with drawing sketches and labelling directly from the text book and girls frequently copy exact text from books into exercise books. In a GCSE Year 11 class the pupils did not have text books or research materials to use at home. In this lesson, one pupil went to sleep for twenty minutes and during this time the temporary supply teacher was sitting doing private reading. The teacher woke the boy but the boy then went

back to sleep because the teacher failed to capture his interest. Several pupils are not able to use the classroom computers for research because these are regularly used by the same boys each lesson on a first come basis. Pupils generally behave satisfactorily.

80. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Marking is not sufficiently detailed and the grades for effort and attainment are ineffective because pupils do not know what they need to do to improve. Work of poor quality is readily accepted and even praised and pupils are given grades which imply their work is of an acceptable standard. Assessments at the end of Year 9 are inflated and as a result pupils are not aware of just how low the standard of their work is.

### Leadership and management

81. The department now provides a much poorer quality of education than at the time of the previous inspection. Leadership has not addressed the key areas for improvement. Teaching is mostly tedious and presents no challenge to pupils and little attempt is made to cater for pupils' different learning styles. Lessons are uninspiring. The department handbook is out of date and there are no clear plans for development. Feedback to pupils through homework comments is not helping develop their learning. Historical skills of analysis and critical evaluation are not being developed in enough depth.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since the previous inspection	Poor

### Main weaknesses

- Pupils attain low level standards because they are not taught important parts of the Agreed Syllabus
- The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are deprived of their statutory right to a religious education; so they badly underachieve
- Pupils underachieve because teaching underestimates their capabilities
- Very weak leadership and management have resulted in standards and teaching declining since the last inspection
- There is an insufficient record of pupils' work in order to enable them to review and build on previous learning

### Commentary

#### Examination results

82. The department was unable to provide accurate information of 2003 teachers' assessments and GCSE results for the subject.

#### Standards and achievement

83. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils understand about *Morality and Authority* through study of the *Ten Commandments*. Many pupils can accurately describe, for example, some Rights of Passage in Christianity and Judaism, but are unable to make links between religions. By the end of Year 11 a few pupils show interest and begin to understand aspects of Muslim work ethics quite well. The majority of pupils are not encouraged to evaluate their opinions and there is therefore limited evidence of their understanding because they do not get enough access to useful information, as a result, they badly underachieve.

## Teaching and learning

84. Teaching shows a sound command of the subject but not of the ways in which pupils learn. A significant minority of pupils concentrate and respond well to the teaching but the majority are not active learners in lessons because the teachers talk too much and do not involve the pupils in interesting tasks. Teachers are not consistent in their expectations of how pupils should behave so pupils' behaviour ranges from good to poor. The quality of teaching from temporary teachers was very weak. There is not enough use of resources to enliven lessons, for example, in one Year 9 lesson on Buddhism, text books were replaced by copied information and no use was made of artefacts so pupils were bored and switched off. The lack of assessment and monitoring of progress results in teachers not knowing how well individual pupils are doing. Pupils' attitude to learning is unsatisfactory because unless their interest has been captured they make little effort, and teachers do not work hard enough to maintain progress. Pupils often arrive late for lessons because they do not value them. In Years 10 and 11, the relatively few pupils who study religious education are willing to discuss issues but do not get chance to do so. Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement are very low.

## Leadership and management

85. The teaching of religious education across the school is inconsistent. There is no continuity in staffing, monitoring of teaching, or progress of pupils. There is no overall development of knowledge and understanding by pupils as they progress through the school because planning is weak and assessment procedures poor. Standards have fallen since the last inspection and the quality of teaching is now much worse. Not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive a religious education in line with the Agreed Syllabus because those not following the GCSE course do not get enough time for the subject and consequently miss out on important features. These pupils badly underachieve.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and areas for improvement

- Teachers focus tightly on raising standards because of secure leadership and management and good departmental planning
- Pupils achieve well because lessons are well planned and teachers are determined to do the best for the pupils
- While work in the subject is integrated, problem-solving principles are not always applied to all lessons so pupils do not see the real point of all they do
- The department is well resourced but not enough use is made of computers to enhance pupils' learning

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

86. GCSE results in 2003 were average. Boys did better than girls and better than boys nationally. Results were significantly better than in previous years and the department exceeded its targets.

### **Standards and achievement**

87. Standards on entry are well below average overall. By the end of Year 9, pupils' skills in the different areas - such as food and textiles technologies and working with wood - are often close to average, occasionally above. However, their knowledge of specialist language, such as names of tools and of the science that lies below so much of the subject, including the properties of materials and the nature of electric circuits, is generally well below average. Higher attainers understand the processes of technology, such as the specification of solutions to problems or the evaluation of products against what is required, well enough to be able to apply them in new contexts. Lower attainers are restricted by their low literacy skills. Even so, most pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 11, pupils build on the skills and knowledge they gain in Years 7 to 9. Teachers put in much effort to raise standards each year as examination time comes along, and the pupils are clearly enthusiastic and motivated enough to work hard and reach their targets in those last months. There are no significant differences in standards between the different technology areas.

### **Teaching and learning**

88. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They encourage the pupils to work hard and productively and pupils learn well, particularly as regards their progress in the specific skills of the subject and in their understanding of how to achieve high results. Teachers use their good subject expertise to help pupils' achieve well. Teachers generally plan lessons with great care, though none has a technologist's appreciation of the value of truly specific learning objectives in lessons, so that quick tests are too rare and it is never fully clear how successful the lessons are. Lessons generally move fast and in a challenging but encouraging way. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and therefore often shine - even if there is no extra staffing support in every lesson. Work is modified so that the needs of all pupils are met. Pupils enjoy this subject and have a positive attitude to it, especially in Years 7 to 9, and this is partly why they work hard and achieve well. There is rarely disruption in lessons - and then it is fairly mild and from only a few pupils.

### **Leadership and management**

89. Leadership is characterised by good, realistic ideas. The close team of teachers and high quality technical and teaching support staff share a clear view of the way forward. As a result of effective management, teaching schemes, systems and policies are being renewed and improved as required, and the courses offered now match the pupils' interests, needs and abilities more closely. The quality of learning and teaching also receives more scrutiny now and is monitored well. There are adequate numbers of computers available but pupils do not use them enough in lessons so important skills are not covered. The main concerns raised in the previous inspection have been dealt with, in particular as regards GCSE results and boys' achievement. Teaching, leadership and management have improved and pupils make better overall progress.



## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art and design

Provision in art is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are above the national average and pupils achieve well because of teachers high expectations and well-structured lessons
- There are regular, good-quality enrichment opportunities which enhance learning and are valued highly by the pupils
- Assessment is very effective so pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to get better
- Computers are not used enough to help pupils improve their design work and image-manipulation skills

### Commentary

#### Examination results

90. GCSE examination results in 2003 were above the national average. Girls performed better than boys, but the number of boys taking art was very small.

#### Standards and achievement

91. Pupils' drawing skills are above average by the end of Year 9; this is good achievement from the average standards pupils have in Year 7. Pupils observe accurately and make good use of perspective in their landscape drawings of areas around the school. By the end of Year 11, pupils are confident and competent with a wider range of media than they used in Year 9. They link their own work to that of other artists or cultures. For example, a Year 11 pupil had completed a stunning study inspired by Gaudi and incorporated shell-like forms effectively.

#### Teaching and Learning

92. Teachers expect pupils to work really hard and behave well. They have created a purposeful and positive workshop ethos. Pupils frequently work in silence through choice, because they concentrate so hard. Pupils are not afraid to try out experimental work. Lessons are carefully structured to break learning into small chunks; this is particularly effective with the Year 10 and 11 coursework. Pupils achieve well because each lesson is sharply focused on one specific aspect. Teachers make very good use of exemplars and demonstrations, and this helps pupils develop their good technical skills. Pupils gain from the sharing of work at the end of lessons, when teachers point out successful aspects. However, pupils do not contribute enough to these sessions because their speaking skills are not well-developed. Pupils benefit from the very good advice and guidance they receive during lessons and from the regular assessment of their work. All pupils know their levels or grades at which they are working and where they can improve. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates, because of the good support they receive in lessons.

## Leadership and Management

93. Leadership is strongly focused on raising achievement. Results are analysed to identify weaknesses and action is taken. Appropriate strategies have recently been put in place to improve boys' achievement. Regular formal monitoring of teaching to share good practice and ensure consistency is not fully in place. The schemes of work are well structured, but do not include sufficient opportunities to use computers for design work and image manipulation. The department is effectively organised and benefits from good accommodation. However, the lack of access to computers limits pupils' achievement in manipulating images. Gifted and talented pupils are challenged well by being given the opportunity to take their GCSE examination early and then study AS level. At the same time, lower-attaining pupils are appropriately catered for by the non-examination course offered. The weekly art club is very popular and highly valued by pupils.

## Music

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are low and pupils underachieve in Years 9 and 11 because of inconsistent teaching since the previous inspection
- There is no subject manager or leader so monitoring and assessment procedures have not been effective
- In lessons seen, teaching incorporates very good demonstration and encourages pupils' creativity
- There is a significant increase in uptake in Years 10 and 11 because the subject is becoming popular again

## Commentary

### Examination results

94. Numbers entered in the 2003 examination were too small to be statistically reliable. There has been an increase in uptake for the course in the current Years 10 and 11.

### Standards and achievement

95. Pupils' skills in all aspects of music are very weak but are improving. By the end of Year 9 pupils can use a variety of instruments, different effects on the keyboard and computers when creating simple pieces. They understand simple musical elements such as dynamics and structure but do not incorporate them successfully in their compositions. A significant minority of pupils are working close to average levels in performing. These pupils are supported by instrumental tuition and the many opportunities to play and perform in lessons and in a range of music groups. Pupils have good skills in using computers with music software. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 are beginning to make steady progress although held up because they have one lesson every two weeks which is not enough to cover all aspects of the National Curriculum. By the end of Year 11 pupils' skills and knowledge of musical history and theory are well below average. It is evident from pupils' books and performances in lessons that pupils are underachieving because of previous disruption to staffing of the subject. However, in lessons seen during the inspection week, pupils made satisfactory progress and sometimes good because of the very recent improved teaching.

## Teaching and learning

96. The present teacher has been in post for six weeks and much has been achieved in this short time. Lessons are well planned and aim to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum for music. Lessons are highly musical and interest the pupils very much. All pupils are given an equal opportunity to access the curriculum in a variety of ways for example, using art as stimuli for composition, using computers to notate compositions and as seen in Year 11 and performing using a range of musical instruments. There is a good balance of activities which cover composing, performing and listening in all lessons. This results in positive responses and good behaviour from pupils. There is limited evidence of progression over time in pupils' work but clear indication that things are now improving. In lessons and activities seen, pupils worked well together, concentrated well and are developed independent learning skills.

## Leadership and management

97. The school has yet to appoint a head of department for music. The present teacher provides a wide range of extracurricular opportunities and encourages pupils to organise their own ensemble groups. Management of the department is currently the responsibility of the senior staff and has not been effective in ensuring long term planning and assessment procedures are in place. The teaching area is dilapidated and the heating system is noisy and has to be switched off during listening and performance sessions. A temporary classroom is often used for the valuable instrumental lessons that are provided by the music support service. However, communication and monitoring is restricted because of the distance between that and the music main teaching area. All of the issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with but improvements are very recent and have yet to have an impact on standards.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use good subject knowledge and probing questions to reinforce good learning
- Very good extracurricular activities enhance learning and improve pupils social skills really well
- Leadership provides clear vision for the subject and the department is improving
- Although there are new policies and some monitoring of teaching taking place, these are not fully embedded in the department's programme

## Commentary

### Examination results

98. GCSE results in 2003 were significantly below average. Results have fallen over the last three years, but with a change of examination syllabus to match pupils' needs better and new teachers, predicted grades for the next two years are higher.

## Standards and achievement

99. By the end of Year 9 boys and girls have sound games skills, and tactical awareness. A few high attainers are well above average in football and netball, as they consistently use advanced skills in matches. Pupils are involved in leading warm-ups, and evaluating their own and others' work, although this aspect is still in a developmental stage. More girls are opting for GCSE physical education because of single gender lessons. Poor literacy skills have contributed to the dip in examination results as pupils perform better practically than they do evaluating or with written work. Pupils with identified special educational needs progress well because of individual attention, and good use of modified worksheets, to meet their needs.

## Teaching and learning

100. Improved consistency in teaching, brought about by sharing good practice and setting pupils in ability groups, has led to improved achievement. Pupils' very positive attitudes and teachers' high expectations of standards of behaviour and hard work lead to effective use of time, and pupils work really well in groups displaying good sportsmanship. Pupils learn well because lessons are well structured and the topics covered are relevant such as examination questions or full game situations, with clear learning objectives, Teachers' summaries and question and answer sessions are developing, and there were examples of good use of probing questions and pupil demonstrations to check and reinforce learning. The department uses ICT effectively for record keeping and PowerPoint presentations.

## Leadership and management

101. A clear vision of what the department will look like in the future and a real team spirit has been developed. Clear, workable policies are now in place for most aspects. Assessment arrangements involving new booklets devised by the department to improve pupils' evaluation and self-assessment skills work well. Procedures for monitoring and analysis of standards and teaching are not fully developed. The school has achieved the Sportsmark award.

102. A wide range of very good quality extracurricular activities, both recreational and for team practice are open to all and well attended. The school teams do well in local and national competitions. The department has good links with local sports clubs and primary feeder schools, giving pupils opportunities to share facilities and coaching teams. The netball courts however, are still waiting re-surfacing and are unsatisfactory.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

All pupils attend tutorial lessons, key-skills lessons and PSHE lessons which incorporate a focus on citizenship along with religious education and ICT in Years 10 and 11. Citizenship was inspected in detail but key-skills lessons and other PSHE lessons were sampled during the inspection. The PSHE programme is unsatisfactory. The recently appointed coordinator has completed an audit and identified areas for development, including staff training. In lessons seen the quality of teaching and the pupils learning was inconsistent across the school ranging from unsatisfactory to very good. The success of the programme relies too much on the outcome of individual teachers' teaching and their relationship with pupils. This experience is not coordinated effectively across the school.

## Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Not inspected previously

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Curricular planning for citizenship is not systematic so pupils underachieve
- Leadership and management has not ensured a balanced coverage of the subject requirements
- Teachers fail to ensure increasing depth of discussion or writing skills
- No record of the development of skills in citizenship is made so progress cannot be monitored and reports do not inform parents of their child's progress
- Individual pupil files contain little work, but pupils do benefit from some helpful marking in the key-skill units of work
- Community links provide some citizenship opportunities, but these are currently uncoordinated

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

103. Pupils do not follow an examination course in citizenship.

### **Standards and achievement**

104. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have more opportunities than those in Years 10 and 11 to work in depth on some citizenship issues but coverage of these issues is inconsistent. The resulting gaps in pupils' knowledge are not fully met by the identified contribution made by subjects such as geography and religious education, and by use of community links such as the Healthy Eating Day. The school council's role is not strong enough to provide an effective forum for pupils to demonstrate initiative and responsibility. Some higher-attaining pupils present their written work neatly and make appropriate use of opportunities to present their ideas from someone else's perspective, for example in drafting newspaper articles on the 'Keeping Safe' topic. The progress made by lower-attaining pupils is reduced by their low level literacy skills and their lack of interest in the subject. Limited previous knowledge combined with insufficient time prevents pupils in Year 11 from developing the necessary skills to achieve really well in the subject.

### **Teaching and learning**

105. In some lessons, teachers have personalised their lesson plans and identified ways of helping pupils understand the issues relating to citizenship. In the majority of lessons, pupils are insufficiently directed as teachers lack the confidence and understanding to enable them to work in depth on the topics. Although pupils in Year 9 are aware of key facts about the health risks of smoking or human rights, they do not make effective use of opportunities to share and develop their ideas in pairs or groups, or gain benefit from summarising sessions at the end of lessons. Units of the course are taught by different teachers and this results in a lack of continuity in pupils' learning and reduces the effectiveness of the informative and helpful marking that is sometimes undertaken. The lack of accurate assessment systems means that pupils have no way of reviewing what they have learnt, or teachers of collating it.

### **Leadership and management**

106. There is no overall coordination of citizenship at present and little preparation has been made for statutory assessment. Reporting of pupils' achievements to parents does not take place. The proposed development plan for the subject is well-thought out and has the right aims. However, the distinctions between PSHE and citizenship are not clear. Citizenship was not a curriculum subject at the time of the last report.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>6</b>
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	6
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>6</b>
Pupils' achievement	6
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>6</b>
The quality of teaching	6
How well pupils learn	6
The quality of assessment	6
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The governance of the school	6
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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