

INSPECTION REPORT

HAUGHTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Darlington

LEA area: Darlington

Unique reference number: 114320

Headteacher: Mr M Davison

Lead inspector: John Ashton

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 26th February 2004

Inspection number: 258651

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	874
School address:	Rockwell Avenue Darlington
Postcode:	DL1 2AX
Telephone number:	01325 254 111
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Ithurralde
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Haughton school is a slightly smaller than average 11-16 community comprehensive school, with 874 pupils against the national average of 1013 pupils. There are slightly more boys than girls on roll overall, though girls are in the majority in Year 7. Four per cent of the pupils are of minority ethnic backgrounds, but only the occasional pupil has a home language other than English. Overall standards of attainment on entry to the school are well below average. Almost one pupil in every four is on the school's special educational needs register. A larger than average proportion of pupils has a Statement of Special Educational Need, the most common of which are for moderate learning and emotional and behavioural needs. An above average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. There are a very small number of refugees and travellers' children, but a larger number of looked after children. The school has enjoyed Arts College specialist status since September 2001. It is due, in 2005, to be part of a purpose-built Educational Village on the same site, incorporating the present secondary school in partnership with a primary and a special school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4492	John Ashton	Lead inspector	
19720	Deborah Granville-Hastings	Lay inspector	
4926	Thelma Aspin	Team inspector	Mathematics
10361	Frank Evans	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
23246	John Mitchell	Team inspector	Science
22906	Barry Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
8744	Russell Whiteley	Team inspector	Art and design Music
4689	Monica Christian	Team inspector	Design and technology
12118	Allan Paver	Team inspector	Geography
23480	Mary Harding	Team inspector	History Religious education
4829	Ian Waters	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
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27983	Mary Sewell	Team inspector	Citizenship and personal, social and health education Special educational needs Drama

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Haughton Community School is an improving school and provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Inclusiveness is the key to its success as it prepares for its exciting new Educational Village partnership with partner primary and special schools. Current academic standards, though still below average overall, are higher than last year's tests and examinations would indicate. There are particular strengths in the performing arts. Mathematics is a significant weakness, citizenship and modern foreign languages less so. Teaching and learning overall are at least satisfactory, and much better than this in many subject areas. Staffing is better than it was, but the impact of higher than average staff absence and turnover is still affecting some departments. The school is well led and managed by its relatively new headteacher. It gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Above average standards and good achievement in the arts, especially in drama.
- Unsatisfactory provision for mathematics.
- Inclusiveness, which permeates everything the school does, producing a very positive ethos.
- Effective leadership of the headteacher, senior staff and most subject areas.
- At least satisfactory and often good teaching and learning in most subjects, leading to satisfactory and often good pupil achievement.
- Very good extra curricular provision.
- Strong and productive links with the local community, including its partner schools.
- Unsatisfactory provision for both citizenship and modern foreign languages.
- Below average 2003 national test and GCSE examination results, especially in the case of boys.
- The impact of staff absence on standards and continuity of learning in some subjects over a period of time.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards of literacy are higher, and specific priority is given to raising writing standards. Numeracy standards, however, are still weak. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is much improved, including levels of effective non-teaching support. Provision for ICT has improved and it now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is significantly improved, although the statutory requirements relating to the provision of collective worship are not yet fully met. Exclusion levels are still high in this 'inclusive' school, but these are the result of a deliberate drive by the new leadership to set higher standards of behaviour, seen already to be working.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Current academic standards are below the national average overall. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.

Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. However, there is a small minority of pupils, mostly boys, whose attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory and this disrupts the learning of others in some lessons. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection but is still unsatisfactory. Punctuality is satisfactory. Provision for personal development is good overall, and improved since the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In Years 10 and 11 it is good. Assessment procedures are good although there are inconsistencies in the way information is recorded in different subjects. The curriculum the school provides for its pupils is satisfactory. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are very good. The match of accommodation and learning resources to the needs of the curriculum is unsatisfactory – the main problem being the recruitment and retention of teachers in some subjects. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils, appreciated by parents and pupils alike. Support for pupils is good and their views are now actively sought and listened to. Satisfactory procedures make the school a safe place to work. The very good links with the community and with other schools and colleges support the development of pupils' learning and personal development very well. The school has a good partnership with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership of other key staff is also good. The school is managed well. Governance is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the new leadership of the school and the teaching their children receive. Pupils feel that they are taught well. They like the way the school is run and particularly appreciate the very good range of extra activities. They are concerned about the number of different teachers they have had in some subjects.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the provision for mathematics.
- Improve aspects of the provision for both citizenship and modern foreign languages.
- Improve overall national test and GCSE examination results, especially those of boys at GCSE level.
- Improve the recruitment and retention of staff.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that pupils experience a daily act of collective worship.
- Ensure that citizenship is given its full place in the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Current academic standards are **below the national average** overall. Pupils' achievements are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The end of Year 9 national test results in 2003 were below the national average for all schools but matched the national average for similar schools.
- Overall GCSE results in 2003 remain below those nationally and below those for similar schools.
- Girls regularly outperform boys at GCSE, as they do nationally, but especially in 2003 when the shortfall was much greater than the national difference between girls' and boys' results.
- Standards are above average in the arts, especially in drama.
- Provision for mathematics is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' overall achievement compared to their prior attainment is satisfactory throughout Years 7 to 11.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, in no subject is their learning unsatisfactory.

Commentary

1. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below the national average in all three of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They match the national average for schools whose pupils had similar prior attainment, three years earlier. These were similar results to the two previous years. The trend in overall results at the end of Year 9 is broadly in line with the national trend for the five years leading up to 2003. Girls' and boys' results at this stage have not differed significantly from each other in recent years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.4 (30.7)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	33.9 (31.7)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	32.3 (32.3)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 158 pupils in the year group in 2003. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The trend in overall GCSE results over the past five years is below the national trend. This was due largely to boys' underachievement. Girls, in fact, improved their overall results in the same period of time. Severe staffing problems in recent years affected these trends..

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	33 (39)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	83 (83)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (90)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	28.1 (29.5)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 138 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Standards observed during the inspection, though still below national standards overall, are better than the national test and examination results would indicate they might be, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The biggest reason for this is the school's relatively new and determined leadership. There is now a tangible ethos of learning and achievement in the school, linked to a sense of the intrinsic worth of everyone who works in the school, and a sense of improving morale, which permeates everything the school does. The most notable subject strengths are in the arts: drama, dance, music and art and design, as befits a specialist arts college. The most notable weakness is in mathematics, due to weak teaching and unsatisfactory leadership of that department. The other lesser weakness is in citizenship where the school has not yet taken the subject seriously enough.
- Achievement is satisfactory overall throughout Years 7 to 11. In some subjects (history, art and design, music and drama) it is good, and very good in the case of drama in Years 10 and 11. The only subjects where it is unsatisfactory are mathematics, the result of weak teaching, and citizenship, as a result of insufficient attention being paid so far to its development as a National Curriculum subject.
- Achievement overall is less good than the teaching would deserve in some subjects and in some year groups. Behaviour is the major cause of this, particularly the less than satisfactory behaviour of some boys. The unsatisfactory attendance of some pupils is another significant factor. Last year, boys in Year 11 underachieved badly on their run-up to the GCSE. There are still classes of younger pupils where the immature behaviour of some boys makes it more difficult for inexperienced or temporary teachers to teach without at least low level disruption to their lessons.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, for in no subject is their learning unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 7 develop literacy skills quickly due to a mixture of in-class support, extra lessons for literacy or by being an innovative focus group. Many pupils gain a Certificate of Achievement by the end of Year 9. Nearly all pupils obtain at least one GCSE or a more practical award.
- Pupils with special educational needs are carefully integrated into the school. Close links with a local special school and the educational psychology service ensure pupils' needs are well met. Pupils working in the inclusion project, the target group and student support centre make good progress in overcoming specific difficulties. These pupils achieve standards much higher than those predicted based upon their prior attainment.
- The very few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are progressing satisfactorily, as a result of regular one-to-one support from the local education authority, appropriate pastoral and academic monitoring and peer group support from pupils who speak the same languages.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **satisfactory**. However, there is a small minority of pupils, mostly boys, whose attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory and this disrupts the learning of others in some lessons. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection but is still unsatisfactory. Punctuality is satisfactory. Provision for personal development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils enjoy being at school, enthusiastically participating in lessons and extra-curricular activities prepared for them.
- The behaviour of most pupils in lessons and around school is at least satisfactory.
- The unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes of a minority of pupils, mostly boys, disrupts their own learning and that of other pupils.
- Good relationships between pupils and teachers help develop pupils' confidence and aspirations.
- The unsatisfactory attendance of a number of pupils affects their learning and achievement.
- Provision for personal development is good overall, and has improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

9. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are satisfactory overall. Most pupils have good attitudes to school and to their learning. They enjoy their lessons, listening carefully, working well on their own and eager to answer and ask questions. Their enthusiasm makes them active learners, often helping to shape the direction of the lessons through their questions and contributions. For example, in a religious education lesson, Year 11 pupils were thoroughly engrossed in a philosophical discussion about the nature of God. Pupils enjoy and appreciate the very good range of extra-curricular activities and events available. Many take part in clubs, and the music and drama productions that are a natural part of the school's life. However, there is a small minority of pupils who have unsatisfactory attitudes, particularly where teaching fails to interest them. These pupils waste time, ignore instructions and try to disrupt the work of the classes.
10. The behaviour of most pupils around school and in lessons is at least satisfactory. They understand and appreciate the standards now expected of them, having been closely involved in the recent school review of behaviour. As a result, there is a comfortable and calm atmosphere in school and pupils feel that behaviour is generally improving. Once again however, there is a minority of pupils, mostly boys, whose behaviour is challenging and disruptive when not handled effectively by teachers. The number of exclusions is higher than at the previous inspection and is also higher than for last year. This recent increase is the result of the redefined and consistent high standards that the new headteacher and staff expect. Exclusions in the last half term have reduced as pupils respond to these expectations.

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	834	151	0
White – Irish	1	3	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	3	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	4	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	1	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

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

11. Throughout the school, good relationships are helping improve pupils' self-esteem, confidence and aspirations. In many lessons, pupils work hard for their teachers and want to do their best for them. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils responded naturally to the energy and passion of their teacher in discussing non-violent responses to racism. Many lessons give pupils the opportunity to work together in groups and pairs and they mostly co-operate well. In design and technology the more confident pupils often help each other, determined to finish projects on time. In music, Year 7 pupils work very well in groups, conscientiously rehearsing their keyboard pieces.
12. Relationships between pupils are good and they generally work together in a sociable and comfortable atmosphere. The pupils say that there is a small amount of bullying but most of them are confident that it is dealt with quickly and appropriately. Pupils show strong loyalty towards their school and they feel they are always encouraged to do their best.
13. Attendance, although steadily improving and significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection, is still unsatisfactory. The attendance rate for the whole school is consistently below the national average and many pupils are often absent which directly affects their learning. Greater emphasis is now put on the link between good attendance and achievement but more needs to be done to get parents to support this at home.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	9.0
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.0
National data	1.1

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

14. Provision for personal development is good overall, and improved since the last inspection. Most pupils avail themselves of the personal development opportunities and respond well. The school has worked hard at this. There are policies and planning for personal development in all departments, resulting in good quality provision in most subjects. The school's status as a specialist performing arts school has had significant implications for personal development, and many pupils are able to participate in the resulting wide range of enrichment opportunities. These are very good overall, and valued by parents and pupils.
15. Spiritual provision has been significantly improved. The well-planned assemblies routinely give time for pupils to pray or reflect, and pupils enjoyed those assemblies seen during the inspection. There is no collective worship on other days in form times with tutors. However, it is planned to expand the use of weekly assembly worship themes into these times. Teachers foster pupils' self-esteem, and encourage them to develop their own beliefs and values. The ethos is good and clearly improved. The old buildings have been brightened by new paint; there are lively displays celebrating achievement, and music playing out of lesson time. This is evidence of a stimulating environment.
16. The code of conduct is well known by the pupils, and there is a fair system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils particularly value the letters of commendation that are sent to parents. Moral education is delivered in a variety of subjects. It is a very strong component in religious education, and in science, geography, history, drama, food technology and physical education, the moral aspects of topics are explored in lessons. A number of subjects offer good opportunities for pupils to work together and they were seen to do so to good effect. There is no discrete personal, social and health education. The school recognises this as an area for improvement and will have a programme in place for September. Meanwhile key aspects of this are delivered in alternative ways such as occasional theme days. Similarly, although the provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory, there are many 'active citizenship' opportunities although they are not formally recognised as such. There are elections and a school council, peer mentors, sports leaders' schemes, chances to help to raise money for community good causes, and many clubs and sporting activities. A number of departments offer additional classes for revision, as well as fieldwork and other visits. There are good cultural opportunities in the enrichment programme, and also in music, drama, English, modern foreign languages, art and design, drama, history, religious education and geography. The drama productions and concerts are major features of school life.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall. In Years 10 and 11 it is good. Assessment procedures are good although there are inconsistencies in the way information is recorded in different subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 10 and 11, teaching is good and leads to good learning and good achievement.
- Some excellent teaching takes place in drama, history and religious education, and there is very good teaching in English, French, music, design and technology and science.
- The teaching and learning in mathematics is unsatisfactory.
- Some temporary and cover staff have been sorely tested by pupils upset by the number of staff changes they have had to suffer.
- Pupils with special educational needs learn well and achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- The assessment of pupils' work is good overall.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 119 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (4.2%)	15 (12.6%)	51 (42.9%)	40 (33.6%)	5 (4.2%)	3 (2.5%)	0 (0%)

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

17. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. It is satisfactory overall. In almost six lessons in every ten observed, the quality of teaching and learning was judged at least good. In one lesson in every six it was at least very good, particularly in design and technology, English, French, music, religious education, science and drama. In five lessons it was excellent. These were in history, religious education and drama.
18. Teaching was unsatisfactory and poor in one lesson in every three in mathematics. It was unsatisfactory in a single lesson in each of history, physical education, science and ICT.
19. Around the same proportion of teaching and learning was less than satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, but more is now good, very good or excellent.
20. The more successful teaching is characterised, for example:
 - In drama, by teachers planning lessons with carefully structured sequences which enable pupils to achieve very challenging targets. Brisk pace and high expectations were features of all lessons observed; as a result pupils constantly develop and refine their skills.
 - In religious education, by lively and imaginative teaching methods including the use of music, and by energy, pace and enthusiasm that communicates itself successfully to the pupils, so that they are interested, motivated and prepared to work.
 - In English, by teachers using assessment particularly well which enables them to focus on perceived weaknesses in learning. For example, the emphasis on close reading and skills of inference in all lessons. This structured and well thought out approach promotes learning and achievement, creates a learning ethos in the lessons and is raising standards.
 - In science, by having challenging work for pupils from Year 7 onwards, not only for higher attaining pupils but also for pupils with very low attainment, including those with special needs.

- In design and technology, by selecting good resources and examples to set high standards and to improve achievement, as well as well-created support sheets to ensure pupils become more self-reliant.

The result of this stronger teaching is better learning and better achievement, lessons in which productivity is high, levels of challenge are as high as they should be and gains in knowledge, skills or understanding are very noticeable.

21. The weaker teaching, seen in too many mathematics lessons, suffers on the other hand from:
 - The behaviour of pupils not being managed well enough.
 - Too much time being wasted.
 - Pupils not completing enough work.
 - Tasks not being explained clearly enough, so pupils are not clear what they are expected to do.
 - Unsatisfactory marking and ongoing assessment.
 - Work not sufficiently matched to pupils' prior attainment.
22. In the occasional lesson in history, physical education, science and ICT, the problems are mainly to do with younger teachers still learning their pupil management skills, sometimes talking too much and not getting the pupils actively involved quickly enough. With more experienced teachers, the issue is to do with feedback and pace.
23. The result of this weaker teaching is unsatisfactory learning and unsatisfactory achievement in which productivity is too low, gains in knowledge, skills or understanding are relatively weak, and the level of challenge for pupils is not good enough.
24. Haughton has suffered more than most schools from staff illness. Most departments have had staffing difficulties in recent years, resulting in a large amount of spending on temporary and cover staff plus an unacceptable degree of strain upon key members of the permanent and fit staff, left holding the fort in difficult circumstances. Notable examples of this have occurred in modern foreign languages, music, science and mathematics. Pupils at Haughton have a reputation for making teachers earn their respect, and some teachers have found this particularly challenging, especially in mathematics.
25. Pupils with special educational needs are learning and achieving well as a result of the good teaching they receive. The teaching is tailored to meet individual needs whether these are emotional, behavioural, pastoral or academic. All teaching is underpinned by careful planning. Well-qualified learning-support assistants provide additional subject specific expertise and, as a result, pupils learn well. Potentially high attaining pupils are identified and teaching is focused to extend their knowledge and understanding. Assessment is good. Detailed records are regularly updated and all pupils work towards targets set each half term. These plans are shared with pupils and parents.

Assessment

26. Assessment procedures are good although there are inconsistencies in the way information is recorded in different subjects. Marking is good overall with some unsatisfactory practice in mathematics and very good practice in English and science. In these latter subjects, marking is thorough and helps pupils understand how they can improve. Pupils have individual targets to aim for, and know when they reach them. In English, each pupil knows exactly what to do to reach the next level in the National Curriculum. In most subjects, suitable records are maintained of pupils' attainments. The best practice is seen in English and drama where very good use is made of assessment information to target further work. Whole school procedures have been carefully audited and steps taken to begin to refine them to make the good data analysis even more efficient. All teachers have key information about the pupils they teach and are expected to use the information in their planning. Whole-school analysis is used effectively to identify those pupils needing additional support or challenge, or who are not making sufficient progress in their learning. Money has been allocated to refine this process through the purchase of suitably accessible computers and clerical support.

The curriculum

The curriculum the school provides for its pupils is **satisfactory**. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are very good. The match of accommodation and learning resources to the needs of the curriculum is unsatisfactory – the main problem being the recruitment and retention of teachers in some subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curricular provision is satisfactory, with particular strengths in the performing arts.
- The provision for enrichment and extra-curricular activities is very good.
- The complementary arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs and for ensuring the effective inclusion of pupils are very good.
- There is unsatisfactory provision for citizenship.
- The unavoidable absence of some colleagues has placed strain on other colleagues.

Commentary

27. The curricular provision is satisfactory overall. It is inclusive and provides a broad range of opportunities that cater for the interests, attitudes and particular needs of pupils. It meets statutory requirements, with the exception of a daily act of collective worship and full provision for citizenship. There is a smooth transition from Year 6 into Year 7, with a bridging project in English, mathematics and science. A small group of pupils with special educational needs is taught most subjects by one teacher, thereby enabling them to obtain the best start to Year 7. As befits a specialist performing arts school, all pupils in Years 7 - 9 learn dance and drama. Dance is well provided for by the employment of a specialist dance company.
28. Certain weaknesses exist. For example, there is no consistent delivery of citizenship throughout the school. In design and technology in Years 7 to 9, modules are fragmented with too many rotations; in physical education in Years 7 to 11, the organisation into six lesson blocks, with a long gap in between, hinders continuity and progress in learning.
29. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and is updated to take account of new developments. It has well-developed programmes for pupils aged 14 -16, and prepares them effectively for the subsequent stages of education and employment. In Years 10 and 11, for example, all pupils study ICT, either for GCSE or for GNVQ. Pupils can study engineering and leisure and tourism. One group of higher attaining pupils is entered for GCSE in English in Year 10, and studies for AS level in Year 11. Innovative features include a well-monitored NVQ course in

hospitality and catering for two groups of Year 10 pupils at the local college, and a Year 11 course in horticulture at school. Disaffected pupils in Years 10 and 11 work well with the learning mentor on an expressive arts course.

30. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall, despite provision being good in some areas and satisfactory in many. Staffing is good in English, drama, art and design and special educational needs and satisfactory in science, history, geography, music, design and technology and religious education. It is, however, unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages and poor in mathematics. The high turnover of teachers and supply staff in modern foreign languages means that pupils have had little continuity in their education. There is no permanent head of department in mathematics and standards are suffering because of too much poor and unsatisfactory teaching from non-specialist supply staff.
31. In some subjects, in which staffing is satisfactory such as science, religious education and history, additional strain is put on teachers due to the unavoidable absence of colleagues. This situation has been compounded by a significant amount of long-term absence in, for example, science. All of these factors, added to difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, have had a depressing impact on standards.
32. The provision of support staff is satisfactory. The provision of learning support assistants is good in English, mathematics and science and satisfactory elsewhere. They are effectively deployed by focusing provision, where possible, on pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need and within subjects where an assistant has a specialist qualification or experience. Technical support is satisfactory in ICT and design and technology and good in science. Arrangements for covering the absence of teachers and appointing supply teachers where necessary are very good. The system is very well organised and aims to minimise the additional load on teaching staff.
33. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. They are very good in art and design and music and good or satisfactory in most other subject areas. However, resources for mathematics have not improved since the last inspection. Pupils are still sharing books so provision remains unsatisfactory. There are insufficient computers in school to give enough access to the subjects of the curriculum. Available computers are heavily used. The library has too few books but careful investment is steadily rebuilding the new stock after a radical clearance. The computers in the library are heavily used by whole classes and by individuals during lunchtime and after school.
34. Accommodation for learning is satisfactory for its limited life. It is intended that the school will be rebuilt on its own playing fields by September 2005. The governors and the local authority take care that the present accommodation remains safe and serviceable until it is demolished.
35. The provision for enrichment and extra-curricular activities is very good. The school provides a very good range of clubs and activities in which pupils may participate both during and after school hours. Pupils have enjoyed success at town and county level in sport, particularly football and volleyball, and the take up rates for all the sporting activities is high. The school is justifiably proud of its performing arts status: the musical and dramatic productions and the links with the Youth Theatre are giving pupils opportunities to learn about performance at all levels and backstage careers in the theatre. During the most recent half-term holiday, over 90 pupils attended school voluntarily for a revision week, which they thoroughly enjoyed, demonstrating desire to do well and to improve their GCSE grades.
36. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to experience as full a curriculum as possible. Many enjoy a special performing arts class or college courses in bricklaying, plastering or catering. Many pupils enjoy the extra benefits of well-organised breakfast, lunch and homework clubs as well as a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Higher attaining

pupils in the Alpha club also visit colleges and, as a result, many of their aspirations are considerably raised.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a **good** level of care for its pupils, appreciated by parents and pupils alike. Support for pupils is good and their views are now actively sought and listened to. Satisfactory procedures make the school a safe place to work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships result in pupils having confidence and trust in their teachers.
- Good strategies support pupils' learning and personal development well.
- Pupils have a sense of involvement in school life and improvement through good consultation.
- Good arrangements help new pupils settle into school life quickly.

Commentary

37. The school provides good support for its pupils' personal development on a day-to-day basis. Teachers know their pupils very well and have a good understanding of their individual circumstances and needs. As a result, pupils have trust and confidence in their teachers and know problems will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. Good relationships throughout the school mean that teachers and pupils interact well and there is a happy and purposeful atmosphere.
38. The school has developed good ways to support pupils' learning to help them achieve well. The learning mentor and teachers work well with Years 10 and 11 pupils to prepare and guide them for their GCSE examinations. Pupils really appreciate the time teachers are prepared to give and 90 Year 11 pupils attended the recent revision classes during half term. Some pupils get extra help to develop their literacy skills and a group of Year 7 pupils benefit from a different approach to help them adjust to secondary life. The 'purple room' provides a valuable level of support for those pupils whose behaviour prevents them, and others, from learning effectively.
39. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive good information and support to help them make appropriate decisions about their future once they leave the school. Through good information from school, good links with colleges and many joint projects through the performing arts, pupils get a good insight into post-16 choices. This is doing much to raise the self-esteem and aspirations of many pupils. A recent survey of Year 10 pupils showed that 70 per cent felt they were likely to stay in education after Year 11.
40. Pupils are very positive about the changes since the new headteacher arrived and feel that their views and opinions are now genuinely sought and considered. Their practical and helpful contribution to the behaviour review has rejuvenated the year and school councils and pupils are confident that they can help make a difference in the school. Pupils also enjoyed the recent review day where they discussed their progress with their tutors and parents and set targets for improvement. There is also a greater emphasis on recognising and celebrating achievement, which pupils really enjoy. This is having a positive effect on pupils' confidence and willingness to try hard.
41. Year 7 pupils settle into secondary school quickly and easily because of the good arrangements to help them. They are well prepared during Year 6 and well supported throughout their first term. Pupils completed a survey after their first half term, which provided useful information for staff and gave pupils a chance to say what they felt.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The **very good** links with the community and with other schools and colleges support the development of pupils' learning and personal development very well. The school has a good partnership with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is go-ahead and effective in improving the current and potential learning environment of many people.
- Very good links with the community are widening the opportunities and experiences for pupils, staff, parents and neighbours.
- Very good links with primary schools and colleges benefit both parties.
- Parents are supportive of the school and communication between home and school is good.
- The new review day is a good way to involve parents but some annual reports give rather brief information and too little practical advice on how pupils can improve.

Commentary

42. The school works very well with its local community and has a strong and very clear commitment to the social, cultural and educational inclusion of all. Much of this has grown through the performing arts but is now clearly embedded in school life. The arts are used as a powerful vehicle for communication and interaction with many parts of the community. Through the involvement of many pupils in the great range of creative and artistic events and productions, many families and friends now have a chance to experience and appreciate the performing arts first hand. This is opening their and their children's eyes to a whole new range of opportunities for possible career choices, interests and pastimes.
43. The school also runs a programme of courses each week for adults. The range of courses is based on the direct needs of the local people, often as a result of their comments and suggestions. The programme is well managed and regularly reviewed to make sure it gives people what they want. There is also good consultation with the local community regarding the development of the Education Village. This ensures that their worries and concerns are voiced and taken into account. The community sports co-ordinator also does much to promote and encourage events and activities that involve many people.
44. The school has very good relationships with other schools. Through the performing arts status, the needs and developments of primary schools are being clearly identified and met through creative and imaginative initiatives. These are well monitored and evaluated and do much to improve confidence, perceptions and achievement of pupils and staff in both primary and secondary schools. The local sixth form college and college of technology work closely with GCSE pupils sharing ideas and giving advice and support. Staff from Middlesbrough College provided training for teachers and pupils in the use of ICT in music that has provoked greater interest in music technology courses.
45. The school values the support and interest of parents and works hard to develop and strengthen the relationship. Communication between school and home has improved recently and parents now get good quality and regular information about what the school is doing. Teachers are quick to contact parents personally to explain problems and how they intend to deal with them. Overall, parents have positive views about the school and are happy with the experience they and their children have.
46. The new review day was well received by parents and is a good way to involve them more directly in their children's learning. Through discussions with tutors, parents get a better understanding of how well pupils are doing and how they can improve. Some of the annual reports to parents about their children's progress are less helpful, however, since they do not give sufficient specific detail to give parents an informed picture. The comments are at times

too brief, not relating directly to the subject and mostly refer to pupils' attitudes rather than clearly indicating what pupils need to focus on to improve.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership of other key staff is also good. The school is managed well. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the new headteacher is a significant force for school improvement.
- Governors support and challenge the school well.
- A large majority of subject areas are led and managed well, in some cases very well.
- The co-ordination of the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and of the wide range of inclusion strategies of the school are both considerable strengths of the school.
- Recruitment and retention of staff are amongst the school's biggest current problems.

Commentary

47. The most significant factor in the rapid improvement in the school is the leadership of the headteacher. His continual presence around the school, his positive, affirming and principled approach has greatly improved the ethos of the school, whilst developing even further its inclusive philosophy. Supported well by an effective senior team with complementary strengths, he is rapidly bringing about necessary improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. There is more of a learning atmosphere than there used to be. Professional relationships are very good. Expectations of everyone are crystal clear. Standards are improving.
48. Governance is good. Governors are perceptive, well informed and very supportive of the school. They have accurate knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, they challenge the school's leadership where necessary, and fulfil all their legal requirements except for ensuring that pupils experience a daily act of collective worship and that citizenship is given its proper place in the curriculum.
49. Specific barriers to raising achievement have been identified and are being dealt with. Chief amongst these are the immature attitudes of some of the boys, the inevitable problems of an old and inflexible building near the end of its useful life, and the difficulties over staff illness, recruitment and retention.
50. The co-ordination of the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and of the wide range of inclusion strategies of the school are both considerable strengths of the school. Both lead teachers for special educational needs provide a structured programme to meet individual needs. Support assistants are carefully deployed to the maximum benefit of pupils.
51. The school is managed well overall. It runs smoothly and efficiently on a day-to-day basis, not least because of well-motivated and efficient non-teaching staff. Financial management has improved greatly in the last nine months and is now very good. Procedures and monitoring are tight and efficient ensuring that spending is in line with budgets. The budget is clearly linked to the school and department improvement plans and very good consultation and negotiation ensures that spending is directed towards appropriate areas. Principles of best value are clearly understood by relevant staff and applied conscientiously. Income per pupil is high but funds are spent carefully and appropriately resulting in satisfactory value for money. The

temporary budget debit, caused by the significant amount of money which had to be spent upon temporary staff last year, has been halved this year by judicious use of insurance cover.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,856,309
Total expenditure	2,921,557
Expenditure per pupil	3,462

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	51,317
Balance carried forward to the next	- 65,249

52. Most subject areas are well led and managed, very well in the case of drama, English, science, design and technology and history. In drama, this shows itself in inspirational leadership of part-time and non-specialist teachers and the building of a team with an absolute commitment to ensuring that all pupils succeed, whatever their background or special difficulties. In English, the planning, assessment, monitoring and target setting are all particularly good, and data on pupils' achievements is used very perceptively to analyse weaknesses in learning or examination performance, which then leads to a focus on these aspects in the teaching. In science, leadership from the front, very good assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' progress, lead to the identification of "target" groups of pupils for careful tracking and an extensive programme of lessons out of school hours, to which every teacher contributes, giving pupils of all ages very good opportunities to improve their learning. In design and technology, the head of department is a skilful leader and leads a good team who work well together, with a realistic development plan which addresses well, for example, the problem about boys' attainment. In history, the leadership has, in just over one year, built from scratch very good quality schemes of work, and secure, professional and very thorough assessment schemes with which to monitor pupil progress. The trail from highly perceptive audit, to development planning, to realisation is exemplary.
53. Provision for the induction of teachers new to the school, for training trainee teachers and for the professional development of staff are very good. Arrangements for the professional development of teachers are very good. At the end of each school year, a review of the past year provides a starting point for identifying training needs to be addressed by senior management. For example, there is a current focus on underachievement of boys, inclusion and behaviour management. The programme of continual professional development operates very effectively on three levels. Training days are used for input from external speakers on whole-school issues, followed up by departmental discussions. Training courses are advertised and any specifically linked to the school improvement plan given priority. Staff requests for professional development are considered on the basis of need, relevance to the school's overall development plan and a teacher's previous professional development record. Each subject area is expected to identify its own training needs in its development plan.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards seen in lessons and in written work are much better than the below average 2003 GCSE and Year 9 test results suggest.
- Boys underachieved significantly in 2003. The structured teaching is now involving boys more in learning.
- Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 take their GCSE examinations in English after one year's preparation and begin sixth form standard work in Year 11.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 7 to 9. The structured and consistent approach to teaching is raising standards.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Assessment, monitoring and target setting are very good and are helping pupils to achieve.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

54. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were below average and worse than those for 2002. Girls did much better than the boys, especially in English literature, where they almost achieved national average results. Boys under-performed significantly. Results in Year 9 are below average. Although some improvement is noticeable, higher attaining pupils underachieved in these Year 9 tests. Results were affected by severe staffing problems in 2001 to 2003, which particularly affected average attaining pupils. There was also a serious reduction in the teaching time allocated to GCSE English and poor attendance by some pupils.
55. Standards of work seen in lessons and in written work are better than the above results suggest. Standards are above average in Year 9 and average in Year 11. Pupils enter the school with low standards of attainment in English. By Year 9, about two thirds of the pupils are already working at or above the expected national levels. Higher attaining pupils in particular are making significant progress. This represents good achievement as a consequence of good teaching in Years 7 to 9. By Year 11, achievement is good for higher attaining pupils and satisfactory for all other pupils, therefore satisfactory overall. Higher attaining pupils in the present Year 11 follow the GCE Advanced Supplementary level course, which is normally studied in the sixth form, having already gained A* - C grades in GCSE English language and literature at the end of Year 10, after one year's study. This represents above average achievement for this group of pupils and reflects good and consistent teaching for these pupils. Average and lower attaining pupils are achieving at a satisfactory level, despite some negative attitudes to learning by small groups of Year 11 boys.
56. Reading skills show improvement during Years 7 to 9 and are satisfactory overall, due to the intensive reading strategies now in place within the English department. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. Pupils listen well in lessons and speak clearly when asking or answering questions. Writing skills are tackled systematically in English lessons and pupils of all levels of attainment show improvement in crafting their written responses. The National Literacy Strategy is well embedded in English lessons and this, together with the structured

and focused approach to teaching the subject is improving pupils' skills and their confidence as learners.

Teaching and learning

57. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. All lessons are satisfactory or better, with some good and very good lessons observed. Teaching was better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11 because the lessons challenged pupils to learn and achieve more and pupils enjoyed doing so. Teachers have very good subject knowledge linked to consistent and structured approaches to learning, with a clear focus on promoting knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers use assessment very well and this enables them to focus on perceived weaknesses in learning. For example, the emphasis on close reading and inferential skills in all lessons to help pupils cope with examinations in Year 9 and in Year 11. This structured and well thought out approach promotes learning, creates a learning ethos in the lessons and is improving achievement and hence raising standards.

Leadership and management

58. Both leadership and management of the department are very good. There is good clarity of vision and sense of purpose. Planning, assessment, monitoring and target setting are all good. Marking is supportive and helpful and very well monitored across, to ensure consistent standards across the department. Pupils are told how they can improve and they say that they like the way their work is marked. Available data is used very perceptively in English to analyse weaknesses in learning or examination performance, which then leads to a focus on these aspects in the teaching. This careful and thoroughly professional approach is involving pupils in learning and promoting increased achievement. The department is now fully staffed with specialist teachers and this, too, is contributing to the improvements in learning.
59. Despite the below average examination results, this is a department, which is raising standards. English met both the school and the local education authority's targets for the last year. Higher attaining pupils in all years are now being stretched. Average attaining pupils are progressing at satisfactory levels because of the carefully structured teaching and the attention paid to improving writing skills. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress.
60. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards are higher and teaching is at least as good. All the issues raised then, which centred on literacy, have been vigorously tackled. English is a good department in which much is demanded of pupils and in which much is beginning to be achieved

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The provision for literacy is good. There is a school-wide awareness of its importance. Each department has a literacy policy. At present the main thrust for literacy development is through English, where the consistent and well-structured approach to the subject is raising pupils' standards of reading and writing. Members of the English department model writing skills for other departments in order to raise the level of pupils' written response in other subjects. Literacy development is very good in drama, art and history. In these subjects pupils are taught to use the specialised vocabulary of the subject. This is reflected in the quality of annotation in art and the very high quality of coursework in drama. In history, pupils are taught to use connectives in shaping and crafting their views. In geography and religious education there are good literacy strategies. In geography these are leading to improved learning and there are increasing opportunities for pupils to write at length. In all other subjects, except mathematics, literacy development is satisfactory.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staffing issues have an adverse effect on achievement and standards, which are too low.
- Currently, there are insufficient teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum.
- Good leadership and management have provided stability within the department.
- Many pupils lack confidence in speaking.
- Teachers use resources well.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

62. Results in the GCSE examinations in French and Spanish in 2002 and 2003 were significantly below average. Staffing issues, involving a very high turnover of teachers over a considerable period, have adversely affected the continuity of pupils' progress and performance.
63. Current standards are below average in French by the end of Year 9. Achievement is satisfactory. Over time, pupils acquire quite a good understanding of the meanings of words, phrases and sentences, which they can develop reasonably well in writing, but they are much less confident in speaking them. By Year 9, higher-attaining pupils are familiar with the past and future tenses, but they are not yet totally secure in using them. Reading skills in one of these groups are good. Average attainers in Year 9 can distinguish between past and present tenses in reading, but they have some difficulty in developing them in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others in class.
64. Standards are well below average in French by the end of Year 11 and below average for a small group of pupils studying Spanish. Pupils' continuity, progression and motivation have been affected adversely by staffing issues, with gaps in their knowledge: for example, pupils in a Year 10 French lesson had difficulty in composing the full tense of a reflexive verb. Teachers try hard to remedy this, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 in French and pupils in the Spanish group are only just learning the parts of the body and common ailments. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils use three tenses in their oral presentations: average attainers in French and Spanish recognise past and future tenses. Standards of accuracy vary.

Teaching and learning

65. Teaching and learning in French and Spanish are satisfactory overall and this has resulted in satisfactory achievement overall. Teachers plan their lessons well and explain carefully what has to be learned at the outset of every lesson, so that pupils are perfectly clear about what they have to do. Starter activities revise past work, and lessons contain different tasks and skills to engage pupils' interest and to help them maintain their concentration. Regular tests and activities make pupils think, and teachers check regularly that pupils understand the work. Teachers use resources effectively to introduce and consolidate vocabulary and constructions. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, the final worksheet evaluated what the pupils had learned during the lesson. Pupils learn techniques to improve their reading skills. In some lessons, however, there is insufficient challenge to pupils to help them develop their confidence in speaking. Opportunities for pupils to read aloud are sometimes missed. Homework is set and marked regularly. Relationships in class are generally good.

Leadership and management

66. The leadership and management of the head of department are good because she has provided stability for the department over several years in difficult circumstances; having to supervise and support a large number of different permanent teachers and supply teachers and having to set work for classes for the latter. She has maintained documentation in good order, and overseen the introduction of the national strategy for Years 7 to 9 and is raising standards at this key stage. Displays in the classrooms and in the department are of an above average standard, despite the department having no support assistants allocated to it.
67. Standards in GCSE have fallen, however. Improvement overall has, therefore, been unsatisfactory - a direct result of the school's inability to recruit and retain specialist teachers of high quality. Due to illness in the recent past, the department has insufficient specialist teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum, and provision for modern foreign languages is, therefore, unsatisfactory overall.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average in Year 9 and well below average and falling in Year 11.
- Teaching and learning overall are unsatisfactory and pupils do not achieve well enough.
- Teaching and learning are good for lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs in Year 7 and 8.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory

Commentary

Standards and achievement

68. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well below average and unfavourable compared with pupils' attainment in most other subjects. Boys did not achieve as well as girls. No pupils attained the two highest grades. Results in national tests in Year 9 were also below the national average, although compared with similar schools they were average.
69. Current standards are below average in all aspects of mathematics in Year 9 and are well below average in Year 11 although national data shows that standards on entry to Year 7 are closer to average. Standards are falling due to unsatisfactory teaching. Achievement is unsatisfactory for pupils with all levels of prior attainment except for those with lower attainment in Years 7 and 8. Pupils do not develop good recording and presentation skills or good work habits. Work is often untidy and too often marred by graffiti.

Teaching and learning

70. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, a significant reason why the achievement for most pupils is less than satisfactory overall. They are good and sometimes very good in classes for pupils with low attainment and special educational needs in Years 7 and 8. Good teaching also occurs in other years, but poor and unsatisfactory teaching occurs in all years. In weaker lessons, behaviour is not managed well enough, so too much time is wasted and pupils do not complete enough work. Tasks are often not explained clearly so pupils do not know what to do. The most recent national subject guidance is not used effectively in the majority of lessons. Literacy and ICT skills are not developed or used enough to support learning. Marking and ongoing assessment is unsatisfactory and work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' prior attainment. The good and very good teaching for younger pupils is well planned, lively, stimulating, carefully matched to individual needs and supported by

suitable practical demonstrations and activities. Pupils enjoy these lessons, but many other pupils are dissatisfied with the lack of class control of some teachers.

Leadership and management

71. The lack of an experienced subject manager and the lack of a permanent stable team of suitably experienced teachers is causing standards to fall, thus leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Standards of numeracy are unsatisfactory. They are below average in Year 9 and well below average in Year 11. Although numeracy skills are used in other subjects, use is incidental and not sufficiently co-ordinated. Less evidence of numeracy was seen than would normally be expected in subjects such as design and technology. On occasions, for example in geography, pupils' mathematical skills are not good enough to meet the demands of the subject, so these skills have to be taught by the geography teachers.

SCIENCE

The provision for science overall is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High attaining pupils achieve well by the end of Year 9.
- The head of science leads and manages well a committed team of teachers and support staff.
- Assessment and its use to inform planning are good.
- The tracking of pupil progress is a very effective tool in helping to raise standards.
- Some pupils, mainly boys, fail to achieve their potential by the end of Year 11 as a result of poor attendance and negative attitudes to work.
- There are insufficient resources for the use of ICT in teaching and learning.
- Schemes of work need further development.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

73. By the end of Year 9, results in the 2003 national tests for both boys and girls were below the national average, but the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels is close to average. Results are in line with those of similar schools. The trend in results in recent years is similar to that seen nationally. For pupils at the end of Year 11, GCSE results in 2003 were below average, with boys' results being markedly lower than those of girls. Some boys and girls who had scored highly in their Year 9 tests, achieved GCSE grades above expectations, as did some of those with very low prior attainment.
74. Standards seen in school are also below average but better than indicated by examination and test results. Achievement by Year 9 is satisfactory overall but both high and very low attaining pupils achieve well, with some of the former reaching standards well above expectations. High attaining pupils have consistently challenging work to do from Year 7 onwards. Pupils with very low attainment, including those with special educational needs, achieve well by Year 9 because they receive very strong support from teachers and classroom assistants in lessons which are challenging but well tailored to their capabilities. Where standards are well below average, pupils are held back by a weak grasp of scientific language, poor writing skills and conceptual difficulties, although they can make and record experimental observations such as measuring the electric current through different lengths of wire.

75. Overall achievement by Year 11 is satisfactory. Work seen in Years 10 and 11 is also of a higher standard than recent examination results suggest but remains below average overall. There is still some underachievement, notably in Year 11. Poor attendance and the negative attitude to study of some pupils, mainly boys, means that work has many gaps, and is often incomplete with consequent discontinuity in their learning. In addition, staffing difficulties over more than twelve months, now largely overcome, have led to some pupils spending too much time with non-specialist supply teachers.

Teaching and Learning

76. Teaching is satisfactory and leads to satisfactory learning and achievement overall. About half the lessons seen were good or very good. Teachers are well qualified, know their subject well and have a good range of experience between them. They plan lessons well and relations with pupils are good. Good marking gives pupils good feedback on mistakes and sets targets so that pupils know what they have to do to improve.
77. Learning is particularly effective when teachers' expectations are securely matched to pupils' prior attainment and when the focus of a lesson is on constant and persistent interaction with pupils. This maintains pace and challenge which, together with careful questioning to test and develop understanding, leads to good achievement in lessons. Such strategies led to high attaining pupils in Year 11 making good progress in understanding types of chemical bonding. Teaching assistants contribute effectively to the learning of pupils with special needs.
78. Some aspects of teaching lead to less effective learning. In some lessons, a limited range of teaching methods, single activities pursued for too long, insufficient involvement of pupils in their own learning and occasional difficulties with managing challenging behaviour all mean that pupils do not always learn as much as they might. The use of ICT is limited by the almost total absence of departmental resources and inadequate access to computer suites.

Leadership and management

79. Leadership and management are both good. The head of science leads a willing team very strongly from the front. However, long-term staff absence, difficulties in recruitment and the consequent necessity of using non-specialist supply staff for long periods have had a major impact on standards.
80. Management has many strengths. Very good assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' progress, the identification of 'target' groups for especially careful tracking and an extensive programme of lessons out of school hours, to which every teacher contributes, give pupils of all ages very good opportunities to improve their learning. Test and examination results are thoroughly analysed and the results used to modify the curriculum. For example, the department is currently looking at alternative courses and experimenting with different ways of grouping pupils in an attempt to combat boys' underachievement.
81. The head of science gives very good support to teaching staff. Much of this is informal but marking, teachers' records and laboratory displays are regularly checked. Newly qualified and teachers with little experience receive particularly strong support. Schemes of work are adequate but need further development and the accommodation and resources for learning, other than ICT, are satisfactory. With improved leadership and management since the last inspection improvement overall is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes and are interested in the subject.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to take both GCSE and GNVQ courses in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- There is insufficient use of National Curriculum levels in teaching to help pupils improve their standards.
- More effective use could be made of new technology such as the four available interactive white boards.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

82. In the 2003 examinations, one-third of the pupils taking the GNVQ full award, equivalent to four GCSEs, gained pass or merit grades. In the Intermediate GNVQ, equivalent to two GCSEs, over two-thirds of pupils gained pass or merit awards.
83. Current standards of work by pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are below average but pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils develop skills in using a variety of software. Word processing and desktop publishing are used as pupils prepare leaflets, and create slide show presentations. In Year 8, pupils are learning how to use spreadsheets, and produce a range of charts. Pupils in Year 9 have created web pages with hyperlinks to a home page. Standards are below national levels in Year 9 as pupils have had limited experiences of ICT in Years 7 and 8, mainly due to the unstable staffing situation. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average but pupils also achieve satisfactorily compared to their prior attainment as they learn to use new software. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 take an ICT course, either a GCSE or GNVQ. Although standards are lower than might be expected, pupils are able to complete modules of work using word processing, slide show presentations, spreadsheets and databases. In spreadsheet work, pupils can use simple formula, whilst higher attaining pupils show more understanding of using spreadsheets for prediction. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have not experienced discrete ICT lessons earlier in the school, and therefore they have not established the ICT knowledge and understanding expected.

Teaching and learning

84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, leading to satisfactory achievement overall. Teachers have a good understanding of their subject, and are able to give pupils good explanations about the use of software, leading to some pupils making good progress. Lessons are well planned and prepared with work set matching pupils' capabilities. This was particularly well done with a lower attaining Year 7 class, where there was good learning due to the appropriate planning of the work and the good in-class support by a teaching assistant and a technician. Pupils have good attitudes in lessons, and their work rates lead to good progress. There is some use of National Curriculum levels in the assessment of pupils work in Years 7, 8 and 9, but this is underused in teaching to help pupils understand how they might improve. In GCSE and GNVQ, helpful comments indicate pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

Leadership and Management

85. The subject is well led and managed, with considerable improvements over the last three years. Staffing is now good, with a core team of ICT teachers, and good support by the librarian, who manages the network, teaching assistants and technicians. Since the last

inspection there has been good improvement. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. The majority of departments have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work. Teachers have undertaken training to develop their skills in the use of ICT in their subjects. The accommodation is barely satisfactory with only two dedicated ICT teaching rooms. The library is used for some ICT lessons as well as by other departments for ICT work. The ratio of computers to pupils is lower than that seen in most schools, and the four interactive whiteboards are underused. Music makes very good use of computer technology, and there is good use in art and design, English and in design and technology. Pupils with special educational needs have good access to computers in their teaching room. Access to equipment is limited, however, and this restricts many subjects' use of computer technology, although not sufficiently to make it that the curriculum is not delivered in those subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall and those pupils who attend regularly achieve well.
- Leadership and management are good because teachers are successfully adapting to changing circumstances and are beginning to raise standards.
- Teachers are working well to improve basic learning skills because pupils do not yet write enough and need more help to structure their writing, improve their weak numeracy and to organise their exercise books.
- There are not yet enough strategies to raise boys' attainment.
- Good continuous assessment shows the achievement of every pupil in every class but is not yet used well enough to set sharp targets to help pupils improve further.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

87. At GCSE in 2003, results were below average overall because of poor attainment by a significant minority of boys, but those who attended well attained at the national average.
88. Standards in Year 9 in work seen are just below average but are rising because teachers have identified under-achieving pupils and are working with them to improve. Overall, girls attain half a national curriculum level better than boys, although some boys attain as well as the best girls and the highest achievers reach Level 7 in very good enquiries about tourism in Spain. Standards in Year 11 repeat this pattern: they are average for those who attend regularly but are below average overall because of long-term absence.
89. Achievement over time is good by Year 9 because pupils start from well-below average attainment on entry to the school. Girls achieve better than boys. Boys gain from competitive starter activities such as the game introducing diversification to farming activities and subsequently make a good oral contribution to a discussion about conflict in national parks. Many do not write as well as they speak, however, and both boys and girls need help to improve the organisation of their books and work sheets to aid revision. There are insufficient strategies to accelerate the rate of boys' progress. Where pupils are in classes of matched

prior attainment, in Year 9, pupils with special educational needs progress well towards their targets though there is insufficient additional support for them. Achievement by the age of 16 is good for those completing very good enquiries on land use in Teesdale but the overall judgement is reduced to satisfactory by significant absence.

Teaching and learning

90. Teaching and learning are good overall, though good teaching is challenged by the weak learning skills of many Year 7 pupils. Sometimes opportunities are missed to consolidate learning at the end of lessons. Well-chosen video clips stimulate learning about arable farming in lowland Britain. A programme of practical work consolidates geographical skills between Years 7 to 9. Good strategies are helping pupils to improve their writing and, where pupils are given clear structures, they write well about changing rural landscapes in Year 7. Pupils are taught statistical methods for GCSE course work because standards of numeracy barely sustain requirements: climate graphs for example are poor. Good continuous assessment accurately identifies attainment and progress for pupils who know their target grades but do not yet clearly understand how to improve them.

Leadership and management

91. Leadership and management are good because very experienced teachers are adapting well to change and are implementing the government initiatives in Years 7 to 9 well, supported by good in-service training. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. ICT and practical work have been introduced and assessment has improved substantially.

History

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of all pupils is good, the result of high quality teaching.
- Most pupils enjoy history and it is becoming more popular for GCSE.
- The new leader is very effective and has already brought about significant improvement.
- History makes a large contribution to pupils' personal development.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in history.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

92. Numbers were low in 2003. Results were below average, but much improved from the previous year, and most pupils (both boys and girls) achieved well in relation to their prior attainment.
93. Numbers studying history are still low in Year 11 and most are lower attaining pupils, so standards seen are below average but most pupils are achieving well because of the very good teaching. A factor holding back achievement, both now and in recent years, has been erratic attendance by some pupils, which makes continuity of learning difficult. In class, pupils can evaluate sources effectively, for instance those related to British women getting the vote. In Year 10, many more pupils have opted to study history in response to the recent change to modern world history and standards are higher overall. Higher attaining pupils can write well-extended arguments. Some good quality work explained why the League of Nations failed.
94. Pupils begin history with attainment well below average and hindered by poor literacy skills. This is evident from the results of early testing in history. From this low start, pupils' attainment comes much closer to the national average by Year 9, representing good achievement for most pupils, including those with special needs. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls since most pupils enjoy lessons and are motivated to make good efforts. Higher attaining pupils are suitably stretched and some high quality written work was seen where pupils responded with interest to local history work on the Felling pit disaster. In a lesson on the ending of the slave trade, higher attaining pupils were able to grasp complex information and realise that in history, explanations can be multifaceted. In Year 9, the setting arrangements are beneficial to meeting the needs of pupils.

Teaching and learning

95. Teaching and learning are very good overall, leading to good achievement overall. The achievement was good rather than very good because of some pupils' unsatisfactory attendance and because of their very low starting point on entry to the course. All the lessons seen except one were very good or excellent and these were the lessons taught by the history specialist team. One lesson seen was unsatisfactory. Teaching is good overall in the first three years. In all the very high quality lessons, class management was firm and there was a calm environment for effective learning. Teachers' expertise was very good, and lessons were highly organised and well timed. There were clear and appropriate aims, with sufficient challenge to meet the needs of all. These lessons were lively and well broken down into varied activities so that pupils' concentration was sustained. Marking was regular and helpful, and pupils felt encouraged and were growing in confidence. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, pupils had not had their work marked for some time and felt discouraged. The lesson began well enough, but tasks drifted on for too long without appraisal and the resulting learning was inadequate.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership and management are both very good. The leader has been in post for just over one year. On her arrival, there were no records, no schemes of work or lesson plans, and no formal assessment scheme. Now there are very good quality schemes of work, and the assessment schemes together with the recording and use of data to monitor progress are secure, professional and very thorough. The trail from highly perceptive audit to development planning to realisation is exemplary. All this is already having a significant impact on standards as seen in last year's GCSE results. The curriculum has been changed in ways that will engage pupils' interests better, include fieldwork opportunities, benefit from the school's arts status, and enable very good personal development. Resources are good and aptly chosen. The teaching of literacy in history is now very good, but more use of ICT is not yet sufficiently

built into lessons. The core team has been very receptive and collaborative in working for improvement. Overall, improvement is very good.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New initiatives in the curriculum are improving the opportunities in religious education.
- Pupils benefit from some inspirational teaching.
- The current low time allocation for the subject is limiting achievement.
- Standards in short course GCSE need to be raised, particularly for boys.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

97. Short course GCSE results were very low in 2003, affected by lack of continuity arising from staffing difficulties and from the irregular attendance of some pupils. Boys did particularly badly and their achievement was unsatisfactory overall. In the previous year, results had been better although still well below the national average. Those were the first short course results.
98. Current standards seen in Year 11 are better, although still below average. The progress within the lesson was very good, as the teacher was getting the very best from the class. Lower attaining pupils were able to discuss, with secure use of appropriate terminology, whether it was possible for believers to know the nature of God. A range of pupils' work shows that over time, achievement is satisfactory in terms of knowledge and understanding for all pupils. Achievement for some pupils it is still affected by absences and other reasons spelt out below.
99. Pupils join the school with well below national expectations for this subject, but by the end of their first three years their attainment is closer to national expectations. Weak literacy skills restrict learning for significant numbers of pupils. The time for religious education is low, and this restricts the breadth of learning. Some good written quality work was seen on aspects of Islam and Christianity. Higher attaining pupils can write effective explanations, for example about Sufi Muslims. Some work is done thematically, and pupils are able to make comparisons across religions. They learn about religious responses to prejudice and discrimination effectively in Year 9, and showed a keen sense of justice in a lesson on racism. No significant differences were seen between the achievement of boys and girls in the early years.

Teaching and learning

100. Teaching and learning are both good overall. All the lessons seen were satisfactory and better. Two were excellent, providing pupils with inspirational learning. The best lessons are characterised by lively and imaginative methods including the use of music, and by energy, pace and enthusiasm that communicates itself successfully to the pupils, so that they are interested, motivated and prepared to work. Planning is very thorough so that there are a good variety of tasks; expectations are very high and time is used effectively. Where teaching was not as strong, pupils had not received regular marks and so motivation was weaker. Time management was not so disciplined and lesson objectives were not fully met.

Leadership and management

101. The leader is new this year, and a number of curriculum initiatives are underway that will improve provision and raise standards. Schemes of work are being re-written. The new local agreed syllabus requires assessment that will bring the subject in line with others in the school, and this is being put into place. Personal development opportunities are being strengthened, better use of the school's expertise in the arts is being made and the use of ICT improved. Good work is being done to improve literacy in the early years. At this stage, leadership and management are both satisfactory. The leaders' range of responsibilities, which includes citizenship, presents a heavy workload. However, there is support from a strong and collaborative team where expertise is high. An adequate time allocation for this subject will be restored next year when time for citizenship is separated from the time given to religious education. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

Provision in Design and Technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching overall is good and this results in good learning.
- Leadership is very good and skilful management has brought about good departmental progress since the last inspection.
- Most pupils have good attitudes towards the subject and make good efforts with their work.
- Owing to the short modules in Years 7 to 9, pupils do not have enough time to amass the necessary skills in all the material areas.
- In order to extend the curriculum, the department needs more computer-aided equipment and computers in food and textiles.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

102. GCSE results overall in 2003 were lower than those from the two previous years and were below the national average for grades A* to C and A* to G. Results in the material areas differ. Results in textiles and graphics were near the national average, but in food and resistant materials, they were well below average. Girls tend to outperform the boys in all material areas.
103. Current standards in Year 9 are below average overall but are better in practical than in theory work. Pupils are successful in making things, using skills and knowledge gained on short projects in Years 7 and 8. Achievement overall is satisfactory at this stage since most pupils enter school knowing little about the subject, but most of the pupils do not make the amount of progress they should, owing to the shortness of the courses. Most pupils handle tools and materials confidently and are accurate when measuring, marking, cutting and manipulating. The highest attaining pupils question the teachers more, keep their files and booklets neatly, and many use ICT for writing up and searching the Internet. A few boys and some of the lower-attaining pupils often struggle in theory owing to their lower levels in reading, writing and number work and tend not to complete homework tasks, thus creating difficulties when they need to move on.
104. In Year 11, standards in practical work seen during the inspection are average. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good overall. Pupils are familiar with a wide range of materials and tools, including computer-aided equipment. This demonstrates good achievement, as GCSE courses make demands on pupils' time and individual effort. They tackle projects sensibly and

many of them work hard. Whereas most pupils perform well with practical work, many, except the higher attaining pupils, do not do themselves justice in theory. In general, imaginative drawing skills are weak and pupils have difficulty in translating drawings into working diagrams. Some pupils, mainly the lower attaining boys, do not do enough coursework. Where theory work is best, pupils use ICT to enhance presentation, create interesting drawings and evaluate their work thoughtfully.

Teaching and learning

105. The quality of teaching overall is good and secures good learning but satisfactory achievement in Years 7 to 9, for reasons explained above. Teaching methods are very good. Teachers plan well and use lesson time effectively to ensure that pupils have ample time for practice and to speak to the teachers about their projects. They select good quality resources and examples to set high standards and the well-created support sheets ensure pupils become more self-reliant. Effective demonstrations build up pupils' confidence and the technician gives very good technical support. The projects interest and motivate the pupils and help them to build up skills in both designing and making. Most teachers give up free time to work with pupils after school hours. This is invaluable, especially for pupils in Year 11, and those with poor attendance records who want to catch up on work. Relationships are secure and pupils appear to enjoy technology. They are encouraged to participate, so respond positively and most of them settle to work cheerfully and try hard. Teachers know the pupils well and work closely with individuals to ensure they achieve their potential. Pupils receive honest feedback on their work, but some teachers mark work more thoroughly than others do, and their pupils are surer of how to progress and at which level.

Leadership and management

106. Leadership is very good. Management is good. The head of department is a skilful leader with good intentions to raise standards and improve assessment. The realistic development plan addresses the problem about boys' attainment, aims to improve the environment, increase the amount of ICT and to constantly update the scheme of work to ensure equal challenge in the material areas. The head of department leads a good team that works well together. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. After a period of staffing instability, creating difficulties in some GCSE classes, the department is now up to full strength, the qualities of teaching and learning are better, and the rewritten scheme of work, after-school clubs and better analysis of data are all helping to raise standards. Improvement since the last inspection is good. However, in order to extend the curriculum, the department needs equipment for pneumatics and computer-aided manufacturing and some computers and programs in food and textiles.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design, music and drama were inspected in depth and dance was sampled. In the two dance lessons and extra-curricular sessions observed, the quality of teaching and learning were good. Standards in Year 8 were seen to be below average, but both boys and girls achieved well in the lesson. Standards in the Year 11 GCSE practical class (three pupils) were judged to be above average.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement from Years 7 to 11 is good.

- Individuality in approach to art and design is positively encouraged.
- Very good displays in the art and design area stimulate and inspire the pupils.
- The proximity of the two art and design rooms encourages sharing of good practice.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

107. After a trend of rising results over the last three years, the results in GCSE in 2003 were below average. Girls performed better than boys overall.
108. Current standards are closer to national standards by the end of Years 9 and 11 than last year's test and examination results would indicate, in fact, average overall. From a low base on entry, all pupils of all abilities achieve well overall. By the end of Year 9, pupils are confident in their use of a variety of media. Their work demonstrates a growing understanding, development and grasp of skills. They are familiar with a range of established artists and use art vocabulary well when evaluating their own work based on these various styles. By the end of Year 11, pupils' practical skills are well developed. They are equally at home with realistic and observational drawing and painting as well as more abstract and surrealist compositions. They are also confident with their three-dimensional and sculptural work.

Teaching and learning

109. Teaching and learning are good, resulting in good achievement overall. Teachers structure lessons well and the sensitive support and encouragement they give ensures the interest and involvement of pupils of all abilities. A strength of the teaching is the encouragement of an individual approach to art which enables pupils to produce some quite unique and creative pieces of work. Marking and assessment are good. Pupils are aware of their present levels or grades and are clear about their targets for future development. The proximity of the two art rooms encourages the sharing of good practice.

Leadership and management

110. The leadership of the department is good. Management is also good; systems and organisation are well structured and helpful. The very good displays in the art and design area stimulate and inspire the pupils. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. There are no unqualified teachers working in the department and the previous Health and Safety concerns over security in the kiln room have been dealt with.

Drama

Overall the provision for drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at GCSE are high.
- Very good teaching leads to very good learning and very good achievement overall.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Planning is very good, providing a cohesive structure for the development of performing skills.
- Assessment is very good.
- Relationships with pupils are very good.
- Accommodation and resources need improvement.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

111. Results in GCSE have been consistently high over the last five years with all pupils achieving much higher standards in drama than in their other subjects.
112. Pupils' attainment on entry for speaking and listening is well below average but develops rapidly in drama and, by the end of Year 9, is much improved. Current standards are high with many pupils on course to achieve the highest grades. Achievement is very good overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in performance. A Year 11 class observed performing 'Pretty Maids' achieved a well above average standard. These pupils have developed high levels of skill, which enables them to effectively blend use of space, dance and voice with an understanding of dramatic tension to produce well-developed and sustained cameos. GCSE pupils produce high quality coursework demonstrating very good use of ICT and high standards of literacy. The superb presentation of coursework reflects the pupils' positive and enthusiastic attitude to the subject.

Teaching and Learning

113. Teaching and learning are very good overall, leading to very good achievement overall. Teachers plan lessons into carefully structured sequences which enables pupils to understand what they are learning and to achieve their very challenging targets. Brisk pace and high expectations were features of all lessons observed; as a result pupils constantly develop and refine their skills and so achieve high levels of expertise. Assessment is very good. Pupils are clear about the skills they need and what they need to do in order to improve. This, together with the very good teaching, engages and motivates pupils to improve further. The pupils' use of assessment clearly raises the standards in drama. ICT is used well, particularly for research at GCSE.

Leadership and Management

114. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Inspiring leadership has already motivated part-time and non-specialist teachers. All the team has an absolute commitment to ensuring that all pupils succeed, whatever their background or special difficulties. The drama curriculum is further enriched by professional actors, two out-reach teachers and a Youth Theatre. In addition, pupils visit local theatres regularly to observe professional productions.
115. Accommodation and resources need improving as this is restricting the development of the subject. Improvement since the last inspection is good because drama continues to uphold the very high standards reported at the time of the last inspection.

Music

The overall provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment sheets inform pupils of their achievement and set targets for future improvement.
- There is good use of ICT to inform pupils' learning and composition skills.
- Clear policies regarding literacy, numeracy and citizenship are in place.
- Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- The interim leadership is doing a very good holding role.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

116. As a result of previous staffing difficulties the GCSE results in 2003 were well below national averages.
117. Current standards by all pupils are much closer to national standards by Years 9 and 11 than examination results would indicate, in fact average overall. Achievement is good overall for all pupils studying music, as a result of good and very good teaching. By Year 9, pupils can analyse and compare musical features using appropriate musical vocabulary. They work well in ensembles and their compositions use appropriate devices such as melody, rhythms, chords and structures. By Year 11, pupils perform confidently both individually and as part of a group. They can compose extended compositions, which demonstrate a good understanding of rhythm, dynamics, chord sequences and strong melodic phrasing.

Teaching and learning

118. The quality of teaching is good, leading to good learning and good achievement overall. Teachers clearly outline the aims of the lessons to the pupils. Performance skills are developed and pupil evaluation is encouraged. Lessons begin with rhythm exercises that ensure the pupils' total concentration. The use of humour linked with well-paced lessons encourages very good attitudes by pupils to their lessons. The sympathetic analysis of pupils' work and encouragement of shared performances results in pupils' commitment to and enjoyment of their learning.

Leadership and management

119. At the moment, the department is well led and managed by the head of performing arts, covering very well for the illness of the music teacher. Schemes of work are creatively designed and differentiation within them means that the content is accessible to pupils of all levels of attainment. Assessment is undertaken conscientiously and is clearly communicated to pupils. Clear policies regarding literacy, numeracy and citizenship are in place. A wide range of extra-curricular activities involves over two hundred pupils. Since the last inspection the use of ICT to underpin pupils' learning is well developed and assists both their research and development of composition work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching of the GCSE pupils enables those who attend regularly to achieve well in the examination.
- There are very good opportunities for all pupils, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel through the extra-curricular programme.
- Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are over generous.
- Health and safety risk assessments in physical activities are not yet complete.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

120. The 2003 GCSE examination results were below average. Nonetheless, boys and girls do better in physical education than in most of their other subjects.

121. Current standards overall in Year 9 are below average. By Year 9, standards in net games are below average, reflecting satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' starting point on entering the school. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in badminton, volleyball and table tennis; those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well integrated, achieving as well as other pupils.
122. By Year 11, standards remain below average overall, and achievement is satisfactory. This can be accounted for by the reduction in time for the subject, the poor attendance of many pupils and recent difficulties in recruiting staff. Curriculum organisation also hinders continuity and progress in pupils' learning. Standards in GCSE practical work are average with a minority achieving at an above average level in their chosen sport. Pupils achieve well in badminton and table tennis. When pupils are required to write what they know of theoretical aspects, however, standards are currently below, or well below, average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in the Junior Sports Leader Award course. Boys' and girls' performances in extra-curricular sport are often above average, reflected in success in football, volleyball and cross-country running competitions both locally and beyond.

Teaching and learning

123. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, resulting in satisfactory achievement overall; they are good in the examination course in Years 10 and 11. Teachers are knowledgeable and have demanding expectations. High standards of participation, dress and behaviour are expected and achieved. Good relationships between staff and pupils create a positive climate for learning, and pupils have good attitudes to the subject. Teaching has a strong focus on 'doing', but there is too little emphasis on improvement, and pupils have to move on before mastering the basic skills. There is insufficient use of progressive target setting. The most effective teaching demonstrates pace, challenge and a focus on learning in which pupils take an active role both physically and intellectually, well illustrated in GCSE table tennis. Teaching still needs to provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in evaluating and improving performance, as reported in the last inspection. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Good marking gives helpful advice on how pupils can improve and lets them know the progress that they are making. Further work on developing assessment criteria is required; teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are over-generous.

Leadership and management

124. Good leadership provides a clear direction for the subject, reflected in good development planning focused on raising attainment. Extra-curricular activities are a particular strength and these are enjoyed and well supported by pupils. Management is satisfactory but there is still work to be done. More work is required on assessment, schemes of work, aspects of curriculum organisation and strategies for the implementation of recent national initiatives. Health and safety risk assessments are not yet complete. The school is making progress towards achieving the aim of the national strategy for 75 per cent of pupils to have two hours a week of quality physical education by 2006. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards and the quality of teaching have been maintained. GCSE results have improved.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Provision for **leisure and tourism** was sampled.

125. In the lesson seen, teaching and learning were good. Examination results in 2003 were above average and standards seen in class are average. Pupils, mostly girls, make good progress because they develop thinking skills to become good independent learners. An appropriately challenging programme of visits and practical work is offered and there is frequent and effective use of ICT in pupils' enquiries.

The vocational work in **ICT** is reported in the appropriate section above.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP

The provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no effective policy or strategy for delivering knowledge and understanding of citizenship.
- Planning, assessment, monitoring and recording are unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient time allocated to deliver the subject of citizenship effectively.
- Some elements of citizenship are being taught well in other subject areas.
- Many departments implicitly promote good communication skills and encourage participation and responsible action.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

126. Citizenship has been delivered via topics such as Road Safety, Crime Awareness, Health and Safety and Drugs Awareness to different year groups using theme days or religious education lessons. These experiences are, however, infrequent. At the time of the inspection there was insufficient written evidence available to determine standards, apart from a unit of work completed by the religious education teachers. Standards of pupils' knowledge and understanding of what makes a good citizen are below average. Standards in skills of enquiry and communication are better. Good standards were observed in art, English and science where pupils discussed the social and moral issues of acid rain. Standards in developing skills of participation and responsible action are satisfactory overall. Good examples were noted in drama, physical education, art and English where independent learning was a strength. However, too few opportunities were reported in mathematics and modern foreign languages. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall.

Teaching and Learning

127. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, leading to unsatisfactory achievement overall, although in the two lessons seen, they were satisfactory and good respectively. Planning is unsatisfactory, elements are taught incidentally and there is currently no scheme of work to cover all three strands of the citizenship programme of study. There is no means of assessing citizenship and pupils are unable to talk about their progress in becoming responsible and informed citizens. All aspects of assessment are unsatisfactory.

Leadership and Management

128. Both leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher and head of religious education have begun to co-ordinate aspects of citizenship. Although an audit of subject contributions has been carried out, these, as yet, have neither been evaluated nor developed into a structured scheme of work. There is currently no vehicle for monitoring a cross-curricular approach. The new headteacher realises the current provision is unsatisfactory and is committed to giving citizenship a higher profile within the school next year.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

