

INSPECTION REPORT

KING HAROLD SCHOOL

Waltham Abbey, Essex

LEA area: Essex LEA

Unique reference number: 115331

Headteacher: Mr Mike Feehan

Lead inspector: Dr Andy Swallow

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th March 2004

Inspection number: 258679

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	773
School address:	Broomstick Hall Road Waltham Abbey Essex
Postcode:	EN9 1LF
Telephone number:	(01992) 714 800
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Fletcher
Date of previous inspection:	19 th March 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

King Harold is an 11-16 comprehensive school in Waltham Abbey, Essex. It is also part of the South East England Virtual Education Action Zone and a Network Learning Community. Most pupils come from four local primary schools in Waltham Abbey West, Honey Lane and Paternoster wards, with a small, but increasing proportion from adjoining London boroughs. These wards are amongst the most disadvantaged in Epping Forest District Council. The school's intake therefore represents a large number of families from significantly socio-economically deprived backgrounds. Most pupils remain at the school for the full five years. The school is smaller than average, with 773 pupils on roll. This number has reduced considerably in recent years. The number of minority ethnic and dual-heritage groups represented amongst the pupils is low. Very few have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average. One in six pupils have special educational needs, a similar proportion to the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9406	Mr R Cottington	Lay inspector	
32382	Mr J Bryan-Williams	Team inspector	Geography
32316	Mr M Brown	Team inspector	Science
27246	Mr P Kitson	Team inspector	Religious education, Physical education
31981	Mr E Forster	Team inspector	Art and design
28429	Mr C Maynard	Team inspector	Music
20611	Mr P Evans	Team inspector	English, Drama
15970	Mr N Waller	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
19222	Mr N Jepson	Team inspector	History
1299	Mr G Jones	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

King Harold School provides an overall **satisfactory standard of education** for the all-round development of pupils, although it has serious weaknesses in some aspects of teaching and learning in Years 7 - 9 and in standards attained by pupils at the age of 14. These weaknesses are largely due to a shortage of teachers. However, standards are rising year on year in Year 11 and most pupils make satisfactory progress by the age of 16. Overall, King Harold is **an effective school**. The ethos is one in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to do their best. The school provides satisfactory value for money despite a large budget overspend due to recent falling numbers of pupils.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- There is too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 7 - 9, with the result that pupils do not attain highly enough in English, mathematics and science by the age of 14.
- GCSE results are rising and a higher than average proportion of pupils achieve one or more grades A* - G.
- There is very good teaching, learning and achievement in physical education, and in digital art and design in Years 10 - 11.
- The provision for science in Years 7 - 9, ICT, modern foreign languages and citizenship is unsatisfactory, and the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in most subjects is unsatisfactory.
- Specialist provision for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties is good, but the unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of pupils in lessons is not well managed by some teachers. This results in a high level of exclusions from school.
- There are good arrangements for pupils' care and welfare and to encourage them to attend school regularly.
- Links with the community are very good and there is a good range of enrichment opportunities.

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in 2002. The overall quality of teaching has improved, particularly the proportion of good and better teaching. Nevertheless, teaching is unsatisfactory overall, largely due to temporary or unqualified teachers. GCSE results have improved consistently, although results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in mathematics and science have fallen over the last two years. Senior leaders have a wide range of information on pupils' progress and potential, and are using this information to increasingly good effect. The use of such information by classroom teachers is still inconsistent.

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	C

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

- **Pupils' achievement is satisfactory** overall by the end of Year 11, given their below average starting points on entry to the school. Standards of the current Year 9 pupils are below the national expectation overall but their achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Years 7 - 9 are average in English but below average in mathematics and science. These are higher than the results in the 2003 national tests, which were low when compared with similar schools, indicating that pupils do not do as well as expected. Standards are above average in religious education and well above average in physical education. They are below average in design and technology, ICT and citizenship.
- Standards by Year 11 are below national expectations, reflecting the GCSE results in 2003. Nevertheless, results are improving year on year. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve satisfactorily and do well in science, geography, art and design, religious education and particularly well in music and physical education. They underachieve in ICT.
- Pupils from minority ethnic heritages and those who are gifted and talented achieve satisfactorily, in line with their peers. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Attendance and attitudes are satisfactory. In spite of the school's efforts, behaviour in and punctuality to lessons are unsatisfactory overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory, although there are some serious weaknesses. **Teaching is unsatisfactory** overall because too many temporary or unqualified teachers work in Years 7 - 9 and pupils do not achieve satisfactorily in too many of these lessons. Teaching is much better in Years 10 - 11 where teachers' expertise is greater. Assessment across the school is not used consistently to plan work for some groups of pupils, and marking in some subjects is inconsistent. The curriculum is generally satisfactory, with strengths in many subjects but weaknesses in ICT. Extra-curricular activities are good, particularly in sport and the arts. Pupils receive good advice and support, and strong links have been developed with other schools and particularly effective links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher articulates a sense of purpose and ambition for the work of the school. Central to this ambition is an acknowledgement of the need to improve continuously teaching and learning and to raise standards of achievement. The school's ethos ensures that all pupils are valued. Governors support the school well but they do not ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Staffing absences have resulted in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching not being consistent or rigorous enough.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents have favourable views about most aspects of the school's work. However, they have some concerns about the standards of behaviour in the school and the setting of homework. Most pupils are happy to come to school and are positive about the way that the school is run.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve attainment in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 9;
- improve aspects of teaching, learning and achievement in Years 7 - 9 by ensuring that senior and curriculum team leaders monitor and evaluate classroom standards regularly, and are rigorous in challenging weaker practice;
- strengthen the provision in Years 7 - 9 for science and for ICT throughout the school;
- continue to improve teachers' classroom management of behaviour of a minority of pupils who disrupt teaching and learning and hinder the progress of their peers;

and, to meet statutory requirements :

- ensure that teachers teach effectively the ICT component of all relevant National Curriculum subjects, and assess and report pupils' progress in citizenship, particularly by the end of Year 9;
- provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils;
- ensure that the governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall by the end of Year 11, given their below average standards on entry to the school in Year 7. However, they make greater progress in Years 10 - 11 than in Years 7 - 9. Standards in the national tests have been well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science. In 2003, results were much lower than in previous years. In the GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more grades A*-C is still below average, but shows a considerable improvement over time. In 2003, standards in English and mathematics were well below average but above average in science. These standards are set to rise in 2004. The few pupils from different minority ethnic heritages achieve as well as their peers. There are no major differences between boys and girls' performance. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and those who are gifted and talented achieve satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not attain highly enough by the age of 14, given their starting points in Year 7, in comparison with similar schools.
- Pupils make good progress overall across Years 10 – 11, given their end of Year 9 outcomes.
- GCSE results at 5+ A*-C are improving year on year - standards in physical education are well above the national average and just above the national average in science.
- Standards in business studies, drama, history, English and mathematics are well below average by the end of Year 11.
- GCSE results at 1+ A*-G are above the national average.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in Years 7 – 11 because the planning of their work and the teaching takes into account their needs.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress at the end of Year 9 are inaccurate and too high.

Commentary

1. The National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average in English, mathematics and science. These outcomes were far lower than in previous years. The school did not do as well as other schools in similar circumstances and targets set by the governing body were missed by considerable margins in all three subjects. Since the last inspection, results have fallen considerably in mathematics and science and have improved marginally in English. Overall, pupils do not attain highly enough by the age of 14 when their performance in the national tests at the age of 11 is taken into account. These relatively low outcomes are accounted for by the staffing difficulties in the core subjects experienced recently by the school. The school has implemented a number of strategies to improve standards in English, mathematics and science, including a programme of booster classes. Achievement in lessons is now satisfactory in English and mathematics, but unsatisfactory in science. The progress of current Year 9 pupils indicates that standards are set to rise significantly again this summer in line with the school's published targets.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (30.5)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	31.7 (32.4)	35.4 (34.7)
science	30.0 (32.0)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 157 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Since the last inspection, the GCSE examination results at five or more grades A*-C have risen year on year and are set to rise again this summer. Although results are still below average, they have increased at over twice the rate seen nationally. The very high GCSE examination results at one or more grades A*-G have been maintained and are above the national average. The school's average point score has also risen, but remains below the national figure. One of the reasons for the school's continued improvement in pupils' performances at the age of 16 is accounted for by the careful match of teachers' expertise and experience to pupils' needs. This has been a priority for the school during the recent challenges of teacher shortages that it has had to face. The GCSE examination results in 2003 at grades A*-C in physical education/sports studies were well above average. Science results at the higher levels were slightly above average. Pupils' performances in most other subjects were below average; they were well below average in English language and literature, mathematics, business studies, drama, history and sociology.

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	40 (36)	52.6 (51.5)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	83 (82)	88.6 (88.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (97)	94.6 (94.6)
Average point score per pupil (best 8 subjects)	30.4 (29.3)	34.7 (34.6)

There were 162 in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Standards of pupils' work in Years 7 - 9 are generally below average. They are below average in mathematics and science, but average in English, showing overall signs of improvement from the school's 2003 test results in these subjects. In the remaining subjects they are below average in design and technology, citizenship and ICT, but average in art and design, music, history and geography. In religious education, standards are above average and they are well above average in physical education. In modern foreign languages, standards are average in the lessons taught by permanent teachers (half of the lessons), but below average in those taught by temporary staff. By the end of Year 9, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in science, taking into account their starting points on entry to the school. However, the current progress of pupils in English is improving and they are achieving well in lessons across Years 7 - 9. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and in most other subjects is satisfactory. Their achievement in music, geography and religious education is good and very good in physical education. Overall, standards and achievement in science have deteriorated since the last inspection.
4. In Years 10 and 11, standards overall are below average but are improving. The majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily, given their starting points in Year 10. Standards in English and mathematics are below average, but showing signs of improvement from the 2003 GCSE examination results. Standards in science are average, reflecting the latest GCSE outcomes. In English and mathematics, pupils achieve satisfactorily and they achieve well in science when account is taken of their performance in the Year 9 tests. In the remaining subjects, standards are below average in design and technology, ICT, citizenship and drama; they are average in history, geography, modern languages and music. Standards are above average in art and design and in religious education; they are well above average in physical education. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in most subjects; they are achieving well in art and design, geography and religious education, and very well in music and physical education. However, their achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory. Overall standards and achievement in ICT have deteriorated since the last inspection.
5. Pupils achieve better in science, art and design, music and in some English lessons in Years 10 - 11 than in Years 7 - 9. This is because the overall quality of teaching and learning is much stronger in these year groups. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented are achieving satisfactorily overall. Where subjects are planned specifically to meet their needs by providing more challenging work, as in religious education, they achieve well. They are insufficiently challenged in most other subjects. There are no significant differences in the standards attained by the few pupils from minority ethnic heritages and they achieve satisfactorily, in line with their peers. The small number of Year 8 who are in the early stages of English fluency receive appropriate support and achieve satisfactorily.
6. Overall, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. They often do well in English, mathematics and science, and in most other subjects, because teachers plan well to meet their needs and use support assistants to good effect in lessons. As a result, they make good progress across Years 7 - 11 against the targets in their individual education plans and develop the necessary skills and understanding. In Years 10 - 11, many pupils with a statement of special educational need are successful in GCSE examinations, for example in digital art. The school has recently opened a learning support centre where some pupils with special educational needs and behavioural difficulties in Years 7 - 9 receive additional support to develop their literacy, numeracy and social skills. The centre is well equipped with modern technology and is well staffed by qualified teachers and support assistants. As a result, most pupils achieve well. They are appropriately supported on their return to mainstream classes. The school also provides an alternative curriculum in Years 10 - 11 for some pupils with more severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. For example, in Year 11, a small group of pupils follow a specifically planned programme of vocational courses at a local college and have the opportunity of some extended work experience, and in Year 10, a small number of pupils follow an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course in the learning support centre, with appropriate accreditation. Many of these pupils make good progress, improve their social skills and behaviour and are able to remain on the school register.
7. Pupils' literacy skills are average. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school in developing their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. These skills are sufficient to enable them to use them successfully in other subjects. Pupils' mathematical skills are below average but are sufficient for the requirements of most subjects. However, there is no planned systematic development of these skills across the curriculum. Some do not have sufficient understanding of processes to help them apply their skills to unfamiliar situations. This can sometimes hinder their progress. Few subjects are systematically planning for the development of pupils' ICT skills and too many teachers, especially in

design and technology and science, do not teach the statutory ICT components within the National Curriculum subject programmes of study. As a result, pupils do not make satisfactory progress outside of their specific ICT lessons in Years 7 - 9.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory. Attitudes and relationships are satisfactory. The provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Attendance levels are satisfactory but punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is too much disruptive and inappropriate behaviour in some lessons. In and around school, behaviour is better but there are many incidents of immature behaviour. There are a high number of exclusions.
- Relationships between pupils are good but a small minority of pupils show a lack of common courtesy to some teachers and support staff.
- Provision for cultural development is good and takes place in several subjects across the curriculum.
- Attitudes to punctuality are unsatisfactory with many pupils arriving late for school. Between lessons, a minority of pupils are nearly always late for the start of the next lesson.

Commentary

- Although the majority of pupils like school, work hard and want to do well, there is a significant minority whose unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes have a negative impact on teaching and learning. Some of these pupils are from families whose parents condone their behaviour and who do not support the school's efforts. Changing these parental attitudes poses a major challenge for school staff at all levels.
- Overall, pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory. In lessons a significant minority of pupils take advantage of temporary or inexperienced teachers. They cause disruption to lessons by calling out, mimicking the teacher or talking across the teacher. In the worst cases, the extent of the problem means that little learning can take place. This is having a significant impact on standards especially in Years 7 - 9. Pupils and parents highlighted this as an issue in the pre-inspection questionnaires and later in the course of pupils' discussions during the inspection. Although behaviour in and around the school is better, a number of boys behave in a childish and immature manner. For example, they throw food at one another and drop litter.
- As the table below shows, there have been four permanent exclusions during the past year, all for serious breaches of discipline. In addition, a total of 83 fixed period exclusions were imposed during the same period. The reasons for this action include rudeness or threats to teachers or other pupils. The number of exclusions is high and reflects the anti-social behaviour of some pupils.

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	691	72	2
White – any other White background	30	4	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	5	1
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0

Black or Black British – Caribbean	6	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	1	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	1	0

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

11. Although the school has good quality policies in place to deal with behavioural problems, the intent is not always followed through consistently well enough by teachers. Despite the behavioural problems, King Harold is a school that welcomes all pupils and where there are good relationships between the pupils irrespective of ability or background. Pupils with special needs are treated well and older pupils show concern for younger pupils. During discussions, pupils said they felt secure and safe, and whilst acknowledging that there was some bullying, believed this to be of a low level and to be dealt with well by staff. Relationships with staff are satisfactory. In the main, most pupils show respect and like their teachers and other staff.
12. Pupils' personal development is an emerging strength of the school's work. The school council, following some initial success, is looking to develop its role into all areas of the school's life. It meets regularly with, and is well supported by, a school governor. Elected members enjoy the responsibility that they have been given, take the role seriously and are eager to make a difference. They are currently exploring ways of reducing behavioural problems. Older pupils are involved in a project to work with and support pupils who are experiencing emotional or social problems. This very worthwhile project is already having a good impact due to the hard work of the pupils and those who are supporting their efforts. Social development also occurs through a good range of outside visits and residential trips as well as sporting events. Although provision is good, activities have yet to improve wholeheartedly pupils' attitudes. For example, care for the school environment is not seen as important for too many pupils, shown by the amount of litter in and around school. The development of the pupils' spiritual awareness is satisfactory, with some good opportunities for self-awareness and reflection during religious education lessons. In other subjects, for example in English, art and design, music, dance and drama, pupils are able to experience a good range of human emotions and opportunities to appreciate the plights of different people from around the world. Cultural development is good and well provided for in several curriculum areas. Pupils learn about their local and national heritage through a range of visits to the Royal Gunpowder Mills and to Waltham Abbey. Opportunities to learn about the multicultural aspects of contemporary British society are effective through the study of major faiths. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are given opportunities to describe their own cultural heritage. For example, a good quality contribution to the school newsletter by a pupil explained the relevance and meaning of Ramadan and Eid.
13. Overall attendance levels are in line with national averages and have improved since the last inspection. The school has good systems in place to ensure good attendance. These include telephone calls home on the first day of absence, targeting those with poor attendance levels and close working arrangements with the local Education Welfare Officer. As a last resort, parents are subject to legal sanctions. Too many pupils are late at the start of the school day, even those who live close by to the school, and many cannot account for their lateness. Between lessons, a small minority are persistently late for the start of the next lesson. In many instances, pupils' absence and lateness is openly condoned by parents. The school is working hard to reverse these trends.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.6
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 in 2002/3.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

14. The school provides an overall satisfactory quality of education for its pupils, although there are serious weaknesses in areas of its work. Too much of the teaching in Years 7 - 9 is unsatisfactory and this results in too many pupils underachieving by the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, however, teaching and learning are predominantly satisfactory, pupils achieve satisfactorily and standards are rising. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they achieve well. The curriculum generally meets the needs of pupils satisfactorily. Provision for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities, is good. Pupils receive satisfactory levels of advice and support from their teachers and are well looked after. Parents and pupils are satisfied with the education that the school provides. Strong links have been established with other schools and particularly with the local community.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is unsatisfactory. It is much better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 - 9. Accordingly, pupils make more progress across Years 10 - 11. This is because the school has taken the decision to ensure that experienced, qualified teachers are working in these years. Teachers who are temporary, inexperienced, unqualified or newly-qualified tend to work in Years 7 - 9. This is having an adverse effect on the overall teaching and learning. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory overall. Information is not used consistently enough to support teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some teachers have insufficient knowledge of teaching and learning approaches in Years 7 - 9.
- Some teachers do not insist on high enough standards of pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning in Years 7 - 9
- Not enough is being done by senior and subject leaders to monitor regularly the quality of teaching and learning and to use the outcomes of this work to improve teachers' performance.
- The teaching of science in Years 7 - 9 is unsatisfactory and too many subjects do not make enough use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- There is consistently good teaching in geography, physical education, music and religious education throughout the school
- Assessment information is not used as effectively as it could be and pupils do not always have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve.
- The use of teaching assistants is good throughout the school. They are well directed to support pupils' learning in lessons.
- Most teachers include all pupils effectively in lessons and promote equality of opportunity well.

Commentary

15. The table below indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school. The teaching is satisfactory in Years 10 - 11, but too high a proportion of the teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 - 9. There has been an improvement in the overall quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Parents and pupils are positive about the teaching in the school in lessons taken by experienced and permanent teachers. They express concerns about the teaching of some temporary and unqualified staff.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 141 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (1%)	21 (15%)	55 (39%)	50 (35%)	12 (9%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)

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

16. Good and very good teaching occurs in all subjects but it is consistently very good in physical education throughout the school and in music in Years 10 -11; good in geography, music and religious education in Years 7 - 11, in English in Years 7 - 9 and in science and art and design in Years 10 - 11.

17. There are common strengths in teaching that underpin the good quality of pupils' learning, resulting in good learning in many lessons, particularly in Years 10 -11. For example, most teachers expect pupils to behave well and they manage some challenging behaviour very effectively. The good quality relationships between staff and pupils means that learning takes place in a positive climate. As a result, most pupils are engaged and concentrate well. All pupils are treated with respect and their contributions are valued and encouraged. Teaching methods are used imaginatively and result in a high level of interest from most pupils. Individual needs are well catered for and teaching assistants are used effectively. Appropriate and realistic challenges are consistently set and pupils work productively. Teachers and assistants understand the next steps that pupils need to take in their learning and they provide a wide range of activities to support this.
18. In physical education and music, where teaching and learning are often very good, all pupils in a class are totally engaged in their work and they make very good progress, much better than might be expected, resulting in very high levels of achievement. Teaching is stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging and is rooted in individual teachers' expert subject knowledge. Teaching methods are well selected and time is used very productively for independent and collaborative work. Activities and demands are matched sensitively to pupils' needs and there are very good relationships in the classroom.
19. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory in mathematics, ICT, history, design and technology and citizenship in Years 7 - 11, in art and design in Years 7 - 9 and in English in Years 10 - 11. In these lessons, teaching is generally accurate and teachers have a secure understanding of the curriculum and the teaching of key skills. They plan to make work interesting and varied and the majority of pupils understand what they are expected to do. Tasks have sufficient challenge to keep pupils working well, both independently and co-operatively, and most pupils make satisfactory progress with their learning.
20. There are wide variations in the quality of teaching and learning in a number of subjects in Years 7 – 9. Not enough is being done by senior and subject leaders to monitor and evaluate regularly standards in lessons, and to improve weaker practice or to use the best examples of effective practice to raise the performance of relatively weaker teachers. For example, in science and in modern foreign languages too many pupils make limited progress and underachieve. In these lessons, and in others in Years 7 - 9, teaching is too often uninteresting and fails to capture pupils' enthusiasm. Activities are dull and take insufficient account of pupils' earlier learning. Frequently, teachers spend too much time managing behaviour rather than extending pupils' learning and some pupils are easily distracted and lack the motivation to work. The progress of some pupils is hampered by the disruptive behaviour of others. The expectations of some teachers are frequently too low, they routinely set low-level tasks and too many pupils produce work of limited depth and quality. Some teaching does not promote independence and does not develop appropriate strategies for pupils to achieve well in tests and examinations. The quality of teaching and learning by unqualified and temporary staff is variable and overall is unsatisfactory.
21. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory throughout the school. Insufficient use is made of pupils' progress when teachers are planning lessons. The targets set for pupils at the end of, and throughout, Years 7 - 9 are often too low. Exceptions to this occur in geography where target setting is a strength of the teaching, and in music and physical education where assessment is used effectively to move individual pupils forward. There are examples of good marking in English and religious education, with evidence that pupils act on the advice that they are given to improve their work. However, in science, marking is far too varied in regularity, quality and usefulness to help pupils to improve. In ICT, design and technology and modern foreign languages, the assessments of pupils' progress are generally inaccurate and there are too few opportunities for them to review their own learning.
22. The school provides successfully for pupils who do not respond well to/or who experience difficulties in learning. Lower attaining pupils are generally taught well throughout the school and teaching assistants are well directed by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The teaching assistant in the learning support centre works very well with the teacher-in-charge. The teaching assistants understand their role in supporting the educational progress of their allocated pupils, offer appropriate encouragement, and use pupils' individual education plans effectively to drive their work. In general, subject lesson plans refer consistently to the needs of pupils with special educational needs, appropriately challenging work is planned for them and additional resources are highlighted. Pupils who are in the early stages of English fluency are also well supported. The school has identified pupils who are judged to be gifted and talented, as well as those who are to benefit from the Education Action Zone's 'Aim Higher' programme. However, not all teachers are yet planning work to match these pupils' needs. There is good practice in

mathematics to challenge higher attaining pupils in lessons and in booster classes to raise their attainment by the ages of 14 and 16. Similarly, effective provision is made for high-attainers in geography, physical education and religious education, but in many other subjects, these pupils are generally insufficiently challenged.

The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is satisfactory overall with some areas of strength and others that are unsatisfactory. Good opportunities are provided for enrichment, especially the range and quality of extra-curricular activities. Resources are unsatisfactory overall, particularly the quality and quantity of computers, general access to ICT and the match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The large numbers of temporary, unqualified and inexperienced teachers are having an adverse effect on provision in some subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The quality and quantity of computers and general access to ICT learning resources across the curriculum are unsatisfactory. ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning in all subjects.
- There are good opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including good provision for sports and the arts.
- The school's preparation for pupils' next stages of education or employment is good.

Commentary

23. The school's curriculum caters satisfactorily for the diverse needs of the pupil population. However, it does not meet all statutory requirements. Few subjects provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their learning; arrangements for the assessment and reporting of citizenship, particularly by the end of Year 9, are unsatisfactory, and there is no daily act of collective worship.
24. The curriculum in Years 10 - 11 is adequately balanced. Two weeks' work experience is provided for all pupils in Year 10. Both dual and single sciences are available, together with a range of technology subjects. A number of vocational and specialist courses, including leisure and tourism, sociology, business studies and an innovative digital art programme, increase the breadth of choices for pupils. These arrangements have enabled a very high proportion of pupils to gain GCSE qualifications.
25. Other aspects of the curriculum are not as strong or as well established. The provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory because teachers are not assessing and recording systematically pupils' progress throughout the school, nor reporting outcomes to parents. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), including drug education and sex and relationship education, is taught appropriately; however, insufficient time is allocated to PSHE and citizenship in Years 7 - 9. Facilities for teaching ICT as a separate subject in Years 7 - 9 have improved since the last inspection, but the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in other subjects, in all years, remains unsatisfactory. Provision for science in Years 7 - 9 is unsatisfactory because the work is planned at too low a level for pupils to make sufficient progress. Provision for modern foreign languages across the school is also unsatisfactory. This is because only half of the present teachers have appropriate expertise and qualifications, resulting in much unsatisfactory teaching, learning and achievement.
26. Careers education is taught effectively within PSHE in Years 9 - 11 and tutors, pupil progress managers and Connexions advisers provide pupils with appropriate guidance.
27. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the life of the school. They are well taught and supported by teachers' assistants in mainstream classes and some are withdrawn appropriately for additional help with reading, writing and number work. Small groups of pupils with behavioural problems are given good support in Years 7 - 9 in the learning support centre. Here, they follow an eight-week programme incorporating strategies to improve their self-esteem, anger management and general attitudes to learning. Their timetable is planned on a fortnightly basis to ensure that they do not miss the same lessons. They are supported well on their return to normal lessons by one-to-one mentoring from the learning support centre manager. In Year 11, a small group of very disaffected pupils are taught entirely off-site, following vocational courses at a local

college, with some extended work experience. In Year 10, a small group successfully follow an ASDAN course in the learning support centre.

28. A good range of enrichment activities of interest and relevance to pupils is organised. These include a residential experience for Year 7 pupils in the summer term, visits to local and national art galleries and the opportunity to engage in a range of creative and performing arts locally and in London. The school also produces a high quality annual performance and many pupils from all year groups attend after-school activities, including sports and creative arts. Levels of participation are high. Some activities, across a range of subjects, are well targeted at specific groups of pupils to boost their learning.
29. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining experienced and quality teachers have resulted in too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning across many subjects, particularly in Years 7 - 9. Parents expressed a high level of concern with the numbers of inexperienced staff in the school and inspectors agree that they are hindering the successful teaching of the curriculum, particularly in Years 7 - 9. This is especially so in modern foreign languages, history, science, citizenship and personal, social and health education. General accommodation is satisfactory, although many of the school buildings and classrooms are showing signs of age. They are offset by the presence of good quality displays of pupils' work and the good efforts of teachers and other staff to create pleasant teaching areas. Of particular note is the learning resource centre with a good range of quality resources. Whilst most subjects have sufficient resources, there is insufficient access to computers and modern technologies to enable subjects to use ICT regularly to enhance teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

Standards of care, welfare, health and safety are good and there are well-established procedures in place. Pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance from their teachers. There are adequate procedures for involving pupils in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attention given to the health, safety and welfare of pupils is good.
- Pupils with behavioural and emotional needs receive good support.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Targeted support, guidance and help, based on the monitoring of pupils' work are satisfactory overall, although better in Years 10 -11 than in Years 7 - 9.
- Trusting relationships with staff are good enough to enable pupils to raise problems and issues if necessary.
- Procedures for helping pupils to settle into school life are good.

Commentary

30. The school's procedures for ensuring the health, safety and well-being of pupils and staff are good. The premises manager, who is also a school governor, has a good awareness of these issues and is vigilant in identifying potential risks. Regular checks and risk assessments are carried out in relation to all aspects of the school environment, work and procedures. No health and safety risks were evident during the inspection. Staff have a good awareness about the medical needs of individual pupils and ensure that their needs are well met. Staff trained in first aid are on hand to deal quickly with minor injuries. Child protection procedures are effective and meet requirements. Staff have a good awareness of these procedures and there are close working relationships with major agencies.
31. Most permanent teachers and support staff know their pupils well, especially their backgrounds, social circumstances and special needs. There are good arrangements in place to support pupils with emotional problems, for example through referral to the learning support centre, the school councillor or to outside agencies. However, the awareness and consistent use of these procedures amongst temporary teachers is less secure. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported by the school within tutor groups, through the pastoral system and through dedicated specialist provision. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic performance is satisfactory. It is

more rigorous in Years 10 -11 than in Years 7 - 9. A large number of pupils indicate that they receive helpful advice about their performance and how they can improve. However, there are inconsistencies within and across subjects, particularly where temporary or inexperienced teachers are operating. Pupil progress managers provide good general guidance and care, but are not yet making sufficient use of all the information that they hold on pupils' progress, particularly in Years 7 - 9, to intervene where pupils are at risk of underachieving. Advice to older pupils about their next steps in education or the world of work is good and enables them to make well-informed decisions. There is good liaison with local colleges. In Year 10, there are good arrangements for all pupils to take advantage of a range of work experience placements. The pupils' handbook provides useful information about study skills, planning for tests and examinations and career action planning.

32. There are satisfactory arrangements to seek the views and attitudes of pupils through the school council, but these do not yet systematically involve pupils in all year groups across all areas of school life. A high proportion of parents believe that induction arrangements for new pupils to the school are good. These include appropriate visits to partner primary schools by the Year 7 pupil progress manager, effective transfer of pupils' assessment data and well-organised visits for Year 6 pupils to King Harold School prior to enrolment. These arrangements ensure that pupils settle in quickly to their new school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and parents is satisfactory. Parents are generally supportive of the work of the school. Links with the local community are very good. A number of good educational links have been established with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents express positive views about the school and the improvements achieved since the last inspection.
- There are too many parents who show little interest in their children's education and do not support the school with its work.
- Parents are provided with good quality information about pupils' progress and are kept up to date about the life of the school.
- Links with the local community and other schools have resulted in a wide range of projects that enhance learning and progress.

Commentary

33. The majority of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and who completed the questionnaire expressed favourable views about most aspects of the school's work. They particularly like the arrangements for the induction of their children into the school, that teachers expect pupils to work hard and that the school is approachable and receptive when they have concerns or questions. However, they express some concerns about the standards of behaviour in the school, the amount of information that they receive about pupils' progress and the setting of homework. The inspection team endorses fully parents' positive comments and agrees that the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils poses a challenge for some teachers. They find that the information parents receive about pupils' progress is satisfactory and that homework is appropriately set, but that there are some inconsistencies across subjects.
34. Most parents support the work of the school and many actively help their children to achieve well. Nevertheless, there is a minority who work against the school, particularly in its efforts to promote good behaviour and attendance.
35. Parents are kept well informed about how well their children are doing through detailed and good quality annual progress reports, as well as consultation evenings. They also benefit from a range of well-produced newsletters and other documents about the curriculum and their children's learning, including the pupils' handbook. However, the school prospectus and the governors' annual reports to parents do not include all the information that they are legally required to contain. The parents of pupils with special educational needs value the support they receive and how well the school involves them in annual reviews of their child's statements. Although parents confirm that the school consults them from time to time, for example about

changes to the school day, the views of all parents about their levels of satisfaction with the school are not systemically sought.

36. Very good links with the community enrich the curriculum and the life of the school. The sports facilities and general accommodation are in constant use by a large number of people from the local community, such as adult education courses, nursery facilities and after-school 'kids club'. A number of outside agencies, businesses and public services, including health education specialists and the local police, provide good support. A project involving "Relate" is of particular note; a representative has trained older pupils in counselling and listening skills to enable them to provide help to their peers. These "peer listeners" work closely with staff in the learning support centre to good effect.
37. There are good and well-managed links with other schools and colleges, for example effective liaison with a local primary school where Year 4 pupils work with pupils at King Harold to produce a digital photo display, and Year 6 pupils benefit from additional support in history. There are also collaborative "community day" projects, poetry writing workshops, summer schools and shared resources and expertise through the South East England Virtual Education Action Zone, the Network Learning Community and the arrangements as part of the Leadership Incentive Grant programme.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is governed satisfactorily; however, governors do not fulfil all their statutory functions, particularly those pertaining to the curriculum. The headteacher and senior leaders are committed to raising standards, but their work is hampered by long-standing absences in the senior team. Curriculum team leaders and pupil progress managers work hard to ensure that day-to-day management is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Systems to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly across Years 7 - 9, are unsatisfactory.
- Governors are involved in shaping the direction of the school, but some curriculum requirements and aspects of their annual report to parents are not in place.
- The induction of new staff to the school, in particular, the contribution to initial teacher training, is very good.
- Procedures to hold staff to account for the school's performance lack sufficient rigour and are unsatisfactory.
- The concern by curriculum team leaders and pupil progress managers for the needs of individuals and the extent to which they create effective teams are good.
- Although the school's budget is currently in deficit, financial procedures to help achieve stated priorities are good.
- School improvement planning is unsatisfactory because too few subjects have sufficiently detailed plans to improve overall provision.

Commentary

Leadership

38. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. He articulates a sense of purpose and ambition for the work of the school. The headteacher has a clear understanding of national initiatives for school improvement and has made appropriate use of the Leadership Incentive Grant and the Virtual Education Action Zone to support training and collaborative work with other schools. Above all, he is keen to ensure that all pupils are valued and enabled to achieve well. By his presence around the school, the headteacher motivates teachers and pupils so that the school has an inclusive and positive climate. Many pupils and parents believe that the school is well led.
39. The senior leadership team is hardworking and very supportive of the headteacher. Senior staff are ambitious to improve GCSE results and to achieve business and enterprise specialist school status.

However, senior leaders are stretched to fulfil their remits, due to the long-term absence of senior colleagues. The decision to maintain the original composition of the senior team, in these circumstances, has resulted in insufficient time to fulfil all strategic roles and responsibilities. Consequently, the overall quality of strategic thinking and planning for improvement across the school is unsatisfactory.

40. Curriculum team leaders and pupil progress managers are generally very conscientious and are operating well, despite significant shortages of qualified and experienced staff in some areas. Many have created effective teams that enthuse pupils. The work of five Advanced Skills Teachers is helping to model good practice. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who attend the learning support centre is led and managed well. The co-ordinators have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in these areas of the school's work and provide effective advice to teachers and support staff on pupils' needs. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

Management

41. Most aspects of the school's work are managed in a satisfactory manner. Daily routines operate well and ensure an orderly start and finish to learning. The school has taken appropriate steps to reduce bureaucracy in line with the government's national strategy for workforce reform, but has been less successful in recruiting well-qualified staff to cover for absent teachers and to fill outstanding vacancies. This limits the overall deployment of teachers to raise achievement, particularly in Years 7 - 9. Nevertheless, new teachers and support staff are inducted very effectively and those on short-term contracts are given sensitive and constructive support. The school works very closely with local teacher training institutions and supports trainee teachers very well. There are particularly good arrangements in place for individuals taking advantage of the government's graduate trainee programme. Support staff are deployed appropriately throughout the school, including those in the learning support centre. Provision for staff development is adequate, although not always linked to the needs of individuals and their teams. For example, whilst arrangements for performance management are in place, they are insufficiently rigorous to ensure that all teachers are aware of their objectives, that progress towards their objectives is kept constantly under review, and that training and advice are provided as required.
42. Senior staff collect and share much useful information about individual pupils' starting points and progress, interpret it wisely to set realistic outcomes for individual pupils, and take appropriate action to improve pupils' achievements, particularly in Years 10 and 11. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, not all curriculum team leaders and pupil progress managers use this information constantly to challenge pupils and raise teachers' expectations, especially across Years 7 - 9. The whole school improvement plan contains specific priorities to raise standards, but indicates neither how nor how often major activities will be monitored and evaluated, and contains insufficiently precise measures by which to judge their success. Very few teams have adequate plans to improve key aspects of their work. Procedures for analysing the quality of teaching and learning, and the impact on pupils' achievement, have lapsed and are unsatisfactory.

Governance

43. The governance of the school is satisfactory overall. Governors are committed to, and positive about, the school's work in the local community. They are particularly supportive of the headteacher and senior team who provide useful and regular information that enables them to play a strategic role in the school's development, for example in preparing a bid for business and enterprise specialist school's status. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the chair of governors ensures a balance of overall challenge and support to fulfil the role of 'critical friend'. Governors hold senior leaders to account for the results of GCSE examinations and play an adequate part in establishing targets to secure continuous improvement. However, they are not sufficiently aware of the impact of shortfalls in staffing on standards in Years 7 - 9, nor have they ensured that the school fulfils all its statutory duties in respect of the National Curriculum requirements for ICT and citizenship. In addition, the provision that they make for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils is unsatisfactory and there are some omissions in the school's annual report by the governing body to parents.
44. With the agreement of and support from the Local Education Authority, the deficit in the school's budget at the end of the last financial year, which was the result of a reduction in pupil numbers and teachers' pay scale assimilation, is being reduced substantially. Governors have set a target to achieve a balanced budget by 2005 - 2006. Otherwise, the principles of best value are applied appropriately in the purchasing

of resources and services, and also in the comparisons with local and similar schools, for example in the recent refurbishment of science accommodation and in the review of the curriculum in Years 10 – 11. In spite of the current negotiated budget deficit, financial resources are well managed and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 – March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,922,021.19	Balance from previous year	77,402.00
Total expenditure	3,104,872.44	Balance carried forward to the next year	-105,449.25
Expenditure per pupil	3,661.41		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in Year 9 national tests and in the GCSE examinations are well below average.
- Improved teaching and learning mean that pupils are now achieving well in lessons in Years 7 to 9.
- Consistently good assessment and marking show pupils how to improve.
- Some teaching does not encourage pupils to work independently, so that they do not develop the strategies they need to do well in tests and exams.
- There is some very good teaching of lower-attaining pupils.
- Pupils can read texts analytically, but are not consistently taught the specific skills of writing.

Commentary

45. The most recent test results for Year 9 pupils show that standards are well below the national average. The results are also well below those of similar schools. When these pupils entered the school at the age of 11, their attainment was just below the national average. Their progress over Years 7 to 9, therefore, was unsatisfactory. Results in Year 9 have improved marginally since the last inspection. In the 2003 tests, both boys and girls performed well below the national average. In the GCSE English examination in 2003, the results at grades A*-C were well below the national average, but the number of pupils who gained grades A*-G was close to the national average. When the pupils entered Year 10, their attainment was below the national average. Their progress by the end of Year 11, therefore, was unsatisfactory. Year 11 results are lower than at the time of the last inspection. In GCSE English Literature, results for grades A*-C were well below the national average, whilst results for grades A*-G were just below average.
46. The standards of work seen during the inspection are better than those in tests and examinations. This is explained by the recent adoption by teachers of a wider range of teaching strategies to promote learning. By the end of Year 9, standards of work seen are average. Pupils are achieving well and are on target to achieve much higher results than in recent years. Most pupils talk in groups to clarify their understanding, taking the views of others into account. They justify and explain their views by quoting from texts. They pick out the distinctive features of different types of text and discuss the effect on the reader of those features. Many pupils write for a specific purpose and audience, for example when they use appropriate vocabulary in persuasive writing. By the end of Year 11, standards overall are below average. However, given their starting points in Year 10, the majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily. Most show a sound understanding of literature and relate their own experience to that of the writers they are studying. Many, however, do not extend and develop their ideas beyond their initial statements. They show tenacity in drafting and revising their coursework, but their writing in lessons is not sufficiently accurate and fluent. Many pupils in all year groups, and of all abilities, are hesitant and inaccurate when they read aloud. There are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls. The few pupils from ethnic minority heritages achieve as well as their peers. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. This is because they are given effective in-class support and appropriately challenging tasks.
47. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, teachers are enthusiastic and increasingly confident, so that pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and they are keen to succeed. Teachers begin lessons with short activities which encourage pupils to start thinking immediately and then use questions which promote good learning. They plan a range of activities which help pupils to learn in a variety of ways. However, in some lessons, teachers do not give enough time for pupils to think before they answer and to explain and elaborate their answers. In Years 10 and 11, teachers concentrate on coursework so that pupils produce written work of a satisfactory standard. All teachers plan lessons which match the grades for which the pupils are aiming but some do not share this

information with pupils, so that many are unclear about what they need to do to be successful. Some teachers are not using in Years 10 and 11 the strategies which are succeeding in raising achievement in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in Years 10 and 11 are broadly satisfactory, but some high- and middle-attaining pupils are not fully stretched in lessons. In all year groups, many pupils are not sufficiently independent as learners. Also, teachers do not consistently teach pupils how to construct sentences and paragraphs which relate directly to the purpose, audience and form of specific pieces of writing. Consequently, many pupils have not developed the flexibility and self-reliance which they need to do their best when working alone or in tests.

48. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The subject leader has a clear vision for the future direction of English. She has also been effective in developing the capacity of individual teachers who have taken up the National Key Stage 3 Strategy enthusiastically and have made good use of local professional development opportunities. Schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 are good and provide good support for relatively inexperienced staff. Teachers learn from each other by discussing good practice. However, the subject leader has not observed the lessons of the other teachers in the department regularly enough and opportunities for teachers to work alongside each other in classrooms have been limited. The procedures for setting targets for each pupil and for helping pupils to achieve them are good and are consistently carried out. Teachers mark according to the school code and make brief but appropriate suggestions to pupils on how to improve. However, this good practice has yet to make an impact on standards in tests and examinations. This is because there is not enough focus on establishing clearly with pupils what they can do when working without support of any kind. The department has made good progress in addressing issues from the last review. However, there is insufficient use of ICT because of limited access to computers.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. Pupils' levels of literacy are not a barrier to learning in other subjects. Provision for developing the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Speaking and listening is good in the majority of departments, where pupils use subject-related vocabulary, listen carefully and apply what they have learned, and are able to explain their reasoning to the teacher and other pupils. In art, pupils read for research on the Internet. Pupils, however, are not fluent when reading aloud in many subjects. There are good opportunities for extended writing amongst pupils with special educational needs and for many pupils in music, physical education, religious education, art and design and geography. The literacy co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum and very good subject knowledge. She has worked effectively to raise the standard of literacy in many areas of the school.

Modern Foreign Languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is too inconsistent because temporary and unqualified staff teach half of the lessons.
- In lessons taught by qualified and permanent staff, teaching and learning are often good and pupils achieve well.
- There is no formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and achievement.
- Pupils' ability to speak creatively in French and German is poor.
- The relatively few pupils who take GCSE examinations are well supported and achieve well.
- Assessment practice does not support effectively pupils' learning and help to set challenging targets for improvement.

Commentary

50. Teachers' assessments show that pupils' work in French and German is of an average standard by the end of Year 9. However, these assessments are not sufficiently well moderated and are unreliable. Only one in five pupils took a GCSE examination in a modern foreign language in 2003. The proportion attaining the grades A*-C in French and German was above average. Standards of work seen in French are too variable. They are in line with expectations in classes across Years 7 - 11 where permanent and qualified teachers are working, but well below the standard expected nationally in classes where temporary and unqualified staff are teaching. Standards of work seen in German are satisfactory. On balance, taking the sampling of pupils' work over time into question, standards by Year 9 and Year 11 are in line with expectations.
51. Pupils' achievement in French is again too variable for similar reasons. It is good in German. It is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11, taking into consideration the patchy provision recently for many classes and from the detailed analysis of pupils' work over time. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. The few pupils from minority ethnic heritages and those with English as an additional language in Year 8 achieve as well as their peers. Low attaining pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, are supported adequately and achieve satisfactorily overall. High-attaining pupils, particularly those identified as gifted, are insufficiently stretched and are rarely provided with different activities from the rest of the class.
52. Teaching and learning in French are too variable, but are good in German. They are satisfactory overall. In lessons taught by qualified and permanent teachers, teaching and learning are generally satisfactory and sometimes good. They are good when French or German is used predominantly by the teacher to explain and demonstrate new language and structures, and when pupils are provided with sufficiently well-organised opportunities to rehearse phrases and sentences as a whole class, before being afforded opportunities to practise in pairs. In general, pupils show good attitudes to learning in these lessons and enjoy using the foreign language to communicate key messages and opinions. For the most part, pupils are well behaved, enjoy working with a partner and collaborate well in small groups. They are confident to speak the foreign language in front of the whole class, and enjoy positive and supportive relationships with teachers. In classes taught by qualified staff, teachers set a challenging pace to learning, with effective use of the overhead projector and visual aids to reinforce and support the acquisition of new language. They assess pupils' progress well and explain what they need to do to improve further their work. In lessons taught by unqualified and temporary teachers, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and sometimes poor. Pupils' behaviour is often unsatisfactory and disruptive in these lessons, with little learning taking place and poor progress recorded in exercise books. In general, there is insufficient use of French and German by teachers for everyday communication across the department. Pupils are correspondingly reluctant to speak in the foreign language beyond short responses. Too much time is spent using worksheets at the expense of stimulating exchanges using modern technologies. There is insufficient use of ICT as a teaching and learning resource, although ICT activities are identified in schemes of work.
53. Many opportunities are missed to enhance pupils' cultural and spiritual development, which is only satisfactory. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 are well prepared for GCSE examinations and coursework. They have a sound understanding of how to achieve satisfactory grades.
54. Leadership is satisfactory overall, particularly in the context of staffing difficulties which impact adversely on the quality of provision and on pupils' achievement. Day-to-day management is good. Temporary staff are well supported and resources are well organised on their behalf. However, there is no formal and systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, and there has been insufficient progress in implementing the requirements of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy, in particular common assessment procedures across the department to improve pupils' learning. Nevertheless, the team leader is aware of many of the subject's strengths and weaknesses, and an improvement plan is in place to address some of these

issues. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, mainly due to the significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified linguists.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been effective in widening the range of strategies teachers use to help pupils learn.
- Well-planned teaching, together with enrichment activities at other times, meets pupils' needs well.
- Teachers are spending more time than they should to manage some unsatisfactory behaviour.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used consistently enough by all pupils.

Commentary

55. Pupils' attainment in mathematics on entry to the school fluctuates considerably from year to year but is generally below to well below average. The Year 9 national test results have risen slowly since the last inspection, but have been below the national averages. However, in 2003, they were well below average. There was a similar pattern in Year 11, as the GCSE examination results in 2003 were well below average. Results were below those of similar schools, showing considerable underachievement. Departmental analysis shows that staffing problems and coursework difficulties in Year 11 were key factors in this decline. There is now a full mathematics team and the timetable for coursework completion has been tightened.
56. Standards of work by Year 9 and Year 11 are below average, but are higher than the standards shown by the 2003 results. To meet the needs of particular groups of pupils, considerable effort has gone into providing a programme of "booster classes" after school, and also lunchtime mathematics sessions. Examples are for those aiming at A* grades in GCSE and at Level 8 in Year 9 national tests. There are also "catch-up" or "booster" programmes for other groups. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Standards are similar across most aspects of mathematics but are weaker in the application of skills to unfamiliar situations. There is now a clear emphasis in teaching on getting pupils to talk about their work, giving reasons for answers. Standards in this aspect are improving.
57. Achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 for both boys and girls. The programme of study, closely linked to national initiatives and examination requirements, helps them to make steady gains in learning. Achievement is good for higher-attaining pupils, as they have better study skills and can work more independently. This helps them to make more rapid gains in their learning. Teachers' detailed knowledge of their pupils, combined with smaller groups and good use of learning support assistants, means that pupils with special educational needs usually achieve well.
58. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with a high proportion of good lessons. In one lesson, the teaching was unsatisfactory. In this lesson, disruptive pupils were not managed effectively enough for others to make sufficient progress. There was some unsatisfactory behaviour in other lessons but it was managed more effectively. Lessons are well planned, using national frameworks and GCSE requirements. The impact of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, and related LEA training, is shown in the wide, more interactive, range of teaching and learning styles used. Practical activities, such as using large colourful paper shapes to help visualise lines of symmetry, or sorting cards matching equations to solutions are especially effective in improving the learning of middle-to lower-attaining pupils. Most pupils enjoy mathematics, as the "buzz" in lessons shows. These factors contribute to the satisfactory progress made since the last inspection.
59. ICT is used well by some teachers but there is no consistent use of ICT by pupils. Statutory requirements with respect to use of ICT in mathematics are not met. This is largely due to the difficulties that pupils and teachers find in gaining access to computers. These are insufficient in number and too often in full use.
60. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has had considerable difficulties in recruiting mathematics teachers. However, a specialist team of teachers is now in place with the appointment of an

overseas-trained teacher and a newly qualified one. An Advanced Skills Teacher has had a significant impact on improving teaching and learning through working with them. Some management posts in the department are not filled and this makes the job of the head of department more difficult. In general, the evaluation of teaching and learning, and the monitoring of pupils' performances, are satisfactory. There is insufficient longer-term strategic planning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Pupils' mathematical skills are below average but are sufficient for the requirements of most subjects. However, there is no planned systematic development of these skills across the curriculum. Pupils are able to calculate answers and plot and interpret information. They plot experimental data gained in science and draw a line of best fit. However, some do not have sufficient understanding of processes to help them apply their skills to unfamiliar situations. This is hindering their progress. Pupils have the required measuring skills for work in design and technology as they can measure and draw with a reasonable degree of accuracy. In geography, they can carry out required calculations. Pupils work out currency conversions in modern foreign languages.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards were well below average in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and are declining.
- The achievement of pupils at the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory, but the achievement of pupils taking the GCSE double award science course is good.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but good in Years 10-11.
- The Advanced Skills Teacher provides an excellent role model for highly effective teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils do not develop their competence in the use of ICT in science because the statutory requirements for ICT are not in place.

Commentary

62. Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards in science. However, results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below the national average and below those of similar schools. Since the last inspection, standards across Years 7 - 9 have fallen and have remained consistently below the national average. Standards in the work seen are below average. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, most pupils were entered for the double award science examination and the results were just above the national average. In the work seen, standards overall in Years 10 - 11 are average. This apparent discrepancy between previous examination results and current standards is due to the fact that focused preparation for examination techniques and revision of key specific concepts, had not yet started at the time of the inspection.
63. By Year 9, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory, given their starting point at the age of 11. Significant gaps in their prior knowledge and understanding of science hinder their progress, particularly in scientific enquiry. This is because stronger teaching has previously been focused in Years 10 and 11 and the planned teaching of scientific enquiry has not responded sufficiently to the increased emphasis in the national tests. Pupils describe simple patterns in information, but are less confident in using their scientific knowledge and understanding to interpret the patterns, make predictions and check reliability. By Year 11, pupils' achievement is good, given their below average standards at the end of Year 9. Pupils use formulae to good effect, explain how sweating helps to cool the body and describe ways in which we might be able to detect life on planets other than our own. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 produce high quality coursework which, along with good examination preparation, helps them to achieve well at GCSE. Lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are given good support and they achieve well. There is no difference in achievement between boys and girls and the few pupils from minority ethnic heritages achieve as well as their peers.
64. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7 - 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. They are better in Years 10 and 11 where over three-quarters of lessons are good or very good. Teachers have good subject

knowledge and are confident in their delivery. However, in Years 7 to 9, the match of teaching is not always appropriate to the pupils' ability, and lessons frequently lack sufficient challenge. This sometimes leads to unsatisfactory behaviour. Teachers do not always identify clear learning outcomes for lessons or use the final part of the lesson effectively to review learning. However, there is outstanding practice within the department. The Advanced Skills Teacher provides an excellent role model. For example, Year 9 pupils made excellent progress when revising the structure and function of green plants. In this lesson, the teacher had planned specific learning objectives to respond to areas of weakness regularly identified and then provided pupils with a wide range of highly effective activities to help them to improve their understanding. There is an absence of the use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning and homework is not sufficiently used to extend and consolidate what pupils have achieved in lessons. Pupils' written work is generally of a satisfactory standard, but the quality of teachers' marking is too variable and does not always give clear guidance on how work may be improved. Key scientific vocabulary is often left uncorrected when mis-spelt.

65. The leadership of the department is unsatisfactory. As a result, progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The new team leader has only recently joined the school. He has already identified the key strengths and weaknesses of the department and communicates very clearly a vision for the future. However, there is no clear improvement plan in place, with targets, to address falling standards and major weaknesses in teaching across Years 7 - 9. The statutory requirements for ICT in science are also not being implemented. Management of the department is also unsatisfactory. Arrangements are not in place to monitor classroom standards and this has resulted in inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment procedures. Pupils are set appropriate targets and their progress is monitored through regular end-of-unit assessments, but the assessment of learning on a day-to-day basis to shape teachers' planning is unsatisfactory. Accommodation is good, as is the quality and range of resources. Technical support for teaching is very good and contributes to the efficient running of the department.

Example of Outstanding Practice

Part of a Year 9 science lesson with an upper ability group looking at green plants

A detailed diagnosis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses through rigorous ongoing assessment has resulted in a perfectly honed set of learning objectives. *"These learning objectives include elements of Level 8 and Exceptional Performance because I know you can get there!"* The challenge is set and pupils are eager to make a start. Deadlines are set and expectations are high but in-depth planning ensures that high challenge is supported by perfectly constructed activities, designed to get the most out of everyone. Pupils embark upon a journey through the plant, consolidating their understanding of osmosis and diffusion, photosynthesis and respiration along the way. The teacher's questions are challenging and stretch all pupils to their limits. As time runs short, initiative takes over and groups split to seek answers independently before coming together to share their findings collaboratively. Levels of achievement are very high, thanks to the precision planning and dynamic teaching. A small group of pupils express disappointment as the lesson comes to an end.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are too few opportunities to use ICT to improve learning in most subjects and statutory requirements for ICT are not being met.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- Year 9 assessment is inaccurate and standards are below average.
- Teaching does not guide pupils sufficiently well towards higher standards.
- The use of ICT in physical education, digital art and music GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11, and in the learning support unit to support pupils' learning, is good.

Commentary

66. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is below average. Teachers' assessments made in 2003 have not been moderated with sufficient care and attention, and are very inaccurate. Pupils have strong presentation skills but are unable to review and evaluate their own work effectively or apply data-handling

and modelling skills independently in ICT lessons or in other subjects across the curriculum. Results in the 2003 GNVQ examination, taken by one-quarter of pupils, were in line with the national average. The remainder of pupils who followed a GCSE short course option achieved well below average results. This was due mainly to the unsatisfactory organisation of the course within the technology curriculum. Similarly, standards of work seen by Year 9 and Year 11 are below average.

67. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 - 9, largely due to satisfactory teaching and learning in the discrete ICT course. Higher-attaining pupils show a good understanding of the applications they use. Most pupils follow instructions well but rely heavily on the support of the teacher to guide their work. However, across the curriculum, many subjects in Years 7 - 9 fail to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop and reinforce key ICT skills. In Years 10 - 11, pupils' overall achievement is unsatisfactory. Their knowledge and understanding of ICT are significantly limited by their experiences of a narrow range of activities in subjects across the curriculum and by an inability to plan and evaluate their work. Girls and boys achieve equally well and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to other groups. Support staff work very well with lower-attaining pupils in classrooms and the provision in the learning support centre enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress across the curriculum.
68. Teaching and learning in specialist ICT lessons are just satisfactory. Teachers give good support to individual pupils. Pupils undertake research using the Internet and use this in the presentation of their work, which is usually satisfactory. They co-operate and apply themselves well and strive to complete the tasks on time, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where the GCSE course relies on pupils working independently. A high proportion of classes in Years 7 to 9 are taught by non-specialists who follow a commercial scheme linked to the Key Stage 3 strategy. This provides adequate resources and supports their planning, but because they do not know how to apply the recommended teaching methodology and are unsure of the subject and its assessment requirements, pupils are not able to reach the national expectations for their age.
69. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is no single teacher with overall responsibility for ICT, standards are rarely monitored, there is no subject improvement plan and the quality and quantity of resources and accommodation have deteriorated since the last inspection. Although all permanent teachers have received a laptop, following training, and now have access to enhanced modern technologies, there are insufficiently planned opportunities for teachers to develop pupils' ICT capability across the curriculum. With overall attainment below the national average, inaccurate assessment practice and generally unsatisfactory challenge for pupils to achieve the highest standards, progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. In Years 10 and 11, pupils use ICT to compose in music, to record and evaluate their performance in physical education and to produce digital art of very good quality. However, too many teachers and subjects, especially design and technology and science, do not teach the ICT which is statutory within their own National Curriculum programmes of study, to enhance subject learning and raise pupils' attainment throughout the school. Overall, pupils' competence in ICT is sufficient to enable them to make progress in other areas of the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results were poor in 2003; however, the use of imaginative teaching methods is helping to raise standards in all years, particularly in Years 10 - 11.
- There is very strong leadership shown by the team leader for geography.
- There are good examples of the marking of pupils' work to help them to improve their achievement.

Commentary

71. Most pupils have below average geographical skills on entry to the school. However, teachers' assessments indicate that pupils are working at the national average by the end of Year 9. Standards of work seen in lessons and through the sampling of pupils' work support these assessments. The GCSE examination results were below average in 2003 and the number of entries was very low. However, standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 show considerable improvement and are similar to those expected nationally.
72. By the end of Year 9, most pupils are achieving well. They are making significant gains in their understanding and ability to use geographical terms fluently, and to manipulate information successfully in a variety of contexts. Many pupils apply their understanding to draw conclusions. They make appropriate judgments at local scales, such as in a planning exercise on the south coast, and at a larger scale when comparing the impact of natural disasters in countries of contrasting development. Pupils' literacy skills develop steadily in Years 7 - 9 so that their work contains some pieces of good extended writing. However, there are still some pupils in Year 9 who have a limited development of a sense of place and who produce work that is descriptive, rather than explanatory. Pupils are now achieving well in Years 10 - 11, with the work seen supporting the very much improved predicted 2004 GCSE grades. Many pupils are able to make sophisticated decisions about the location of industry and can justify their decisions, using sound geographical principles. The overall quality of coursework is much improved.
73. Teaching and learning are good. In most lessons, pupils make good progress because the teaching is stimulating, enthusiastic and challenging. All teachers have good subject knowledge and they use teaching methods that are interesting and that match the needs of all pupils. Higher and lower attaining pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, achieve well. There are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls, and the few from minority ethnic heritages achieve as well as their peers. Overall, there is a good balance of independent and collaborative learning, with teachers constantly assessing pupils' progress and highlighting what they need to do next to improve. In a lesson on land use, for example, pupils learn independently then collaboratively by analysing evidence, making choices and then justifying them to others. All classrooms have attractive display work which is used consistently as an effective learning resource. There is good support for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. A significant minority of pupils behave immaturely in a number of lessons. Teachers manage this behaviour well, using a variety of techniques that emphasise that learning comes first. Pupils are set detailed targets for improvement and know what they need to do to meet them. Most pupils are proud of their work and the progress they are making. The use of ICT is sound in Years 10 - 11, but unsatisfactory in Years 7 - 9 due to limited access to computers.
74. The leadership and management of geography are very good. The new team leader has clear ideas to move the subject forwards and understands how pupils learn and achieve. There have been good improvements overall since the last inspection. A very good detailed scheme of work has been produced that determines how geography can be taught effectively. This includes well-selected opportunities for the assessment of pupils' work and clear guidelines to ensure that the quality of marking is of a consistently high standard and helpful to pupils to enable them to improve further. Weaknesses in the GCSE course have been rapidly addressed so that pupils' progress is now good. All geography teachers operate as an effective team. There is good evaluation of pupils' outcomes and sharing of best practice, but no formal recording of the quality of teaching and learning, nor subject improvement planning.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good in Years 10 - 11.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good in Years 10 - 11.
- Subject leadership is good.
- The disruptive behaviour of a small but significant number of pupils in Years 7 - 9 has an adverse impact on others' learning.
- The overall quality of lesson planning is inconsistent, making it a contributory factor to unsatisfactory standards of teaching and learning in a number of lessons, particularly in Years 7 - 9.

Commentary

75. Teachers' assessments indicate that pupils are working at the national average by the end of Year 9. Standards of work seen in Years 7 - 9 during the inspection support these judgements. The GCSE examination results in 2003 at grades A*-C were significantly below average. Boys performed much better than girls. In Years 10 - 11, standards of work are much better than examination results would suggest and are average overall. This is because the subject leader has successfully re-written specific components of the history schemes of work relating to the study of medicine in order to improve their overall quality and interest for pupils. In addition, more resources have been purchased and training for staff has been provided to enable them to engage pupils more analytically in extended writing.
76. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 - 9 and in Years 10 and 11. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls, and the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve as well as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school, largely due to the effective support provided by teaching assistants. The subject has benefited considerably from inclusion in the school's overall dissemination of key elements of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy, in particular the use of assessment to help pupils to improve their work.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good features in Years 10 - 11. For example, the quality of teachers' questioning in some lessons motivates pupils to engage productively in whole class debate, then to continue sharing opinions in pairs and small groups. In many lessons, tasks are well matched to the needs of higher and lower attaining pupils, ensuring that they make good progress and that they are fully stretched. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are generally good in these lessons. There are well-planned units of work, such as the study of World War II, that make a sound contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Nevertheless, there is some unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 7 - 9 where lesson planning is insufficiently detailed to cater for the needs of a range of pupils and where the level of activities is too low. In these lessons, pupils lack motivation and become quickly disinterested. This can result in incidents of poor behaviour which are not well managed by some teachers and which hamper the learning of other pupils. In general, there are insufficient opportunities in Years 7 - 11 for pupils to work independently and to develop important research and analytical skills.
78. The leadership of the subject is good. The team leader presents a good role model for teachers and pupils, shows high levels of knowledge and enthusiasm for history and has a clear idea for the development of the subject. This is not yet articulated, however, in a formal improvement plan. He exerts a good influence as a leader but the effectiveness of the whole team is adversely affected by staff absences. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall. There is effective support for temporary teachers and satisfactory deployment of resources to teaching groups. The progress that pupils make is recorded and reviewed at regular intervals. Strategies are in place to support those who falter in their learning, particularly in Year 11. However, the use of ICT across all year groups is not well advanced and there is no formal programme to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. All in all, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good which results in above average standards and good achievement.
- Pupils show a willingness to answer questions and to assess their own learning.
- Teachers use music and videos imaginatively to stimulate and motivate pupils.
- The subject leader shows determination to bring about continuous improvements in pupils' work.

- ICT is not used enough by teachers to enhance pupils' learning.

Commentary

79. Teachers' assessments in 2003 indicate that standards were above average by the end of Year 9 in relation to the agreed syllabus. Standards of work seen in Years 7 - 9 during the inspection support these judgements. In 2003, the GCSE examination results at A*-C in the short course were in line with the national average. A high proportion of pupils were entered for the examination and almost all pupils attained at least a grade G. In Years 10 - 11, standards of work seen in the statutory course are above average. This is due to improvements in teaching and learning, especially in the assessment of pupils' work.
80. Pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school by the end of Year 9, then continue to make good progress in Years 10 - 11. There are no significant differences in the achievement of girls and boys and pupils from minority ethnic heritages achieve as well as their peers. By the end of Year 9, most pupils are able to compare a number of world religions by answering questions and discussing the moral and religious issues concerning, for example, human suffering. In one lesson, the teacher's use of music to support pupils' reflection on suffering was particularly successful in developing their levels of understanding and empathy. On another occasion, the skilful use of Buddhist beliefs on suffering to underpin group work gave pupils an opportunity to learn independently of the teacher and this research consolidated their learning very effectively. Some pupils do not find it easy to write down their conclusions. Very often they are able to articulate their thoughts much better orally than in writing. In Years 10 and 11, the teacher's good subject knowledge motivates many pupils to make good progress. For example, in a Year 10 lesson in which pupils considered the morality of abortion, a thought-provoking video was shown to present a balance of viewpoints. The material stimulated an in-depth discussion by the pupils, resulting in all pupils achieving well.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and have high expectations. They know their pupils well and relationships are productive. Pupils are given very clear instructions and the objectives of lessons are linked to previous learning. Teachers engage pupils effectively in question-and-answer sessions, which provide good opportunities for them to review and consolidate their learning. There is good use of keywords and specialised vocabulary through discussions to reinforce pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers' marking is very helpful in helping pupils to know what they have done well and what steps they need to take to improve the quality of their work further. In particular, marking supports the good progress that pupils with special educational needs make and also challenges higher and average attaining pupils to achieve well.
82. Leadership and management are good. In lessons and through the sampling of pupils' work, the determination of the team leader is evident in relentlessly pursuing higher levels of achievement. She is a good role model for teachers and pupils, has particularly high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work, will not settle for second best, nor be satisfied necessarily with their first efforts. She has put arrangements in place to formalise the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and achievement and to incorporate these approaches in a long term improvement plan. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Sociology

83. Two GCSE sociology lessons were sampled, one in Year 10 and one in Year 11. The class work and coursework of three pupils in Year 11 from across the ability range were also analysed. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' effective questioning ensures that all pupils are engaged and responsive. Although standards are below average, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Their files show evidence of good progress in research and analysis skills, and in the presentation of conclusions. The depth of research and reasoning of lower-attaining pupils is limited.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examination results in textiles are outstanding, but the results in other subjects are below and well below national averages.
- Recent improvements in the organisation of small groups in textiles and in the use of modern materials are leading to more time for pupils to learn independently.
- The use of assessment to help pupils to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve is inconsistent.
- There is insufficient access to ICT for pupils throughout the school, with the result that they are not developing important technological skills.

Commentary

84. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of experiences, but most lack a satisfactory understanding of the design process. The majority of pupils are therefore achieving below average standards at the age of 11. By the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments indicate that pupils' standards are above average. These assessments have not been sufficiently well standardised and are inaccurate. They are not supported by the unsatisfactory standards of work seen during the inspection. In 2003, just over half of Year 11 pupils were entered for a GCSE or GNVQ examination in design and technology, thereby formally completing the technology programmes of study. This flexible approach has developed as part of the Education Action Zone's innovation programme. Overall results were similar to the national average for both grades A*-C and grades A*-G. They were the second highest subject results in the school. These results were largely due to the outstanding outcomes achieved in textiles where all pupils gained at least a grade C. In the GCSE examinations in electronics, graphics, systems and control courses, and in the GNVQ programme, the results were below or well below national averages. Nevertheless, this still shows an improvement on the results achieved at the time of the last inspection.
85. Standards of work seen in Year 9 and Year 11 are below average. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory by the end of Year 9 and Year 11, despite the continuing good standards of work seen in textiles in Years 10 and 11. Low-and high-attaining pupils make slow progress due to the lack of suitable learning resources and an insufficient structure to their work. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, and the few pupils from minority ethnic heritages achieve just as well as their peers. However, there is no formal provision for gifted pupils, resulting in their unsatisfactory levels of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively by teaching assistants in the workplace and they learn well. Practical work is stronger in all the aspects of technology. It is only in the high achieving graphics classes in Years 7, 9 and 11 that good design skills are being developed. Pupils' folder work is good in textiles in Years 10 and 11 and they use ICT effectively to improve the quality of their presentation. Unsatisfactory research and drawing skills are currently limiting the performance of many pupils.
86. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 - 11 and there are some good, and sometimes very good features. In the best lessons, pupils have opportunities to take charge of their own learning through carefully planned activities which are well sequenced and led by the pupils themselves. Teachers encourage pupils constantly with positive comments about what they are doing well and constructive criticism about what they need to do next to improve. There is effective use of specialist and technological vocabulary to describe equipment and processes, and good opportunities for pupils to use simple mathematical formulae and accurate measuring skills to make models and test their design thinking. This practice is not yet sufficiently consistent across the department. Too much learning is still dependent on the teacher and there is limited use of ICT, although planned, to research applications, model schedules, communicate design proposals and accurately manufacture products to a good finish. Consequently, technology does not meet the ICT requirements in the National Curriculum programme of study. There are few good quality reference materials to support pupils' independent learning, and the matching of specific learning resources to individual pupils' needs is unsatisfactory. The marking and assessment of pupils' work is completed regularly, but not all teachers use the outcomes of these processes to help pupils to improve. Most pupils enjoy their work and behave and achieve satisfactorily. A small but significant minority disrupt the learning of others in lessons where teachers do not manage their behaviour effectively.

87. The quality of leadership is satisfactory. The overall vision for the subject is clear but there is no formal long-term improvement plan. Teachers operate generally as an effective team. The overall management of the subject is satisfactory. There is a more settled staffing profile than in recent years and although there are still teaching vacancies, good use has been made of the technician to support teaching and learning. Schemes of work are generally satisfactory, but there are insufficient resources to support the teaching of graphics and to develop good levels of practical work across all aspects of technology. There is no formal programme for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and achievement. Accommodation is poor, but teachers use display in many workshops to generate pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Plans to refurbish some rooms are in hand. Overall, there have been satisfactory improvements in teaching, learning and standards since the last inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of art and design are good.
- Standards are hindered by lack of continuity in the availability of qualified teachers.
- Standards in digital art and design are excellent.
- Pupils do not have the opportunity to use computers to create art in Years 7 - 9.
- Boys in Year 7 do not learn effectively when teachers tolerate poor behaviour.

Commentary

88. By the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments show that the majority of pupils are working at the national average. In the most recent GCSE examinations, results at grades A*-C were below the national average, although pupils' performances in art were better than in their other subjects and regularly exceed the school's targets. Pupils were very successful in the digital art examination, with all achieving grades A*-C.
89. By the end of Year 9, standards are in line with expectations and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Higher- and lower-attaining pupils gain confidence in handling a range of two- and three-dimensional media. These include paint, collage, print and ceramics. Through these activities they develop a satisfactory understanding and application of the basic visual elements of colour, line, tone, shape, form and texture. In regular planned homework tasks, they develop sound independent computer research skills, but pupils do not know how to use computers to create art. By the end of Year 11, standards of work are above average and most pupils are making good progress and are achieving well. In the GCSE examination courses, girls and boys are achieving equally well. They are able to work independently to produce individual responses to topics. They draw and paint to a typical standard for their age. Pupils say, 'Art sparks our imagination'. This is particularly evident in the digital art course where pupils know how to manipulate and develop creatively their own photographs and designs to an exceptionally high standard. Art is popular and many pupils improve their skills by staying on after school for additional tuition.
90. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and for the reinforcement of key literacy and numeracy skills, is satisfactory. In all years, pupils extend their understanding of art through the study of different artists and art forms related to different cultures. They use measurement accurately in graphic page layouts. They are accustomed to annotating their drawing and design work. They are acquiring and using an appropriate art vocabulary and most are beginning to develop and express personal opinions and judgements about art when writing and speaking.
91. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but good in Years 10 and 11. In general, teachers have good knowledge of art and work hard to deliver the well-considered schemes of work. GCSE lessons are well managed and interesting, and this results in pupils becoming totally involved in their tasks and making good progress. However, the good practice observed in most lessons of strategies for managing pupils effectively is not shared sufficiently across the team. This results in silly behaviour by boys in Year 7 not being adequately addressed by all teachers. The regular sharing of lesson objectives with pupils and the constant individual practical help that is provided for higher, average and lower attainers, are strengths of the department. This attention enables pupils with special educational needs, those from ethnic

minority heritages and those identified as gifted and talented to make effective progress. Some teaching in Years 7 and 8 has been by unqualified staff and this has reduced the overall proportion of pupils working to the expected levels by Year 9. During teacher absences, the department uses trainee teachers effectively to broaden the graphic design experiences available for pupils. These, and other temporary teachers, are very well supported by being invited to lessons where pupils have examination requirements explained to them. This helps to provide a consistency of approach in what is, overall, a temporary team.

92. Leadership and management are good. The subject team leader has addressed issues raised in the last inspection well and there has been good improvement. A useful test has been introduced to assess pupils' abilities on entry to the school and effective systems to monitor and record pupils' achievements. An innovative digital art course has been very successfully introduced, good links with local enterprises have been developed, and pupils now improve their knowledge of contemporary art and design by working with local artists; some also visit art galleries. All pupils are regularly involved in a thorough assessment and recording process, with the result that all are well informed of what they have to do to improve. Arrangements to evaluate teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there is no formal improvement plan to direct future work. The insufficient use of computers by pupils in Years 7 - 9 means that full National Curriculum requirements are not met.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is always good and often very good.
- There is a very experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher in charge of the subject.
- There are insufficient computers available for pupils' music lessons in Years 7 - 9.
- The curriculum is imaginative and is taught using a variety of learning styles.
- Lower-attaining pupils make good and sometimes very good, progress.

Commentary

93. Teachers' assessments show that pupils' attainments by the end of Year 9 are below average. However, these outcomes have improved since the last inspection when they were well below average. Standards of work seen during the inspection show that the majority of pupils in Year 9 are now working at the national average. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were below average. Overall, standards in Years 10 and 11 are better than the examination results would suggest and are average. This is because pupils are now achieving average standards in their composition skills and musical understanding, although they have only basic performance and listening skills.
94. In general, pupils achieve well in Years 7 - 9, with no discernible differences observed between the different ethnic or gender groups or those pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall in their acquisition of musical skills, knowledge and understanding. Most pupils are now achieving very well by the end of Year 11, given their previously very low standards at the end of Year 9.
95. Teaching and learning are always good in Years 7 - 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils learn well because lessons are planned effectively, move at a good pace and contain appropriate learning objectives. The department has good cross-curricular links; for example, Penderetski's "Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima" is used for a project involving music and dance. Pupils behave well in lessons, and remain focused when working unsupervised in the various practice rooms. Assessment procedures in lessons and across units of work are good and are employed effectively to shape teachers' planning. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because of the range of music studied, the variety of planned concerts and visits, and the good links with outside agencies, including local primary schools and arts groups. There are many opportunities to

reinforce key literacy and numeracy skills. However, the department does not meet the statutory requirements for ICT due to insufficient provision of, and access to, computers.

96. The department is well led and managed by a skilful and experienced teacher who has a clear vision for the subject, although this is not captured in a subject improvement plan. There is insufficient formal evaluation of teaching and learning, although the team leader for creative arts meets regularly with the head of music to discuss curriculum content, teaching and pupils' progress. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to enhance and enrich pupils' musical experiences, including a choir, a Gamelan club, after-school GCSE support and tuition on violin, woodwind, guitar, voice, and keyboard instruments. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are rising, more pupils are accessing instrumental lessons and the overall accommodation and range of resources have been enhanced.

Drama

Provision in drama is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at GCSE are well below average.
- Good teaching and learning now promote good achievement.
- Pupils entering Year 10 do not have the expected level of skill because they do not study the subject all the year round in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

97. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were well below the national average at grades A*-C, although there was an improvement from the previous year. All pupils who took the exam achieved a grade. The targets that the school has set for 2004 are challenging, but pupils' current progress shows that they are on line to meet them.
98. Standards of work seen in Years 7 - 11 are improving but are below average. This improvement is due to better teaching and learning. These are now good, particularly the use of National Curriculum and GCSE criteria to explain to pupils the standards they have reached and what they need to do next to improve. By the end of Year 9, pupils are achieving well and developing sufficient self-discipline to use drama skills effectively. By the end of Year 11, pupils are maintaining their good achievements and can work well together in mixed gender groups to produce pieces which show good understanding of social situations and good use of gesture, movement, intonation and language register. Lower- and higher-attaining pupils, including those with specific talents and with special educational needs, achieve equally well in lessons because the pupils encourage each other to improve in group work and because the teacher's comments to groups are focused and challenging. There are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls, and pupils from ethnic minority heritages achieve as well as their peers. Some pupils produce written work that is too descriptive and not sufficiently evaluative. The teaching of reading and writing is not sufficiently explicit. Marking does not consistently show pupils what exactly they need to do to improve.
99. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and, of late, some good improvements have been made. The recently-appointed subject leader has a clear idea for the future of the subject and communicates to pupils her high expectations. She has begun to work with colleagues in other departments to raise standards across the curriculum, for example when Year 9 pupils study *Macbeth*, both in drama and in English. The newly-written schemes of work are very good and are beginning to promote systematic improvements in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Drama makes a good contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils through its practical engagement with social issues and its emphasis on personal and group development. It also promotes independent thinking and learning and thereby makes an important

contribution to one of the school's main priorities. However, arrangements for the formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, as is long-term planning for improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good across Years 7 - 11, leading to above average results in GCSE examinations.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school.
- The high quality and range of out-of-school learning opportunities enhance pupils' overall achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The subject does not contribute as effectively as it might to the development and reinforcement of pupils' key numeracy skills.

Commentary

100. Teachers' assessments in 2003 indicate that standards were well above average by the end of Year 9. Standards of work seen in Years 7 - 9 during the inspection support these judgements. The GCSE examination results in 2003 at grades A*-C were well above average. In Years 10 - 11, standards in the work seen in the core programme and those in the GCSE programme are also well above average.
101. Pupils achieve very well in Years 7 - 9, in relation to their attainment on entry to the school, and continue to achieve very well by the end of Year 11. Most pupils achieve very high standards in lessons and there are no significant differences in the achievement of girls and boys. Teachers assess pupils' progress constantly and use the outcomes of their assessments to good effect. Work is appropriately matched to the needs of higher, average and lower attaining pupils. This leads to very high participation rates. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress. By the end of Year 9, pupils perform a wide range of skills in trampolining and basketball with confidence and accuracy. They are able to demonstrate, and are very willing to articulate, the skills, knowledge and understanding they have learnt in lessons, such as the importance of setting up a zone defence in basketball and the role and responsibilities of each player. The ability to analyse in some detail their own levels of performance at the end of Year 9 is limited for the majority of pupils. In the GCSE course, Year 11 pupils gather, hit and catch the ball in rounders with good dexterity. They are able to apply these techniques and knowledge of tactics and strategies, with precision, in a competitive game. As part of the GCSE course, pupils use databases and spreadsheets competently to collect and store relevant information. They analyse this information effectively and use it as a basis for extended writing. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive out-of-lessons sports programme, which enhances their achievement further.
102. The quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' attitudes to learning, are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm, as well as the quality of demonstrations, motivate most pupils to perform very well. The range of effective questioning techniques consolidates and extends pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned and taught with pace. Pupils are provided with very well structured opportunities to coach and improve the performance of others. This, in turn, enhances their learning. Teachers do not always provide sufficiently challenging opportunities for pupils to use a range of electronic and digital measuring and timing devices to measure the effectiveness of their performance and to reinforce key numeracy skills.
103. Leadership and management are good. The subject team leader is a good role-model for teachers and pupils and has developed an effective team that is determined to raise standards even higher. She is well aware of the strengths of the department and the areas that need further development. Arrangements are in place to improve current procedures for monitoring and evaluating the department's work, in particular the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement, and to ensure that these are formalised in a long term improvement plan. The subject makes a good contribution to the moral and social development of pupils. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Dance

104. Two lessons were sampled in dance, together with an analysis of Year 10 and Year 11 pupils work. In these lessons and through the assessment of the pupils' work, teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well. Very good leadership and management of this area of the school's work ensure that the GCSE examination results are close to the national average.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business education

105. Two lessons in business studies were sampled. Whilst the learning, teaching and achievement are satisfactory, the standards seen in these lessons, like those reflected in pupils' work, are below average.

Leisure and tourism

106. One GNVQ leisure and tourism lesson was sampled. This group comprises lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Teaching and learning were good and all pupils achieved well as a result of a well-structured and resourced lesson, with good support provided by the teacher's assistant. All pupils could readily give examples of how they might target different age-groups to visit leisure and tourism facilities and some pupils had an understanding of how to use persuasive language in advertising campaigns.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient time available in Years 7 - 9 to deliver the personal, social and health education and citizenship curriculum.
- The overall scheme of work for citizenship is good, but there is insufficient clarity, particularly in Years 7 - 9, about what is personal, social and health education and what is citizenship.
- Procedures for recording and reporting pupils' achievements in Years 7 - 9 are unsatisfactory.
- Procedures for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

108. The school recognises the important contribution that citizenship makes to the personal and social development of pupils. However, the allocation of time in Years 7 - 9, where it is taught for one lesson per fortnight and is combined with personal, social and health education, is insufficient to enable pupils to attain average standards. In Years 10 - 11, the allocation of time to citizenship and personal, social and health education is adequate, enabling the schemes of work to be covered and the syllabus for the short course GCSE in citizenship. Although pupils keep files of their work, the school has no systematic or reliable assessment procedures. As a result, the quality of teachers' marking is often inaccurate, is not moderated and is, overall, poor. Neither teachers nor pupils are aware of the nature and depth of the work required by the end of Year 9 or Year 11. Standards of work seen are therefore below average throughout the school.
109. Pupils' achievement in lessons and in the work sampled is satisfactory in Years 7 - 9, most pupils discuss and analyse information given to them in groups. They formulate and explain reasoned arguments, using information that they have researched and they are aware of further areas of investigation. By the end of Year 11, pupils are developing an adequate understanding of the implications of crime for society, and they relate these implications to young people and the wider community. They discuss, argue and justify an opinion and some pupils are able to see both sides of an argument. However, lessons usually concentrate on developing these skills orally and in small groups. As a result, pupils have limited opportunities to develop personal opinions or justifications for their arguments in

extended writing assignments. Girls achieve as well as boys and there are no differences in the achievement of pupils from minority ethnic heritages. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the good levels of support provided by teachers and assistants. Higher- and lower-attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily, although there are few targeted activities to stretch pupils identified as gifted and talented.

110. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 7 - 11. Lessons are generally well planned, with clear objectives shared with pupils, and include a range of activities to impart knowledge and understanding and develop skills of enquiry and reasoned argument. Most pupils respond well and show interest in these activities. In Years 10 - 11, there is some good teaching, particularly where pupils are encouraged to work independently, and in small groups, developing discussion and justifying thoughts. For the most part, pupils behave well and are willing to share their ideas with a partner and with the whole class in a mature manner. However, in some lessons, a significant minority of pupils show poor self-discipline and are unwilling to listen to the contributions of peers. They are often disinterested and off-task. In these lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory due to inadequate and inconsistent pupil management skills.
111. Leadership is satisfactory. There is good knowledge of the citizenship curriculum and the detailed schemes of work provide good guidance on implementing the programmes of study. Overall improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. However, a long-term staffing absence is now hindering future developments, such as assessment and reporting procedures. Management is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of classroom standards and no long-term improvement plan to put into place procedures to ensure the consistent recording and reporting of pupils' progress, particularly by the end of Year 9.

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient time available in Years 7 - 9 to deliver the personal, social and health education and citizenship curriculum.
- The overall scheme of work for personal, social and health education is good.
- Assessment is not used consistently well to enable teachers to measure pupils' progress.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards personal, social and health education.

Commentary

112. Personal, social and health education is seen as important in enabling pupils to develop appropriate skills, attitudes, values and opinions. Pupils show mature attitudes and are keen to become involved in discussions and question and answer sessions. However, the allocation of time in Years 7 - 9, where it is taught for one lesson per fortnight and is combined with citizenship, is insufficient to enable pupils to attain average standards. In Years 10 - 11, the allocation of time is adequate and pupils achieve well. The scheme of work is comprehensive and covers appropriate aspects of careers education, drug education and sex and relationship education. However, it has not been updated to reflect the non-statutory national curriculum framework and does not provide teachers with sufficient clarity, particularly in Years 7 - 9, highlighting the differences between citizenship and personal, social and health education.
113. Two lessons in Year 7 were sampled. Learning, teaching and achievement were satisfactory. However, there were no procedures to provide evidence of the progress and achievement of pupils.
114. The teacher responsible for personal, social and health education has been absent for some time and this is now hindering further developments and rendering the management of the subject unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of classroom standards.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
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	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	5
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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