

INSPECTION REPORT

LEYTONSTONE SCHOOL

Leytonstone, London

LEA area: Waltham Forest

Unique reference number: 103101

Headteacher: Mrs Joan C McVittie

Lead inspector: Liz Barthaud

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th May 2004

Inspection number: 258689

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 - 16
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll;	892
School address:	Colworth Road Leytonstone London
Postcode:	E11 1JD
Telephone number:	020 8988 7420
Fax number:	020 8496 2801
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Watkins
Date of previous inspection:	21/9/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Leytonstone School is a popular, oversubscribed comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-16, located within the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The school is situated within an area where there are a number of high-achieving single-sex girls' schools and as result, there are more boys on roll in each year group throughout the school. In 2003, Leytonstone School gained a Department for Education and Skills School Achievement award. In the same year, it gained the "A Pause" award to celebrate the work undertaken as part of the sex and health education programme. In 2002, the school was awarded Investors in People status and achieved a Healthy Schools award. Attainment of students on entry to the school, as measured by tests at the end of Year 6, is below the national average. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average at just over 27 per cent and indicates the well below socio-economic circumstances of families, whose children attend the school. The rich ethnic mix is a strength of the school. Of those attending the school, 64 per cent represent groupings other than white, with the largest group being Black British – Caribbean at 10.2 per cent. A high proportion of students, 29 per cent, have English as an additional language and 9 per cent are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The number of students with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, is above the national average at just under 24 per cent. During the last school year, 42 students joined the school and 49 left. This figure is in line with the national average. At the end of Year 11, around 76 per cent of students continue with their studies either at other local schools or the further education college. From the time of the last inspection, the school, in line with other local schools, continues to face difficulties in recruiting teaching staff in particular subjects. Recruitment of staff to work in key management roles has improved substantially since September 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30317	Liz Barthaud	Lead inspector	
10173	Catherine Hinds	Lay inspector	
22513	John Morey	Team inspector	English Drama
32251	Peter Bratton	Team inspector	Mathematics
24453	Gordon Jackson	Team inspector	Science
3555	Carol Emery	Team inspector	Design and technology
12110	Peter Bailiss	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
7636	Anil Sinha	Team inspector	Community languages - Urdu
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship English as an additional language
11969	John Hardy	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Business studies
10895	David Wasp	Team inspector	History Religious education
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	Art and design Special educational needs
31660	Marianne Young	Team inspector	Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Leytonstone School is a **good school** with many strengths. Students joining the school in Year 7 do so with attainment levels below the national average. Students' achievements are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and they make satisfactory progress in their learning. Achievement and learning in Years 10 and 11 is good as a result of **good** teaching. Standards at the end of Year 11, based on GCSE results, are **in line with the national average** and **well above** when compared with schools with students of similar abilities. The improvements that have taken place over the last three years can be directly attributed to the **very good** leadership of the headteacher. The **good** leadership and **satisfactory management** provided by other members of the school management team have resulted in teaching, which is **satisfactory** overall. Governors provide good leadership and a clear direction for the school. Very good financial planning and management ensures the best use is made of all available funds. The school provides **good** value for money.

The schools main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership of the headteacher is having a positive effect on improving students' standards and levels of achievement;
- Standards by the end of Year 11 are in line with the national average as the result of leadership, which is good overall at senior and middle leader level;
- The achievement and learning of students in Years 10 and 11 is mostly good as a result of the largely good teaching they receive, which meets their needs;
- Good behaviour and very good relationships, including very good racial harmony, enable all students to learn in a happy and safe environment;
- Procedures for assessing how well students learn are satisfactory. Specific learning strategies to raise standards for students on an individual basis are not yet sufficiently developed;
- The school offers a broad range of curriculum opportunities to meet the needs of all students, but provision for citizenship and religious education in Years 8 to 11 is unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, not all students are guaranteed access to the full National Curriculum in information and communication technology (ICT);
- Provision for and standards achieved by minority ethnic and Traveller children are in line with those of other groups within the school;
- The governing body provides a good level of both challenge and support to the school and is fully involved in shaping future developments;
- Leadership and management in music and for students with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11 are not effective and are adversely affecting achievement in these areas;
- Poor levels of punctuality prevent the school from making a purposeful start to the day.

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues for action and the additional weaknesses, which were identified within the main body of the previous inspection report. The quality of teaching and management in modern foreign languages has improved, as has the attendance of students to school. Statutory requirements in music, ICT in Years 7 to 9, design and technology and modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11 are now met. Arrangements to enable the school to fulfill statutory requirements in relation to religious education from Year 8 and to hold a daily act of collective worship for all students remain unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

When students join the school in Year 7, their attainment, based on the results at the end of Year 6, is below average. Skills in literacy are variable, but satisfactory overall. Results at the end of Year 9 in the national tests in 2003, when compared with all schools nationally, were in line with the national average in mathematics and below average in English and science. When compared with schools with a similar intake of students, standards in mathematics were above average, average in science and below average in English. Performance against national standards within these areas has fluctuated over the last three years in line with the ability profile of students joining the school in Year 7. Another factor has been that, in line with many other schools within the area, the school has

experienced difficulties in recruiting experienced staff in these subject areas. The achievement of all students in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. This judgement includes students for whom English is an additional language, students from Traveller families, those identified as gifted and talented, and those with special educational needs.

Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003, based on average point scores, were well above average in comparison with schools in similar contexts and in line with the national average when compared with all schools nationally. GCSE results have been improving faster than the national average over the last four years. In Years 10 and 11, students' achievement is good, except for those with special educational needs, where it is satisfactory. Standards achieved by boys have been rising steadily over the last three years, whilst the standards achieved by girls have been more variable.

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

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

Leytonstone School is an inclusive school and as a result, relationships between students are both very harmonious and very good. Relationships between students and teachers are **very good**. Students' personal development is **good** because the school actively seeks and acts upon the views of the students. All students in Years 7 to 11 adopt **good** attitudes to all aspects of school life and their behaviour is **good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school is **good**.

The school has worked hard to develop good procedures for promoting good attendance over the last three years and as a result, attendance rates have improved and are now **good**. Punctuality to school is currently **unsatisfactory**, despite the wide range of strategies and importance placed by the school in this area.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in Years 10 and 11. The highest proportion of very good and excellent teaching was seen in Years 10 and 11, but there were examples in Years 7 to 9. Unsatisfactory teaching and learning was mainly confined to one subject, but there were examples in other areas where the school has experienced difficulties in staff recruitment. Teachers know their students well and most plan their lessons well to meet the learning needs of the students within their teaching groups. Teachers regularly assess how well students are doing and marking is undertaken regularly, with the result that achievement in Years 10 and 11 is better than in Years 7 to 9. In some classes in Years 10 and 11, there is insufficient modification of tasks to match the needs either of students with special educational needs, or those, who are gifted and talented. Where this occurs, the achievement of these students is satisfactory.

The curriculum offered is satisfactory. The range of subjects and vocational opportunities offered to students in Years 10 and 11 is good. In addition to working towards GCSE examinations in the school, students also have the opportunity to study for vocational GCSEs in art and engineering by attending the local college. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are good and strengthen the overall curriculum offered. Oversight of curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is insufficiently supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator and as a result, is unsatisfactory. The arrangements for the care, support and welfare of all students are good. Students are involved in the life and work of the school and their views are taken into account and acted upon. The school has satisfactory links with parents and good links with other schools and colleges and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the school is **good** and that of the headteacher is **very good**. Management throughout the school is **satisfactory**. All members of the senior leadership group have a very clear vision for the school's future, which is reflected in their work. Leadership and management of subject areas are now at least satisfactory with some very strong features. The exceptions are in citizenship and religious education in Years 8 to 11, where the management of the subject is unsatisfactory, and in music, where both leadership and management are poor. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are actively involved in shaping its vision and direction. Financial management is very good. Governance of the school is **good** with governors fulfilling their roles well. There are currently some areas of the curriculum where statutory requirements are not met in full, including the provision of ICT across the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and for citizenship throughout the school. The school has been unable to recruit a specialist teacher of religious education for a number of years and the current arrangements for students in Years 8 to 11 are unsatisfactory and do not meet statutory requirements. The school does not ensure that all students take part in a daily act of collective worship.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are positive about the work of the school. They believe their children are taught and supported well. A small, but significant minority of parents rightly criticize the quality of information the school provides about the progress their children are making. Students like their school and are very proud of it. They are confident they are in a safe and caring environment and appreciate that the teachers are committed to helping them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue the current trend of improving levels of achievement for all students;
- Maintain a focus on developing the skills of middle managers for securing improvement;
- Improve the consistency and effectiveness with which assessment data is used to raise standards and improve teaching;
- Improve the leadership and management of the music programme in Years 7 to 10;
- Improve leadership and management for students with special educational needs, particularly in Years 10 and 11;
- Improve punctuality to school to ensure a purposeful start to the day;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship;
- Provide religious education from Year 8 onwards;
- Deliver a fully co-ordinated programme in citizenship for all students;
- Provide ICT opportunities for all students in Years 10 and 11.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

When students enter the school, they do so with standards in science, which are broadly in line with the national average. In English and mathematics, standards on entry are below average. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were in line with all schools nationally and high when compared with schools in similar intakes. The achievement of students is satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCSE examinations, based on average point scores achieved by students, have been improving faster than the national trend.
- Good achievement of boys at the end of Year 11 in 2003 resulted in higher than average standards.
- Standards at the end of Year 9 in mathematics and science are rising consistently.
- Standards in English at the end of Year 9 are inconsistent and there is no trend of improvement.

Commentary

1. At the end of Year 9 in 2003, overall standards were below the national average. Standards in mathematics were in line with those of all schools nationally and above those of similar schools. In science and English, standards were below those of all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools, standards in science were in line and below in English. Over the past five years, results at the end of Year 9 in mathematics and science have maintained a trend of improvement in line with the national trend. Results in English have been inconsistent and variable. Details of the results in the most recent national tests are set out below.

Key Stage 3

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.2 (33.4)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	34.5 (33.6)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	32.0 (32.2)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 177 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In Years 7 to 9, student achievement in mathematics is good, satisfactory in English and unsatisfactory in science. By the end of Year 9, there is no significant difference in standards between boys and girls in mathematics. In science, standards attained by boys are higher than those of girls. In English, standards attained by girls are consistently higher than those of boys.
3. At the end of Year 9, standards in art are well above the national average. In music, they are well below. In most other subjects, standards are mostly in line with those recorded nationally. The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 from minority ethnic groups is satisfactory, which is in line with that of other students. The exception to this is for Asian/Pakistani students, who achieve standards lower than those of the majority.

4. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were in line with the national average for all schools and high when compared to similar schools. For the past four years, results have been improving at a faster rate than that found nationally. Standards for boys at the school in 2003 were significantly higher than that of boys in all schools, whilst that of girls was below average. These results mirror the differences in standards achieved at the end of Year 6 between boys and girls joining the school. The results for boys have been rising steadily for the past few years, whilst the standard for girls has been erratic and displays no steady trend of improvement. GCSE results of students in 2003 represent achievement that is well above average when taking into account standards at the end of Year 9.
5. There are few students in the school, who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Those students in the later stages are well supported by all staff and they attain standards in line with their general ability.

Key Stage 4

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining five or more A*-C grades	50 (46)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining five or more A*-G grades	84 (86)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining one or more A*-G grades	94 (92)	96 (96)
Average point score ¹ per student (best eight subjects)	32.4 (33.1)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 174 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. GCSE results in Urdu and drama were well above the national average and above in art. In business studies, design and technology (food and resistant materials), geography, history, environmental science and physical education, GCSE results were well below. The achievement of students from different ethnic backgrounds, with English as an additional language and from Traveller families is good, which is in line with the majority of other students. Students with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.
7. The school sets challenging targets for improvement at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. In 2003, the national test results at the end of Year 9 exceeded the school's targets in mathematics and science, whilst results in English were 10 per cent below the target. GCSE results in 2003 were in line with the school's targets. Targets set for 2004 and 2005 are clearly focused on raising standards even further.
8. The school has made good progress since the time of the last inspection. Standards at the end of Year 11, based on GCSE results, are now more closely in line with those of all schools and whilst overall standards at the end of Year 9 remain below the national average, they are improving and are in line with those of similar schools.
9. Since the time of the last inspection, in line with many other schools within the area, the school has faced severe difficulties in recruiting staff to posts, particularly in the areas of English,

¹ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school or the national average. By the end of Year 9, the level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 4 = 27 points, a Level 5 = 33 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore, a school whose average points score for mathematics at the end of the Year 9 national tests is greater than 33 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. GCSE grades are also awarded points as are A level grades and these are calculated in the same way although the number of points awarded for each grade is different, for example, GCSE A* is worth eight points, grade A seven points, grade B six points and so on until grade G which is worth one point.

mathematics and science. This has adversely affected the rate by which standards have improved in a number of subject areas.

10. Achievement of students with special educational needs against their targets in their Individual Education Plans is satisfactory overall, both in class and when occasionally withdrawn for specialist help. The achievement of gifted and talented students is satisfactory. The good management resulting from the recent appointment of a co-ordinator for the gifted and talented is leading purposefully to the initial identification of these groups of students. Not all teachers are modifying their teaching sufficiently to meet fully meet the needs of these groups of students.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **good**. Attendance at the school is **good**. Punctuality to school is **poor**, but is **satisfactory** to lessons. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students like their school and the vast majority have a good record of attendance.
- Students have good attitudes to their lessons and so work hard and perform well.
- Particularly good cultural, social and moral development means that students get on well together and relish the rich cultural mix of their community.
- Students behave commendably well, considering the cramped accommodation and site.
- A few students, mainly boys, behave badly despite the school's good efforts to help them.
- Far too many students arrive at school late.

Commentary

11. Students' attendance has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now good. Students recognise recent improvements in the school are now keen to attend regularly and take increasing pride in attending Leytonstone School. They join in activities enthusiastically. They respond well to good teaching and concentrate hard throughout the lessons. Students become enthusiastic and eager when teachers inspire and stimulate them and so are keen to achieve as well as they can. Students work well together in many lessons and often help each other spontaneously. Good relationships are established with students, who have special educational needs.
12. The school accommodation and site is small, with many potential hazards, such as narrow paths, tight corners and only a few staircases. Nevertheless, the atmosphere around the school is very calm because students relate very well to others. They adapt their behaviour to the needs of their peers. Students from different ethnic groups mix well together. Students are very friendly and helpful towards adults, recognising the interest taken by staff in their welfare. Many older students enjoy helping younger students.
13. As at the time of the previous inspection, students' personal development is good because the staff carefully nurture their cultural, moral and social understanding. Levels of mutual respect are high. All students are valued, whatever their background. Students celebrate each other's cultures and show a good understanding of the implications of different beliefs and values. The school community genuinely revels in its multicultural population. Students realise their responsibility for their environment because they debate and discuss issues affecting the wider world. This brings benefits in personal, social, health and religious education lessons in particular. Teachers encourage students to take responsibility for others through participation in the school council, for instance, as well as the successful peer mentoring initiative where students respond well. Students show satisfactory levels of curiosity, wonder and spiritual awareness. In lessons, staff occasionally help students to ponder, reflect and observe their

own lives and achievements, as well as those of other people. However, the lack of a daily act of collective worship prevents students doing this routinely.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-03 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.4	School data:	1.2
National data:	7.2	National data:	1.1

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

14. Staff have worked hard and successfully to improve attendance. Constant communication with parents harnesses parents' commitment, except in a small minority of cases. The school monitors attendance carefully on a daily basis. The school is poised to change its registration systems, but has experienced teething troubles with the swipe card system trialed recently. Registers are signed correctly, but late-arriving students do not always make their presence known to the staff until the next lesson register is taken. Up to 100 students arrive after the bell has gone at 8.45am, and a small minority of students are still arriving at 9am. A significant minority of these students claim to be unaware of the new system for signing in. Moreover, a few parents at their pre-inspection meeting and in responding to questionnaires indicated uncertainty about the procedures. The poor punctuality of so many students prevents the school day from making a purposeful start, even though the vast majority of students arrive on time for individual lessons to begin promptly.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	319	22	1
White – any other White background	72	6	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	38	5	0
Mixed – White and Black African	15	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	36	8	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	50	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	112	7	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	18	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	91	11	0
Black or Black British – African	51	5	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	25	9	0
Any other ethnic group	33	13	0

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

15. Students recognise that behaviour has improved and that they work in a safe environment. The school is rightly reviewing its rewards policy in the light of requests from students for greater consistency of use. The vast majority of students behave well.
16. When students' behaviour is unacceptable, they acknowledge and respond to the school's sanctions. The school rarely excludes students permanently. The school uses exclusion correctly and carefully monitors its incidence. It is aware of the greater incidence of exclusion amongst boys and particular ethnic groups. Staff research various strategies and make useful contacts so as to access specialist help and support effectively. The school has reduced exclusion by 30 per cent this year by creating very good arrangements for students, who misbehave. The learning resource unit and the appointment of a learning mentor are, likewise, particularly successful initiatives. Consequently, students report a significant reduction in bullying to the current occasional incident and insist that the school is quick to act.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**, as is the curriculum. Enrichment activities are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is **satisfactory** in Years 7 to 9 and **good** in Years 10 and 11. The assessment of students' work and the use made of information to set progress targets are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subjects.
- Procedures for assessing students with special educational needs are inconsistent, leading to difficulties in monitoring progress made on an individual basis.
- The use made of assessment information to devise ways to improve learning varies between departments.
- The systems for monitoring the work of teachers in the classroom have resulted in a good programme of professional development for all staff with a clear focus on raising achievement.
- Insufficient challenge in some lessons throughout the curriculum leads to unsatisfactory behaviour and learning.
- The impact of the national Key Stage 3 strategy on raising achievement in Years 7 to 9 is inconsistent across subjects.

Commentary

17. At the time of the last inspection, teaching and learning were judged to be good overall. Evidence from students' work and observations of lessons during the inspection confirm that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in Years 10 and 11. Standards at the end of Year 11 have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with the national average as a result of the good teaching received in these final two years. High staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting high-quality specialist staff, particularly at subject leader level since the time of the last inspection, are significant contributory factors to the slow rise in standards in Years 7 to 9. Details of the teaching observed during the inspection are given in the table below.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 97 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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3 (4%)	15 (15%)	35 (36%)	34 (35%)	9 (9%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
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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.

18. There is evidence of good and very good teaching in all year groups. A major characteristic of this is the depth of teachers' subject knowledge and their ability to impart what they know to their students in an interesting and stimulating way. In one curriculum area where teachers are teaching outside of their area of expertise, teaching and learning was unsatisfactory. The pace and challenge in most lessons results in students being able to develop and express their ideas in depth and as a result, good progress in learning is made. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, students are not motivated to learn. The slow pace of the lesson, coupled with activities that lack challenge, results in unsatisfactory behaviour. In these lessons, behaviour is not managed effectively and this results in learning being unsatisfactory and occasionally poor. Over the last three years, the school has developed very good systems for monitoring the work of teachers in the classroom and as a result, has developed a good system of professional development and support for all staff, whether beginner teachers or senior managers. There are, however, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching not only between, but also within departments.
19. The school has implemented many of the key elements of the national Key Stage 3 strategy designed to raise achievement in Years 7 to 9. One result has been the adoption of the "Leytonstone Lesson" structure aiming to provide a more consistent learning experience for all students. At present, the application and, therefore, impact of these agreed strategies on raising standards by the end of Year 9 is inconsistent and as a result, a greater proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Years 7 to 9.
20. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are satisfactory. They receive satisfactory levels of support from their teachers, aided satisfactorily by support assistants. The present means of assessing these students is unsatisfactory. Not all students are assessed on entry to the school in Year 7, although those that attend in later years are assessed. Teachers and support staff do not usually keep on-going records of the progress of their students. They are, therefore, unable to support the recognition of their needs initially or to inform on their progress to support the termly reviews. In some classes, there is insufficient modification of tasks to match the needs either of students with special educational needs, or those, who are gifted and talented.
21. Teaching and learning for students, who speak English as an additional language, are satisfactory. The specialist teacher and support assistants provide effective support for this group of students. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and provide good information to review progress and identify areas of weakness.
22. The assessment and monitoring of students' work is satisfactory. Good policies and procedures are in place for the dissemination of information, tracking students' progress and identifying underachievement. The collation and analysis of performance data by senior managers is good and is shared effectively with heads of department and heads of year. The use of performance data by senior managers is good, but its use by heads of department to inform curriculum planning and raise standards ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Assessment and marking are carried out regularly. However, inconsistencies in the quality and use of comments and targets to help students to improve their work result in variations in standards and achievement, not only across the school, but also within subjects. In art and geography, the use of assessment is good. Here, students are clear about levels and grades and how to improve their work. Assessment is unsatisfactory in music and citizenship.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. The opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular provision are **good**. The quality of accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good practical and vocational opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11.
- A good range of activities support students' learning before school, at lunchtime and after school.
- The curriculum for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- The school fails to comply with statutory requirements in religious education beyond Year 7.
- There are weaknesses in the curriculum area of music and in the provision for citizenship and cross-curricular ICT in Years 10 and 11.
- The school has forged good relationships with local colleges and other institutions.

Commentary

23. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall. The school has been unable to employ a specialist in religious education for a number of years. Current Year 7 students study religious education as a discrete subject, but insufficient time is provided for teaching the programme in Years 8 and 9 through the personal, social, health and religious education course. Provision for personal, social and health education, including drugs awareness and sex education, throughout the school is satisfactory. Provision in citizenship is unsatisfactory in all three years.
24. In Years 10 and 11, the range of courses has been developed imaginatively to meet the needs of all students. In addition to a wide range of academic courses, there are good practical and vocational opportunities for students, including an off-site art and engineering vocational GCSE course. The school has also developed good working relationships with local colleges and the local hospital. The work experience and careers guidance programmes are managed well and the school has addressed successfully many of the issues of non-compliance raised in the previous inspection report. However, there are still statutory breaches in the provision of religious education and ICT at this stage, as well as in the overall provision of citizenship. The curriculum is in general managed well by members of the senior management team and reviewed regularly by a governing body committee.
25. Students for whom English is an additional language have access to the same curriculum as other students and to all areas of the school's activities.
26. Curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The support they receive varies between good and unsatisfactory across the school. Where support is satisfactory or good, teachers use the short-term targets identified in the Individual Education Plans of each student in the planning to plan lessons. Where support is unsatisfactory, the full range of students' needs are not interpreted sufficiently. In many cases, teachers take insufficient account of these targets in their planning of lessons. Targets are known by staff, and parents have copies of their children's Individual Education Plans. A minority of teachers, aided by support staff, successfully modify strategies to meet students' needs. The oversight of curriculum provision is insufficiently supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The school does not employ sufficient support staff to meet the high number and diverse range of students identified with special educational needs. Support staff mainly interpret for themselves what they should be doing and they are inadequately supervised.
27. The school provides a well-established and effectively managed programme of additional learning opportunities before and after school, at lunchtimes and at weekends. A wide range of clubs and activities support and extend what students have learnt in lessons and make a good contribution to raising their achievement. Most subjects and many students are involved in these activities. Homework, ICT and technology clubs are particularly popular. A very good range of recreational and competitive sports activities is provided. A high proportion of students, both boys and girls, take part in these and there are good opportunities for gifted and

talented students to extend their skills. In art, students' learning outside the school day is well supported by regular visits to galleries, museums and study visits to Paris. Opportunities are not as extensive in music, drama, history and geography as would be expected in a secondary school.

Care, guidance and support

The school has **good** arrangements for the health, safety and welfare of students. It provides **good** support and guidance and promotes **good** involvement of students in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff nurture very good working relationships with students, so they feel secure and valued.
- Students increase in confidence and commitment to the school because they get good personal advice and guidance.
- Very effective support staff make strong contributions to the welfare of the students.
- The school is rapidly improving its procedures for involving students in its work and development.
- Academic guidance is satisfactory overall, but in almost half the subjects, students are not sufficiently clear about exactly how to improve their work.
- Students do not value tutor periods because these are not sufficiently interesting or well organised.
- The new system for checking late arrivals is not secure and consequently, the school cannot be certain of which students are in school.

Commentary

28. The school achieves a very caring ethos in which students feel safe and secure. Students know and comment that their individual needs matter to the staff. A significant minority of tutors and heads of year are relatively inexperienced in their roles. Students feel a growing comfort with, and confidence in, their heads of year.
29. Teachers track students' personal development carefully. Teachers are alert to any negative changes in students' demeanor. They take prompt action to arrest any further deterioration and to help the student get back on track. Students with particular needs know that specialist staff provide sensitive and well-considered help. The school takes equally good care of students, who are Travellers, are from ethnic minorities or have special educational needs. The school arranges good induction for new students so that students manage the transfer easily. Students get good advice about options for Year 10 and 11 courses, and for future career choices. Students are particularly positive about the high-quality support provided by the Connexions service.
30. The headteacher has purposefully raised the profile of support staff teams in the school in order to create a united approach to raising standards in the school. All the teams operate very effectively. This means, for instance, that the presentation of the accommodation is now much smarter and safer. The pristine new student toilets are testament to the hard work of the site staff. Highly proficient and very willing support staff ensure that information about students' needs is effectively disseminated within the school. Staff with particular responsibilities for health and safety have a good understanding of their roles. Students, who fall ill at school or suffer an accident, are well looked after and cared for tenderly. All staff know and adhere to the school's comprehensive child-protection procedures.
31. Teachers routinely track students' academic progress. Teachers assess students' progress regularly and share the outcome with the students. A few departments, such as geography and

physical education, give students clear, helpful guidance on exactly what to do to improve, however, this is not yet a strong feature in the majority of departments.

32. Tutor periods are always interrupted by students arriving late to school. The school has recently introduced a new system for students signing in late. This is not sufficiently well known to all students, nor are they all committed to it. Consequently, the registers are inaccurate for the beginning of the school day. The school is aware of this situation and is exploring swipe card and electronic registration systems in order to ensure the security of all students.
33. In addition, the school recognises that the variable quality of registration periods adversely affects students' commitment to these sessions. The quality of these sessions varies considerably from very good to unsatisfactory. A few sessions lack structure and interest, so students do not settle well. Students have little enthusiasm for 'thought for the day' because it is inconsistently promoted.
34. Students are regularly consulted about their views through the increasingly effective school council. The school encourages students to think of ways of improving routines and facilities. Council members were hugely influential in the recent successful appeal for the sports hall bid. Year 11 students are attached to tutor groups and help new students adjust to life in a secondary school. Mentoring, including peer mentoring, is now a successful feature of school life. Students recognise the school's efforts to involve them, and most respond well.
35. The special needs co-ordinator and learning support staff make satisfactory contact with primary schools and the available support agencies to determine students' needs and their level of attainment. These provide good means of ensuring that each student has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** partnerships with the local community, other schools and colleges, and **satisfactory**, though continually improving, partnerships with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attendance at school activities demonstrates parents' commitment to the school and willingness to be involved.
- Strong links with other local secondary schools ensure a good exchange of skills, knowledge and expertise for the staff and interesting activities for the students.
- The school's productive links with the local community and colleges enriches the curriculum.

Commentary

36. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff work hard and effectively to include parents in the life of the school. A flourishing parents association and many candidates for governor vacancies testify to the parents' desire to be involved. Attendance at consultation evenings has improved recently because the school promotes parental involvement well. Teachers make good use of these occasions to seek parents' views. Any concerns are handled promptly, using correct procedures. For instance, the school increasingly encourages parents to use heads of year as the first point of contact with staff over any issue related to their son or daughter. Staff communicate regularly with parents of students experiencing difficulty in school. A recently established parent support group is already a successful initiative.
37. There are satisfactory links with primary schools to transfer information about pupils joining the school in Year 7, including those for whom English is an additional language. The school has good contacts with a range of community groups in the area.
38. Parents are supplied with copies of the Individual Education Plans and are initially well informed on the needs of their children with special educational needs. The majority of parents are not

asked for their comments when the termly reviews take place, except for those that have a statement of their children's needs.

39. A small, but significant, minority of parents rightly criticise the quality of information the school provides about individual student's progress. Annual reports to parents are satisfactory overall. Teachers provide good detail about students' accomplishments. Less helpful advice is given about how students can improve their work. Teachers and tutors do not promote students' use of homework diaries sufficiently to ensure that parents know about the homework set. Parents are, therefore, unsure how they can help. The marking of students' work in books is not always constructive enough to ensure that parents know how well their children perform and the strategies for improvement.
40. The headteacher is sincerely committed to working in partnership with other schools. The rapidly emerging links enable staff to share and extend their expertise with other schools. Students visit local schools on a good number of occasions. Examples are work experience and discussions with primary pupils, who are approaching the change to secondary education. Regular dialogue with these schools promotes secure curriculum links. The transfer of information from most, but not all, primary schools is efficient and timely.
41. The school is imaginative in its search for community partners. The behaviour and attendance of a few students has improved because of the constructive links developed with the local college. The school is planning interesting vocational courses in conjunction with the neighbouring hospital. Innovative links with Leyton Orient football club support students' literacy and numeracy work. Successful links like these account in part for the increasing popularity of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the school by the headteacher is **very good** and the leadership of key staff is **good**. The effectiveness of management is **satisfactory**. Governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and is strongly supported by the leadership team.
- The governors know the school well and are well led in supporting its work.
- Very good financial planning and management ensures the school makes the best use of all available funds.
- Leadership and management in music are poor.
- Leadership and management for students with special educational needs are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

42. The headteacher and other key staff have high aspirations, a sense of purpose and clarity of vision for the development of the school. The headteacher is a very good leader, who, over the last four years, has clearly identified and successfully tackled areas where the school needed improvement. As a result, progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the school provides good value for money. She has successfully created a cohesive and effective team at senior leadership group level. The effectiveness of management at middle-leader level ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. As a result of this inconsistency of approach to the management of areas of learning across the school, teaching and learning is variable. The senior leadership group team is now working alongside middle leaders to improve the consistency and effectiveness of their working practices as part of the drive to improve the standards of, and rate of, progress made by all students. The headteacher encourages all staff to take responsibility and provides them with effective support and staff development opportunities. One example is that the school currently has six heads of department participating in the first national college for school leaders programme "Leading from the middle".

43. The governing body is hardworking and committed. An example of this is the way in which they have petitioned long and hard to gain permission to build a sports centre on the school site for use by both the school and the local community. Governors are fully involved at a strategic level in the formation of policy and are actively involved in identifying priorities for the development of the school. They work closely with the headteacher to recruit good staff to key positions. They are very clear about the links between instability of staffing in curriculum areas and the impact this has on the school's ability to raise the achievement of students as quickly or as consistently as they would wish. Decisions about curriculum developments, for example making an application for business college status, reflect their desire to get the very best of the students in terms of facilities and funding. Governors have not fulfilled their legal obligations in ensuring that the school holds a daily act of collective worship.
44. Financial monitoring and procedures are very good. The principles of best value are used very well and shrewd planning has enabled the school to present a balanced budget this financial year. The Bursar is a member of the school leadership team. She has considerable personal strengths and has introduced effective and robust procedures. Channels of communication between governors, senior managers, budget holders and administrative staff are very good. Morale among all staff is high.
45. Leadership and management of the provision for ethnic minority achievement are satisfactory. There are clear assessment procedures and good support for students.
46. The management and leadership of special educational needs are unsatisfactory. The governor for special educational needs has yet to establish effective links with the school and the staff working within the special needs area. There is good inclusion of students with special educational needs in the day-to-day life of the school. The local education authority does not provide often enough the services of an educational psychologist for reviews. This is the case, even when there has been previous involvement, such as in drafting the statement of a student with special educational needs.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,294,590
Total expenditure	3,269,245
Expenditure per student	3,657

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	33,000
Balance carried forward to the next	25,705

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning of all lessons is a strength and enables students to understand the purpose of the lesson and, at the end, to identify what they have learnt.
- Students' behaviour is managed effectively.
- Higher-attaining students in all years are not set challenging work.
- Students have an insufficiently clear view of what they need to do next in order to improve.
- Existing guidance on effective teaching and learning in the national Key Stage 3 Strategy is insufficiently exploited.

Commentary

47. The attainment of students on entry to the school is below average. By the end of Year 9, students' attainment is close to, but slightly below the national average. The trend of results has fluctuated recently, with girls' performance at the end of Year 9 over the past three years showing a widening gap when compared to the national average. The proportion of 14-year-old students gaining Level 6 or above in the end of Year 9 tests fell markedly in 2003 when compared to those gained in 2002. In the most recent GCSE examinations, results for the higher grades A*-C were below, but close to the national average for English and showed improvement on the previous year. In all years, boys' attainment is below that of girls', but by a smaller margin than is found nationally. Although in the most recent GCSE English examination girls outperformed boys overall, boys' performance exceeded the national average for boys and they fared better than girls at the very highest grades. In GCSE English literature examinations taken most recently, results were below average. Girls again outperformed boys, but by a smaller margin than is found nationally.
48. Standards of work observed in lessons and in students' books in all years were satisfactory. Students make satisfactory progress, acquiring a range of key skills, such as writing, with growing accuracy and fluency, and responding with insight to literary and non-literary texts. There is a very wide variation in the standards of reading and writing between the highest- and lowest-attaining students. Students develop positive attitudes as they collaborate in group work and make satisfactory progress in their speaking and listening skills. The achievement of all students is satisfactory, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and boys and girls in general. The same is true of students from minority ethnic groups.
49. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers routinely explain the purpose of their lesson at the start of each lesson. Teachers also ensure that they conclude their lessons with a helpful recap of what has been learnt, therefore, ensuring that students are aware of their progress and achievements. Given this sound framework, teachers do not do enough to exploit thoroughly the existing guidance on more effective teaching and learning techniques, which is provided in

the national Key Stage 3 Strategy. This means that students' progress is slower than could be expected. Learners are almost always co-operative with one another and usually show interest in their lessons. The management of behaviour is effective, since students are set clear guidelines on acceptable behaviour. Whilst there are helpful support materials for students with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, the needs of higher-attaining students are not routinely met. They are not set enough challenging work. In the best teaching seen, students in a GCSE class were challenged to extend their thinking about a difficult poem in an atmosphere of genuine engagement and intellectual endeavour. However, not enough is done to reinvigorate the diet offered routinely to students in the majority of lessons. Whilst teachers' marking is diligent, their feedback to students on their performance is inconsistent between classes. Therefore, although teachers have a great deal of information about the current performance of their students, they do not offer clear guidance on what they need to accomplish in the short and medium term in order to progress.

50. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Improvements in quality and standards since the last inspection have been satisfactory. Over the past three years, the current head of department has worked hard to develop her team of staff. The stage is now set for her to lead a determined drive to raise standards further by managing improved consistency of practice, leading closer engagement with the national Key Stage 3 Strategy and guaranteeing that all students are routinely set work, which is appropriately challenging.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Standards of speaking and listening, reading and writing across the school are satisfactory. There is wide variation in standards between the highest- and lowest-attaining students. Boys and girls, students with special educational needs and those using English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, as do those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Pleasing examples of students' written work are prominently displayed in classrooms and corridors and, in the most effective teaching, are actively used as aids to teaching and learning.
52. As well as in English, the support for the development of students' language skills is good in mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history, geography and art. In religious education, religious education support is available in Year 7 only. Literacy figures prominently in these departments' schemes of work and in their guidance for teaching staff. It is satisfactory in design and technology and unsatisfactory in citizenship. Support for students with weaker literacy skills through intervention programmes is satisfactory. The school is targeting the wider application of skills developed in catch-up programmes.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards across the school are below average in both French and German.
- There is a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching.
- Students do not always display an enthusiasm for learning a language in all lessons.
- Students' work is well assessed and marking helps them to learn from their mistakes.
- An overemphasis on worksheets and passive activities reduces students' motivation.
- There has been good progress since the last inspection.

Commentary

53. Standards of students by the end of Year 9 are below average. Higher-attaining students reach high standards in reading, writing and listening, but lower attainers do not progress beyond using single words or short phrases in the foreign language. GCSE results are below the national average in French and well below in German, although the numbers opting to study

and, therefore, take a GCSE examination in German are small. However, the proportion of students obtaining an A* grade in French in 2003 was higher than the national average. Girls generally perform a little better than boys, but the gap is less than that found nationally and varies from year to year. Students from ethnic minorities or Traveller families reach similar standards to the rest of the school. The overall trend is towards an improvement in standards and this was the case in the GCSE French results for 2003.

54. The achievement of Year 9 students is satisfactory. Those of above average ability learn to write short letters about past and future activities with growing confidence. In classes where ability is below average, students recognise single words and short phrases, whilst reading and filling in worksheets. They cannot, however, use what they have learnt independently in either short dialogues or in longer sentences. In several Year 7 classes, students of a wide range of ability make excellent progress. Well-planned teaching and fast pace result in them learning to tell the time in French very confidently. By the end of the lesson, they match a number of written statements to clock faces with good accuracy. In a minority of lessons in other years, students are not well motivated. Their attention is not focused by the use of clearly defined activities supported by visual materials and their loss of interest results in slower progress.
55. Overall achievement in French in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Students of below average ability in Year 11 progress well in class. Effective teaching, using a wide range of different activities, results in them learning a good range of vocabulary in a short time. In Year 11 German, higher-attaining students write at good length about foreign travel and work experience placements. Most, however, need written and individual support in order to make satisfactory progress. The achievement of students from ethnic communities and from Traveller families is comparable to that of other students. Those for whom English is an additional language also make satisfactory progress.
56. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. There very good and excellent lessons in French. These are characterised by rapid pace, high expectations and challenging activities. As a result, students work to their full potential and aim to complete the tasks set as quickly as possible. Very good monitoring and support for individual students means that all are fully included in lesson activities. In other lessons, teaching does not capture the interest or attention of all students. In the lessons where teaching is satisfactory, the use of worksheets and lack of visual stimulus does not always motivate students to work with interest or enthusiasm.
57. The leadership and management of the languages department are satisfactory. Day-to-day work is efficiently co-ordinated and there is well-documented guidance. Good progress has been made in accurately assessing the level of students' work and there is consistently detailed marking across the department. There is, however, a need to develop further common lesson planning and teaching techniques. The head of department and the school's leadership and senior management team have worked effectively together to make good progress since the last inspection, although some of the weaknesses in teaching still remain.

Urdu

Provision in Urdu is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Competent teaching motivates all students to make good progress.
- Students demonstrate their commitment to the subject, which raises their standards.
- Resources and accommodation are good overall.
- Development of students' independent learning skills is not adequately planned.
- Urdu does not make use of ICT either for teaching or for learning.

Commentary

58. Standards at the end of Year 9 are at least in line with the national average for "other" or community languages and generally above the national average in Year 11, as evidenced by the well above GCSE results in recent years. The large majority of students gained grades A*-C in 2001-2003, while all students entering gained grades A*-G in the past three years.
59. Students' progress in all years is good and it is very good in Year 11. In Year 9, when students start studying Urdu, they have mastered the basics of Urdu writing, have developed an appreciation for the range of Urdu vocabulary and can read longer texts with increasing confidence. Their listening and speaking skills are developing very well. In Years 10 and 11, students' achievement is above national expectations and most Year 11 students are preparing confidently for their predicted above average GCSE grades. As the group sizes are relatively small in all the three years, variations in performance between boys and girls and achievement are not significant.
60. The competent conduct of lessons, with a variety of activities involving all the four language skills, provides adequate learning opportunities for all students. Lessons are well prepared and topics planned are relevant and interesting. This offers a challenging learning experience to all students, who respond to it with commitment. High expectations by teachers of all students result in lessons that are delivered at a challenging pace with activities, which closely match their individual learning needs. The language content of lessons is normally well considered. These factors motivate students to engage with both in-class tasks and homework, ensuring their good progress in individual lessons and over time. Good class management skills, combined with care for individual students, ensure that students understand and undertake planned learning activities. However, lessons do not, on the whole, actively encourage independent language learning skills. There are not enough elements of research and collaboration, use of authentic written materials, such as newspapers and magazines, or explorations of cultural and other aspects of the language studied.
61. Urdu provides choice and equal opportunity to some students, who might not otherwise be drawn to learning a modern foreign language successfully. There has been a steady improvement in the GCSE results in Urdu since the last inspection, reaching consistently above national scores in recent years. However, the take-up of the subject has remained static and relatively small. Good support for this subject is provided by the head of the modern foreign languages department. Opportunities for professional development and other facilities to improve teaching and class management skills are provided. The use of ICT, both for teaching and learning, remains unexplored, which limits opportunities for developing students' independent learning skills, as well as their awareness of the cultures associated with the language.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good, visionary leadership is promoting teamwork and purposeful teaching and learning.
- Standards are rising in Years 7-9 as a result of good teaching.
- Marking and assessment procedures are inconsistent and do not provide students with meaningful targets for improvement.
- Teaching and learning strategies in Years 10 and 11 are not effectively raising standards.
- Attractive displays in classrooms create a stimulating environment for teaching and learning.

Commentary

62. Standards of students on entry to the school, based on the test results at the end of Year 6, are below average. In 2002 and 2003, test results at the end of Year 9 were in line with all schools

and above those of similar schools. This represents good achievement for all students. The proportion of students achieving Level 6 at the end of Year 9 in 2003 was well above that of students in similar schools. The rising trend in results at the end of Year 9 is slightly faster than the national trend. Provision for and standards achieved by minority ethnic and Traveller children are similar to those for all students.

63. In 2003, GCSE results were below average and similar to those of the previous year. They represented unsatisfactory progress for those students. Boys achieved higher standards than girls, whose results were significantly worse than in their other subjects. Although there has been no significant trend of improvement in GCSE results over the past four years, initiatives introduced by the very recently appointed head of department and the students' work seen during the inspection week indicate improving standards in Years 10 and 11.
64. Most teaching is good or better, with the result that standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 are rising and are now satisfactory. The most successful lessons and where learning is good are those in which the teacher has a strong command of the subject, shares objectives with the students and has high expectations. These lessons are also structured to ensure that good learning takes place in distinct units. These elements were all present in a very good lesson in which some Year 7 students were being taught how to use tally charts and represent data as a bar graph. In this lesson, teaching was at a brisk pace and students were set a challenge to work for an award for excellent effort. The least effective teaching is too dominated by teacher-led activities and offers little challenge to students. Teachers work closely with support staff to improve the learning of students with learning difficulties.
65. The standard of marking and assessment is unsatisfactory because it is inconsistent. It is not used effectively to set students targets for improvement. The best marking highlights key learning points and excellent homework is rewarded with a "homework of the week" sticker. Such marking helps to steer students so that they make fast progress because they know what to do to improve. There is strong reliance on the use of textbooks and too little use is made of ICT to enhance learning opportunities. Current teaching strategies are failing to raise standards in Years 10 and 11. Plans to install interactive whiteboards and provide increased access to computers are designed to support initiatives such as additional classes at lunchtimes in efforts to raise GCSE achievement. The attitudes of students towards mathematics are good. Most are eager to learn and make progress. This was especially evident in lessons where Year 10 students were working purposefully on their GCSE coursework.
66. The recently appointed head of department is demonstrating strong leadership with a clear vision for improvement and raising standards. In the short time since his appointment, he has introduced changes, which focus on raising achievement. These include revision classes, new texts and courses, reorganisation of resources, and a computer to be used for monitoring students' progress. Sound plans are being made to organise single-sex teaching groups in order to monitor more closely the relative achievements of boys and girls.
67. The head of department is supported in managing the department by a recently appointed senior colleague and a member of staff with responsibility for implementing the numeracy policy. Schemes of work are in place and acknowledge the subject's contribution to literacy. Classrooms are attractive, with displays of students' work and relevant material, creating a stimulating environment for teaching and learning. Adjacent rooms are situated along a corridor, providing valuable opportunities for collaboration among the team of mutually supportive teachers. There has been satisfactory progress in provision since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. The policy for numeracy is not yet fully implemented throughout the school. In-service training has taken place for all staff to raise their awareness and departments have carried out audits of their own provision. There is not enough evidence of mathematics being used in other subjects. In geography, students make some use of graphs and tables to illustrate and summarise information. In design and technology, students use their knowledge of measurement and weight, and in physical education, number skills are used in calculations of goal difference. There is little evidence of the use of mathematics in science, music, modern foreign languages, religious education and English.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new head of department demonstrates good leadership qualities.
- The proportion of boys gaining A*-A grades at GCSE is greater than the national average.
- The overall trend in Year 9 test results is rising faster than nationally, though results are still below the national average.
- Many students lack motivation, which limits individual achievement.
- The schemes of work are in urgent need of development to ensure there are sufficient opportunities for students to take part in practical work.
- Infrequent use of ICT limits opportunities for independent learning.

Commentary

69. The 2003 test results for Year 9 students were below the national average, but equal to those of similar schools. Results in recent years place science as the middle- or lowest-attaining core subject. This indicates unsatisfactory levels of achievement overall, based on students' earlier levels of attainment when they started at this school. In 2003, boys' results maintained the upward trend towards national levels. The girls' results were well below those of boys and show marked yearly fluctuations.
70. GCSE results in 2003 for grades A*-C have shown a four year decline and are now just below the national average, as at the time of the previous inspection. However, the proportion of students gaining the higher grades is a credit to the department. The relative performance of students in science, compared to that in their other subjects, is commendable and is significant for boys. However, a large proportion of girls only gain D - F grades. Overall, levels of students' achievement were satisfactory compared to their earlier attainment.
71. In lessons seen, students' standards of work were close to the national average. Students' books were generally well-presented and showed good examples of marking, which was performed consistently across the department. The standard of students' work is levelled against national criteria and this information is shared with the students themselves. Appropriate use of praise and basic target-setting, coupled with comments made to students showing them what to do to improve, are successfully used to promote progress. Lesson notes were mostly accurate and reflected students' needs and abilities. In many books seen, from both able and less-able students, there were examples of incomplete work. This indicates that students, despite constant encouragement from their teachers, have yet to be fully committed to their learning and so are not achieving as well as they should. This is especially true of students in Years 7-9, though still only just satisfactory for students in Years 10-11.
72. The development of students' literacy skills is generally well supported through a variety of reading and writing activities. However, there was little evidence of the promotion of the use of key words and scientific terminology in lessons or on display. The development of numeracy was unsatisfactory. There was little evidence of ICT being used in science to promote an interest in the subject or to promote learning. This indicates that the department is failing to meet its requirements in this area. As in the last report, there is very little evidence of practical

work, required to develop manipulative skills and to promote an interest in science. The department is now starting to address the issue of scientific method used in investigations. Students are gaining an understanding of the need for fair testing. By Year 11, students are able to perform simple calculations on various physical concepts and are developing an understanding of atomic structure and links to the periodic table, indicating satisfactory progress.

73. The standard of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory and included one excellent lesson on hydrocarbon molecules taught to a lower-ability group. Students co-operate well with each other, are well behaved and relationships with teachers are usually good. Once lessons have started, students are reasonably attentive and make satisfactory progress. Teachers work hard at attempting to motivate students, but many teachers are still failing to be fully committed to providing opportunities for students to learn through taking part in practical activities. Lessons are mostly well planned and pitched at appropriate levels for the classes taught. However, teachers need to make better and more frequent use of questioning, so as to provide more challenge and to engage more students. In the better lessons, students know at the start of each lesson what they are expected to learn. Their own knowledge and understanding of key ideas is skilfully investigated by teachers and used to further their learning. In the less successful lessons, the range of learning is too narrow and the teaching fails to stimulate students' enthusiasm for science. Time given towards the end of a lesson to allow teachers to confirm with students what they have learnt is often inadequate. This, therefore, prevents students from receiving essential feedback, which helps to consolidate their learning. Specially adapted worksheets enable students with special educational needs to achieve as well as their peers. Provision for and standards achieved by ethnic minority groups and Traveller students are satisfactory.
74. Recently, the work of the department has been seriously affected by numerous staff changes. The new head of department is approaching his responsibilities with drive and determination and has a clear vision for the department. Previous progress made in addressing those issues identified at the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. However, areas requiring priority attention have now been identified and help from department colleagues is ensuring that some of the current needs are being tackled. These include the production of schemes of work that meet national guidelines. Fully documented policies are now in place. Department monitoring systems are being developed, but have yet to be fully embedded. As a result, management of the department at this stage is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership of ICT as a separate subject has contributed to the good progress made by students since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good, especially for those students in Years 10 and 11.
- Students' attainment in GNVQ intermediate course, Years 10 and 11, is well above the national average.
- Insufficient ICT rooms and limited numbers of computers lead to unsatisfactory cross-curricular ICT.

Commentary

75. Attainment is below average on entry to the school, although many students have satisfactory knowledge and skills in ICT in some aspects or strands of the subject. Overall, few are at the expected level across all strands. Students achieve well and by the end of Year 9, standards are broadly in line with expectations for the age. Students from different ethnic backgrounds and those from Traveller families reach similar standards and achieve well. Throughout Years

7 to 9, students develop as responsible, discerning users of computers, understanding the benefits that technology brings and the dangers of its misuse.

76. Students following the GNVQ full award course perform well, achieving a far higher percentage of intermediate passes than that seen nationally. A good proportion of passes are at merit and distinction level. At foundation level, students showed less commitment and so their performance was well below national average. All groups of students, including those with special educational needs, make gains at a similar rate to others. Some lower-attaining students gain Level 1 accreditation through the CLAIT programme.
77. Students' attitudes to the subject are good, but a high proportion of the lower-attaining students did not gain accreditation in 2003 because course requirements were not met. Students generally respond to instruction and treat the equipment with respect. The majority of students value the opportunity to use the computers because opportunities outside the specialist ICT lessons are rare.
78. The quality of teaching in ICT lessons is good. Teaching is better in Years 10 and 11, reflecting the use of subject specialists. The quality of teaching varies in Years 7 to 9 due to the large proportion of non-specialist teachers. In the good and very good lessons, students are very clear about the purpose of their lesson and teachers' use of the school's prescribed lesson structure is effective. Lessons have pace, engage students fully and challenge all groups of students so that they achieve well. Teachers give good oral feedback throughout lessons, monitoring learning and giving satisfactory help to those with special needs. In the least effective lessons, objectives are not clear, which reduces the overall effectiveness of lesson plans. Not enough emphasis is given to the different skills levels within classes, and this adversely affects many students' rate of progress. On occasions, opening activities are too long, impinging on the main focus of the lesson and reducing the quality of learning.
79. Leadership in ICT is very good. There is a clarity of vision and direction, which is transmitted to all involved. Management is good, although cross-curricular provision is unsatisfactory. Effective management of the nucleus of specialist staff is taking the subject forward well. Monitoring of teaching and learning is improving, but data is not yet used well enough to support planning and development in the subject. Very good network management and technical support ensure that maximum benefit is gained from the limited resources. The quantity of computers is well below average for the size of the school and access for subjects across the school is inadequate. There is no monitoring of those students not on accredited courses and, therefore, statutory requirements are not met in Years 10 and 11.
80. Since the previous inspection, attainment has improved and the amount of equipment and accommodation has increased. All students in the lower years and the majority in the upper years receive ICT lessons. Progress has been good.

Information and communication across the curriculum

81. Provision for ICT across the subjects is unsatisfactory. Students in the lower years have an ICT lesson every week, but few gain regular access to ICT facilities in other subjects. Little evidence of ICT use was seen by subject inspectors. Consequently, the use of ICT in subjects to raise achievement is considerably underdeveloped, with the exception of art and geography. Whilst the school has made gains in the quality and quantity of equipment since the previous inspection, there are not enough computers or rooms to meet the demands of subjects. The majority of students do have access to equipment at home and many are connected to the Internet, which enables them to develop their skills further outside school. The school provides good access outside lessons, which students appreciate. The school recognises the problem and is hopeful of success in a recent bid for specialist college status.

HUMANITIES

An integrated humanities course for GCSE is offered and is a popular choice for students. Standards are in line with national expectations and the quality of teaching and learning is good. The subject makes a strong contribution to students' personal development, especially in the areas of moral and social education.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are improving.
- Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 as a result of lessons, which challenge students' thinking.
- There is a minority of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9.
- Students show good attitudes to work and behave well in lessons.
- Very good assessment contributes to raising standards.

Commentary

82. 2003 GCSE results were below the national average both at grades A* to C and A* to G. Few girls entered for GCSE and comparisons against national averages are not possible for them. Very few girls study geography and, therefore, the small numbers mean that it is not possible to compare their performance with other girls nationally. However, boys' performance is broadly in line with that of all boys nationally.
83. Standards are below average at the end of Year 9 and average at the end of Year 11. Standards are rising, especially in Years 10 and 11. Students achieve satisfactorily in Years 7-9 and achieve well in Years 10 and 11, where the quality of teaching and learning is higher. Students with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented achieve as well as other students. Students, who speak English as an additional language, also achieve as well as their peers. Provision for and standards achieved by minority ethnic and Traveller students are satisfactory. In the past, few girls have chosen to study geography in Years 10 and 11, however, this has changed and improved in the present Year 10.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11. There is a very strong focus on preparing students for GCSE examinations in Years 10 and 11 and teachers provide challenging work for individuals and groups of students. Work is carefully planned to ensure that students think and investigate rather than simply learning geographical facts. In Years 7-9, teachers too often take insufficient account in their planning of the wide range of ability in most classes. As a result, lessons lack pace and challenge and fail to interest and enthuse students. In these lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory and learning is not good enough as a result. There are very good assessment procedures in place to track students' progress. The use of the data provided to set individual and group targets is very good. The subject makes a good contribution to students' literacy and numeracy development. The use of computers to enrich and enhance the curriculum is satisfactory. The subject makes an unsatisfactory contribution to the development of citizenship. Teachers control their classes well, so no time is lost in lessons due to misbehaviour. Students behave well in lessons and show good attitudes to work. Working relationships are relaxed, co-operative and businesslike.

85. The curriculum is good. The use of field courses enhances the provision and contributes to raising standards. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The head of geography and history has been in post for only a short time and has not yet had time to make a positive impact on the leadership of the subject. The management of the subject is good. Good assessment and monitoring systems are in place and are contributing to raising standards. Geography has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- There are very clear plans for future development.
- The department suffers from poor accommodation.
- Higher-attaining students need more challenge to develop their subject skills.
- Teachers use a wide range of varied techniques to promote good learning.
- ICT is underdeveloped as a resource within the department.

Commentary

86. In the 2003 GCSE examination, results in the A* to C range were below national expectations and in the A* to G range they have fluctuated recently at or below the national average. A major factor in this trend has been the long-term absence of a subject-specialist teacher.
87. The department has new and very effective leadership and management and the impact has been the improvements in teaching resulting in higher levels of achievement by students. In lessons seen and work analysed during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 were in line with those expected nationally and students achieved well, despite the fact that many had entered the school with low levels of literacy and below average subject knowledge.
88. Students acquire historical skills rapidly from Year 7 onwards. Higher-attaining students in particular express their ideas well in written work, for example, in some detailed extended writing by Year 9 students on life in the trenches during the First World War. In Years 10 and 11, students hone their historical skills further and standards are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 11. In this context, some very impressive source work analysis was seen by Year 11 students on the role of women during the Second World War. Minority ethnic and Traveller students and those with special educational needs also achieve well, but have too limited a range of learning materials to suit their individual needs. There is, however, a commendable emphasis to raising standards of literacy throughout the curriculum.
89. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their subject knowledge very effectively, which gives all students the confidence to develop their knowledge and understanding of history. Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers use a variety of techniques to stimulate and promote good learning. This is an improvement from the time of the previous report. Students work hard and show positive attitudes in class. They are keen to take part in discussions and show commitment to learning. In order to improve on this positive picture, higher-attaining students need more challenge to make them develop their historical skills in greater depth.
90. Overall, good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Record-keeping is now effective, assessment is now rigorous and there are very clear plans for future development in the department. ICT, however, is still underdeveloped as a departmental resource and very little use of ICT was seen during the inspection. Accommodation is very scattered and one subject room in particular is unfit for teaching and learning.

91. There is now stability in staffing. History is an increasingly popular subject in the school in Years 10 and 11 and the key issue now is to improve GCSE results, especially in the attainment of higher grades.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below those expected of students in Years 7 to 11.
- There are no subject-specialist teachers for religious education.
- The subject fails to meet statutory requirements beyond Year 7.
- The subject lacks overall co-ordination and leadership.
- The Year 7 course is managed and taught well.
- The time allocated for the subject within the personal, social, health and religious education programme is very low.

Commentary

92. There have been no students entered for public examinations in this subject in recent years. At present, religious education is only taught as a separate subject in Year 7. Here, standards are below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus, as most students enter the school with low levels of literacy and subject knowledge. Achievement is satisfactory, considering students' prior attainment. In Years 8 to 11, the subject falls within the remit of the personal, social, health and religious education department and the time allocated for religious education is very low. There was little evidence of students' work seen during the inspection and no religious education lessons were seen beyond Year 7. As a result, there is insufficient evidence on which to make a judgement on standards and achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11. There is evidence, however, that moral and social issues, such as euthanasia and abortion, are dealt with effectively in Years 10 and 11, and, in this context, some thoughtful extended writing on these topics was seen in students' folders.
93. There are no subject-specialist teachers, but the quality of teaching in Year 7 is good. Teachers use classroom management skills well to promote good learning and students have positive attitudes towards the subject. In one lesson, for example, students were encouraged to share their own religious beliefs in a group work activity and they did so enthusiastically. The lessons seen in Year 7 made a very positive contribution to students' personal development, especially in terms of understanding the many multi-cultural aspects and issues of life in Britain today.
94. The Year 7 curriculum is managed well, but the co-ordination and leadership beyond Year 7 is unsatisfactory. There are currently no enrichment activities and little evidence of the use of ICT. There has been insufficient improvement since the previous inspection. Overall, there are many key issues for the school to address, most notably in the area of subject-specialist teaching and the provision of a full programme of religious education beyond Year 7.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good in graphics with satisfactory improvement in food and resistant materials in Years 10 and 11.
- Achievement at the end of Year 9 is restricted because of inadequacies in planning and assessment that fails to allow students to build effectively on learning gained in previous modules.
- The good relationships and attitudes in lessons allow students to learn effectively.
- Insufficient challenge in many lessons restricts the achievement of higher-attaining students.

Commentary

95. In 2003, GCSE results were below the national average. There were variations between the different material areas, with standards in graphics average, but with below average standards in resistant materials and food. Staffing difficulties have contributed to low standards in food, but work seen in lessons and coursework shows satisfactory improvement in attainment in all material areas. Standards achieved by minority ethnic and Traveller students, and students with special educational needs, are in line with and sometimes better than expected.
96. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below those expected. Students enter Year 7 with varied practical skills and limited knowledge and understanding of design and technology. Satisfactory progress and achievement in Years 7-9 means that students are able to generate ideas, carry out research and also develop and modify work to produce working drawings for final designs. They use a wide range of tools and equipment well to produce good-quality products in a variety of materials. The lack of joint planning between teachers, linked to assessment, means that students do not consistently build on their learning from one module to another. This results in standards that are below expectations at the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, students extend their understanding of the design and make processes and apply them well to develop their chosen projects. Achievement in graphics in Years 7 to 11 is good. It is satisfactory in resistant materials and food. Students' use of technical and extended language is underdeveloped, which adversely affects the standard of the analytical and evaluative writing in coursework. ICT skills are weak, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Resources are inadequate and restricted access to ICT has a negative effect on standards.
97. Teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good teaching. Lessons are well prepared, but there are inconsistencies in teachers' identification and sharing of the skills and knowledge that students need. When teaching is good, activities are well structured, with good pace, but this is not the case in all lessons. Teachers manage behaviour well, ensuring that practical lessons are safe. Working relationships between teachers and students are good. This combines well with the good individual support students receive from teachers and technical staff. This good co-operation enables students, particularly lower attainers and those with special educational needs, to make satisfactory progress in lessons. However, many activities lack sufficient challenge to develop the ability of higher-attaining students. Students in Years 10 and 11 have a good understanding of their current performance and are clear about what they need to do to improve.
98. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department, supported by hardworking teachers, has handled the staffing difficulties well to minimise the negative effects on students. There is a good, clear understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and priorities identified that reflect the development needs of the department. Monitoring of students' progress is satisfactory. However, the lack of formal monitoring of teaching by the head of department has resulted in inconsistent implementation of strategies for raising attainment in Years 7 to 11.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since the new subject leader took over, standards have been rising rapidly.
- Leadership and management are innovative and very good.
- Very good procedures for assessment are used very well.
- Very good planning supports well the good teaching and learning and encourages well the students' good achievements and attitudes.
- The provision of the quantity and range of resources is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

99. On entry to the school, students' standards in art and design are below average. The good teaching and learning are enabling the current Year 9 students to achieve well and attain above average standards. Since the new subject leader was appointed nearly two years ago, GCSE examination results have improved rapidly and are now above the national average. Across the school, students achieve well and show good attitudes to their work. Teachers give freely of their time to raise standards by organising many extra-curricular activities. Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection and the subject is now one of the highest performing subjects in the school. Students from all ethnic groups and Travellers' children have their needs very well recognised through the wide range of good cultural inputs for the subject and they achieve as well as other students. The inclusion of all students is very good.
100. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. A particular feature of the teaching is the very good encouragement the students receive from their teachers to try of their best. Equally impressive are the very good schemes of work, which are interpreted well into lesson planning. Students are highly motivated and develop good attitudes to art and design. The head of the subject has developed very effective assessment systems for tracking students' progress.
101. Assessment is very good and is enhanced by the thorough marking of students' work and suggestions of how they could improve their standards further. Students are aware of their target grades and what they need to do to improve. Relevant homework is set and its completion is very well tracked. If it is not completed, the head of the subject informs parents with letters home and frequent verbal communication by telephone calls and personal contacts.
102. Through very good leadership and management, the subject leader has worked very effectively to raise the overall quality of teaching and build a highly committed teaching team. His knowledgeable and innovative leadership of the curriculum and teaching is excellent and he provides an excellent role-model for other staff and students. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.
103. Accommodation is good. The provision of resources for day-to-day teaching and for the use of ICT is unsatisfactory. The present financial allocation is insufficient to cater for the rapidly

growing number of students now choosing to study the subject or to provide them with suitable facilities for ICT. There are good links with artists and visits into the community. There is a good use of literacy with students encouraged to write stories and poems about their work. The use of numeracy, although planned for, is underdeveloped.

Music

Provision in music is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are not achieving well enough.
- Standards of work, and expectations by teachers in lessons, are well below those expected nationally.
- The subject is poorly led and managed.
- Students' progress is not assessed regularly.
- Music remains a popular option for students, but there is a lack of musical enrichment for them.

Commentary

104. In 2003, half of the student group entered for GCSE music attained A*-C grades. In the current Year 11, there are no students studying music. The work seen during the course of the inspection was below average in standard in Year 10 and students' levels of achievement are unsatisfactory. They do not use musical language correctly and their compositions lack musical ideas and melodic shape. The more competent students have some notes in their files about different musical styles, but for the majority, written work is scant and musical sketches are few. Because most lack sufficient prior musical knowledge and understanding, they struggle to produce the standard of work expected from students after two terms in Year 10.
105. The work undertaken with the younger students in Years 7 to 9 is also of a poor standard and their achievement is poor. The lack of clear planning and structure in their learning results in standards that are still well below those expected nationally of all students at the end of Year 9. Lessons lack rigour and pace, and teachers too readily accept poor-quality work. Students in all years find difficulty in working collaboratively and communicating musical ideas within ensembles. They do not use musical language correctly. Many struggle because criteria referred to by their teachers are unclear for them to evaluate and make improvements in their work. Too frequently, students do not understand what is expected of them and many become disinterested in learning. At times, immature behaviour, especially by boys, means that they do not take lessons seriously. However, when questions are targeted and students are made to explain and describe their work, then learning is improved and they make satisfactory progress in lessons. Overall, however, teaching and learning are poor.
106. The leadership and management of the department is poor and is not effective in securing the highest possible standards from all students. Schemes of work have been rewritten, but do not include regular times for recording and evaluating students' work, so assessment overall is a weakness. There is a lack of monitoring of students' progress. They are unaware how to improve their work or how well they are doing in relation to national standards. Despite students still showing enthusiasm for music in Year 10, and statutory requirements now being met in Year 9, improvement since the last inspection has been poor. This is because standards are now much lower, the quality of teaching has declined and there are few extra-curricular activities.

Drama

This subject was sampled during the inspection week.

107. Standards in drama are very good. Results in the most recent GCSE examination were impressive and well above the national average. Students' achievement is very good. Both boys and girls, including students with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress, as do students from ethnic minority backgrounds. From a low base, students acquire and develop a range of key drama skills and, by Years 10 and 11, can adopt and sustain roles well in scenes they have devised.
108. Teaching is very good. The drama specialist is knowledgeable and skilful in challenging students and motivating them to achieve. He has worked very hard to make effective links with partner primary schools and to manage the creation of a stimulating environment for drama. He provides very good leadership of this area of the curriculum. In order to enhance standards further, non-specialist teachers would benefit from continuing support and guidance and access to a wider range of specialist equipment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of and participation in extra-curricular activities are very good.
- Teachers set high expectations of students in terms of participation, performance and behaviour.
- Achievement of students studying the GCSE is unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation for physical education is poor.
- Students have a positive attitude to the subject and behave well in lessons.
- Leadership of the subject is good, with the head of department having a clear vision for developing physical education at the school.

Commentary

109. The majority of students attain standards at the level expected nationally by the end of Year 9. There is, however, a wide range of ability in Years 7-9, with some students performing at higher levels than that expected nationally. Standards have steadily increased over the last three years as the department's comprehensive and accurate assessment procedures have efficiently monitored and evaluated students' performance over the range of sports offered. Achievement of students in these years is good.
110. Standards and achievement of students in Years 10 and 11 are similar, although the performance of GCSE examination candidates remains poor. They perform particularly badly on the theory aspects of the course. In 2003, less than one fifth of students entering achieved a grade C or above, well below the national average. A number of good strategies, including targeted revision classes, have been put in place to tackle this issue. Girls do not generally perform or progress as well as boys, although students with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers.
111. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations of students. They plan and teach lessons that engage and stimulate students to work productively and co-operatively. For example, in a very good Year 10 GCSE athletics lesson, students developed their understanding of sprinting technique through peer observation and response to clear, enthusiastic teacher explanations. However, all lessons do not have clearly expressed teaching points, which are made explicit to students and which are linked to clearly defined learning outcomes. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating students' progress are good. As

a consequence of teachers' high expectations in terms of participation, performance and behaviour, students have a positive attitude to the subject and behave well in lessons.

112. Whilst the requirements of the National Curriculum are met, those students in Years 10 and 11 not studying the examination course only receive one hour of physical education per week, half the recommended amount. The recently introduced Junior Sports Leader Award is enabling Year 10 students to develop their coaching skills and provides opportunities for them to exercise responsibility. The very good extra-curricular activities are open to all and students, particularly the more able, benefit from the extensive range of clubs and teams offered both in the school and in the local community.
113. Leadership of the subject is good. The head of department has a clear vision for developing the subject, improving examination performance and widening participation further. He provides a good role-model for colleagues and students. Management of the department is satisfactory. The head of department has made a very good job of managing recent staffing problems, but several key areas need tackling. These include having a more formal teacher monitoring programme, developing procedures for sharing good practice and drafting a more comprehensive departmental development plan.
114. Accommodation for physical education is poor. There are no on-site fields and the internal accommodation is old and tired-looking. There is also no dedicated physical education classroom for teaching GCSE theory lessons, which does not create an appropriate learning environment for these students. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge and planning is good and aids students' learning.
- Assessment is used effectively to meet the needs of all groups of students.
- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below those expected nationally.
- The need to use inappropriate teaching rooms adversely affects the standards achieved.

Commentary

115. Standards of work seen during the inspection were below the average expected for the age group. The proportion of grades A*-C gained in the 2003 GCSE examination were well below the national average. Students entering the course have no prior knowledge of business and their average attainment at the end of Year 9 is below average. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are rising, although results are likely to be remaining below the national average for the current Year 11. Staffing problems last year resulted in the use of some non-specialist teachers, which impacted on the quality of work produced by students. Students do have a satisfactory knowledge of business studies theory, which the higher attainers apply with confidence. Average- and lower-attaining students have a greater difficulty in relating the theory to business situations, but are able to define business terms with some accuracy. In the lessons seen, all groups showed adequate knowledge of recruitment and selection procedures. Provision and standards achieved by ethnic minority and Traveller students matched that of other groups.
116. Students' attitudes are generally good, with the majority of groups showing a good level of involvement. However, in the lessons seen, attendance was low, suggesting a lack of commitment on the part of some students. In paired or group activities, students work with

maturity and make positive responses to teachers' questioning. However, in lessons observed, students did not always contribute readily or with enthusiasm.

117. Teaching in business studies is satisfactory and as a result, the achievement of students is satisfactory. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory and some were good. In good lessons, students are given greater responsibility for their learning and a high level of challenge ensures that the most able students are stretched. Good preparation and planning, supported by good-quality resources, encourages students to take a positive approach to their learning. Resources are accessible to all students and, when linked to the good support teachers provide, enable students to make gains in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers' comments, whilst not always telling students how to improve, or teachers consistently providing feedback are helpful to students. At times, teachers provide too much direction, which does not encourage students to develop as independent learners.
118. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is clarity of direction. Plans based on the analysis of current performance are already in place to alter the specifications for the coming academic year. The effective small team shows a strong commitment to students' success. Staffing within the subject is stable, which is helping to raise standards. However, with only one teaching room available, lessons are taught in a specialist ICT room, which is not suitable for theory lessons and has a negative impact on standards. No mention was made of the subject at the time of the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below the levels expected.
- Coverage of citizenship across the curriculum is unsatisfactory and National Curriculum requirements are not met.
- Most teachers do not bear citizenship well enough in mind when planning lessons, or make citizenship elements clear enough to students.
- The school's management of the subject is unsatisfactory.

Commentary.

119. Standards are below expectations at the end of Years 9 and 11. This applies to boys and girls, across all levels of attainment and to all the ethnic groups in the school.
120. Teaching of citizenship is combined with that of personal, social and health education and religious education. The time allocated for citizenship is inadequate. No direct teaching of citizenship was seen during the inspection so it is not possible to make overall judgements on teaching and learning. Assessment procedures for tracking students' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory.
121. The curriculum is unsatisfactory. Teachers' planning for and identification of citizenship in their lessons is unsatisfactory. Insufficient attention has been given to National Curriculum requirements. Although the school does not meet requirements, there are less formal elements of citizenship in a number of areas of its work.

Personal, social and health education

122. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Coverage is mostly within the weekly time-tabled lessons. It is an integral part of a number of subjects. An analysis of students' work and lessons seen suggests that teaching is satisfactory, although there is a level of unsatisfactory, as well as good, teaching. Students show good attitudes to work. The course makes a satisfactory contribution to students' personal development and their ability to play a positive role in school life. This is seen in the work of the school council, for example. The statutory requirements for sex education and drugs awareness are met.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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