

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MOOR PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119773

Headteacher: Mr. Peter Cunningham

Lead inspector: Bill Stoneham

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 258704

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

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

**Key Stage 3** refers to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 who have transferred from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. **Key Stage 4** refers to pupils who are in Years 10 and 11. At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**), or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**).

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

Efforts have been made to minimise the use of shorthand notations, though some have been used. Throughout the report, the notation **ICT** refers to information and communication technology. The term **SENCO** refers to the special educational needs co-ordinator. An **IEP** is an individual education plan. **PHSE** refers to the school's programme for personal, health and social education. **ASDAN** stands for the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network and is a form of accreditation followed by some pupils in Years 10 and 11. The school also has two main units offering education to selected pupils. These are referred to as **WING** – Withdrawal Intervention Nurture Group and **SERF** – Special Education Resource Facility. The former is a unit for pupils who are experiencing social and emotional problems and it is deemed to be in their interests to remove them from mainstream classes for a short while. The second unit is a specialist unit that caters for a cohort of hearing impaired pupils.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 11-16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 511

School address: Moor Park High School  
Moor Park Avenue  
Preston  
Lancashire  
Postcode: PR1 6DT

Telephone number: 01772 795428  
Fax number: 01772 653912

Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Ms Valerie Wise

Date of previous inspection: October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Moor Park High School is a smaller than average mixed comprehensive school located in the industrial city of Preston. It has 511 pupils aged between 11 and 16. The school was awarded a School Achievement Award in 2001 and is involved in various initiatives designed to help schools serving mainly areas of social and economic deprivation. The area served by the school is one of high social deprivation near to the centre of Preston. Standards on entry to Year 7 are well below average overall. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The ethnic mix of the school reflects that of the surrounding area; indeed, the school is reputed to be the most racially mixed in Lancashire. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is very high, though few pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also well above average. There are very few pupils from travelling, refugee or asylum seeking families. Pupil mobility is relatively high and can affect some year groups adversely. About six per cent of the total roll either join or leave at a time other than the start of the academic year. This figure rose to 14 per cent in Year 11 last year.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27407	Bill Stoneham	Lead inspector	
19653	Libby Dickson	Lay inspector	
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English
24891	Jackie Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics
31255	Derek Williamson	Team inspector	Science
18854	Malcolm McGregor	Team inspector	Art and design, Design and technology
14841	Michael Duffey	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
23550	Marie Blewitt	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
1387	Romy Markham	Team inspector	History Religious education
11300	Barry Smith	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs
8360	Frederick Peacock	Team inspector	Geography
18755	Roger Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education
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The inspection contractor was:

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>13</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>CENTRES FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>40</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The overall effectiveness of the school is good.** Standards overall are below average but, given their well below levels of attainment on entry, pupils' achievement is good. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good. The school works hard to maintain this standard and very good monitoring procedures have been established. Much assessment data is collected and the school has developed good systems for analysing achievement by gender and by ethnic background. Such procedures are increasingly used to inform teaching and raise standards, but more consistency in the use of such information is needed in Years 7, 8 and 9. The work of the school has been further enhanced by some very recent rebuilding work; a cramped site is used effectively. Overall the school offers satisfactory value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Strong management of the headteacher and senior staff and its impact on school improvement.
- The quality of care and support offered to all pupils, which enables the school to manage a variety of needs and function harmoniously.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those for whom English is not a first language is very good and it is helping these pupils to achieve well.
- The development of assessment and its use as a means of challenging pupils, raising standards and supporting learning is very good, but it needs more consistent application in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The effectiveness of ICT skills to support learning in most subjects needs improving.
- The quality of management, teaching and learning in ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9 needs improving.
- The attainment of some white British boys, in particular, is too low, largely because of their low literacy skills.

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Several changes have taken place in the interim period, but the key issues in the previous report have been addressed satisfactorily. Standards on entry remain well below average, but the school is active in developing suitable programmes to tackle this deep-seated issue.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	E	D	E	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Overall, achievement in the school is good.** Though standards are below average overall, the context in which the school operates must be borne in mind. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with standards that are well below average. Through good teaching and the quality of support offered, most pupils leave school with results that are better than those expected, based on their entry levels. Some groups of pupils actually achieve far better than predicted. Asian girls frequently achieve very well, as do pupils for whom English is not a first language. In contrast, many white British boys achieve less well. Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science and most other subjects, but they are average in religious education, business studies and citizenship. In some cases this is because the groups, especially in Years 10 and 11, are small and tend to comprise mainly higher attaining pupils. Standards in art and design are above average mainly because of the very high standards of work in ceramics. Achievement tends to be good in most

subjects, but in history, design and technology, physical education, and business studies it is satisfactory. There are two prime reasons for this. Firstly, the pupils' limited literacy skills, especially in Years 10 and 11, impede progress; secondly, some of these subjects have experienced recent staffing difficulties, which have hindered the pace of improvement.

**The pupils' personal qualities are good.** Attitudes and behaviour are good and punctuality is satisfactory, though attendance is unsatisfactory, but it is improving. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** The strengths noted at the last inspection have at least been maintained.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years.** Teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics, science, French, religious education, geography, music, art and design and citizenship. They are satisfactory in history, design and technology, physical education and business studies and unsatisfactory in ICT. Much time and effort is devoted to improving the quality of teaching and learning and the school has established some very good systems to monitor what is happening in the classroom. Recent improvements in facilities are already beginning to help learning in science and art and design, but there is still no specialist accommodation for drama; other subjects are now benefiting from more stable staffing.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, leadership and management are good.** The governance of the school is good, as is its management. Leadership is good overall, with the headteacher offering strong leadership.

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

Parents like the school and they believe it is providing a good education. Though many parents do not readily involve themselves in the work of the school, most are supportive. Parents find the induction procedures for new pupils to be good and they believe that the school works hard to promote good attitudes. They find the school approachable and value the quality of teaching offered. Parents appreciate the support that the school offers pupils who, for whatever reason, may be having difficulties with their learning. Equally, newer projects such as the 'able and talented' programme are seen by parents as the school promoting opportunities and experiences that their children might not normally benefit from.

Pupils were generally positive about the school in almost all areas where questioned. They too saw the school as a place which expected them to do well and they find the staff approachable and keen to help them to learn and to develop as individuals. There were some adverse comments about bullying and that the staff did not always treat the pupils fairly, but discussion and observation revealed a high quality pastoral system and pupils who were interviewed were confident that they could ask members of staff for help.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure the consistent use of assessment data in Years 7, 8 and 9 as a means of challenging pupils and supporting learning.
- Review the use of ICT across the curriculum to improve the quality of learning in all subjects in line with the best practice.
- Improve the management of ICT and learning and some teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Continue with measures to raise the attainment of all pupils, but especially that of some white British boys.





## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good, but it is very good for pupils for whom English is an additional language, especially British Asian girls. This is mainly because of the quality of additional support they receive. Achievement is good in Years 7, 8 and 9 and it is also good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils who spend their full five years at the school, and who attend regularly, achieve well overall.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils achieve well overall. Achievement in English in Years 7, 8 and 9 is very good, as is the achievement of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Many pupils achieve better than expected results because of the emphasis the school places on monitoring progress and supporting pupils to improve their work.
- The school's own analysis clearly shows that some pupils, especially some white British boys, do not achieve as well as expected, mainly because of their low literacy skills.

#### **Commentary**

1. In national test results in 2003, standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 were broadly average in English but well below average in mathematics and science when compared to all schools nationally. The overall results in these three core subjects were well below average. In comparison to similar schools based on prior attainment, standards were well above average overall. They were very high in English, indeed compared to similar schools they were in the top five per cent nationally, and were well above average in both mathematics and science. These pupils entered the school with well below average prior attainment. Though their results remain well below average, they are better than predicted based on prior attainment. Achievement is, therefore, good. This improvement owes much to the quality of teaching that is provided and the monitoring procedures that have been established to track the progress of each individual and offer additional help where needed.
2. The school has developed detailed statistical analysis of pupils' performances in the national tests at the end of Year 9. While these data show that overall pupils achieve well, they also show that levels of achievement are not spread equitably throughout the school. Girls achieve more highly than boys and Asian heritage pupils tend to achieve more highly than their white British counterparts. Pupils for whom English is an additional language often achieve very well, partly because of the quality of classroom support they are offered. The group with the lowest levels of achievement tends to be white British boys; this is the group who tend to have the lowest literacy skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.4 (32.8)	33.3 (33)
Mathematics	31.6 (31.9)	35.3 (34.4)
Science	31 (31)	33.7 (33.3)

*There were 86 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2003 were well below average when compared to all schools nationally. Indeed, results were in the bottom five per cent nationally for the attainment

of five A\* to C grades. When compared to similar schools based on prior attainment, results overall were above average, but were average for the attainment of five A\* to C grades, but well above average for the attainment of five A\* to G grades. These results, which were below the school's targets, represent satisfactory achievement.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	18 (30)	50 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93 (93)	90 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	97 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	23.1 (31.8)	34.3 (39.8)

*There were 94 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. In most subjects, standards were either below or well below average, though in history and geography, where the pupils' limited literacy skills had a profound impact, standards were very low. In art and design standards were above average, mainly because of the particularly impressive results gained, mostly by boys, in ceramics. Also, this is an area where writing skills are required less at examination than in most other subjects. The school has undertaken a detailed analysis of these results and can show that a series of circumstances served to conspire against its efforts to at least maintain the standards of the previous year. Staffing difficulties in science, design and technology and history caused some disruption to GCSE classes. In many subjects, the low level of literacy skills of a significant number of pupils hindered attainment.
5. In Years 7, 8 and 9, most pupils develop their basic literacy skills well. Though progress is rapid, the situation must be kept in perspective. On entry to the school, pupils of all ethnic backgrounds and heritages tend to have very low literacy skills. Work undertaken in Years 7, 8 and 9 attempts to address these deficiencies. When pupils start their GCSE courses, though their literacy skills have improved, for many they are still at a low level. Further improvements are made and careful classroom teaching and sensitive classroom support both contribute to the improvement. However, many pupils still lack confidence in the more advanced skills of fluent reading and writing, evaluation and comprehension, the features needed to reach higher grades. This becomes particularly apparent when the pupils sit their examinations. When the pupils are on their own and are lacking the support and guidance of their teachers and classroom support assistants, many struggle even to understand properly the question that is set. Consequently the quality of their answers suffers.
6. A further factor has been identified by the school. In a year group that numbers less than 100, the performance of each individual pupil counts for more than one per cent of the overall outcome. The school's own extensive monitoring of pupils' performance identified six pupils who were predicted to gain at least five A\* to C grades. Each of these pupils could be described as being 'fragile' in terms of their family background or health. Despite the best efforts of the school, none of these pupils gained the quality of results expected. When these difficulties are added to associated problems of some irregular attendance, sometimes arising from cultural traditions, the transient nature of the school population and the fact that nine pupils were following an alternative, college based curriculum, it becomes easier to account for the volatility in the school's GCSE examination performance.
7. Inspection evidence based on lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work indicates that for present pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, standards are below average in most subjects in comparison with national benchmarks. In some subjects, however, standards are higher. They are average in English, religious education, music and citizenship and above average in art and design. As these pupils entered the school with well below average standards, they are

achieving well. A number of factors contribute to this outcome. The school has thorough procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. These include a good use of examination and other performance data. Target setting is well developed and the performance of each pupil against his or her targets is undertaken regularly. This system continues to develop and is now supported by the use of mentors who work with a variety of pupils in an effort to help them improve their standards of work.

8. Similar provision is made for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Though standards are again below average in the majority of subjects, the school's data analysis shows achievement to be good and that GCSE results should improve significantly in 2004. The present Year 11 group is less turbulent, staffing is more settled and other initiatives introduced since the arrival of the present headteacher, such as the able and talented scheme, are beginning to have an impact. The main obstacle to a fundamental improvement, however, remains the low literacy skills of a significant number of pupils and especially some white British boys.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Their achievement is tracked carefully along with that of all pupils in the school. Baseline information is gathered on entry and the support department has plans to extend further its use of statistical evidence to measure progress, including a pilot programme for measuring progress in English, mathematics, science and personal and social development.

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

Although there are immature attitudes and behaviour from a minority of pupils, attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Attendance is unsatisfactory, but is improving steadily. Punctuality is satisfactory. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils display good attitudes in class. They take an interest and respond well to good quality teaching.
- Overall, pupils behave well in and out of lessons; they relate well to one another and to the adults who work in the school.
- Attendance, though well below the national average, is steadily improving as a result of the school's efforts.

### **Commentary**

10. Attitudes are good. Most pupils are positive about the school and what it has to offer them. They settle to work quickly at the beginning of lessons and concentrate well. Many are well motivated, involved and make constructive contributions, particularly in lessons where teachers are confident and make lessons interesting. Teachers show clearly that they value pupils and their efforts and achievements, in return pupils respond well to the encouragement and support they are given. In contrast, there is a small minority of pupils throughout the school with unsatisfactory and occasionally poor attitudes. This was most noticeable in lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory. As a result these few lessons were disrupted and all pupils were prevented from making the progress they should.
11. The friendly and harmonious atmosphere in the school is due in part to the pupils' good behaviour around the school and at lunchtimes. They greet visitors to the school in a welcoming manner and with a natural friendliness and openness. The school is passionately committed to inclusion and all pupils, irrespective of their ability or cultural background, are fully included in the life and work of the school. There is very good racial harmony throughout the school community. Behaviour in most lessons is good and the majority of pupils respond well to teachers' expectations and have a clear understanding of the rewards and sanctions systems. In some lessons behaviour is very good and this has a very positive impact on learning. A small number of pupils with specific emotional and behavioural difficulties respond

well to all the help they are given to show self-control and behave appropriately so they can get on with their work. In extreme cases of poor behaviour in lessons, teachers make appropriate use of the 'on call' system to have troublemakers removed from the lesson.

12. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes towards the support they receive and in a Year 7 literacy support lesson the pupils, besides behaving very well were eager to work and showed good application. Across the range of support strategies and at all levels, pupils appear genuinely pleased with the support they receive.
13. There are few pupils in the early stages of language acquisition and the recent arrivals are proud of their progress in English over a relatively short time. They are fully aware of some of the problems they have with subject specific language, but feel they are very well supported and have trust and confidence in their support teachers.
14. No instances of bullying or harassment were seen during the inspection. Following up concerns expressed by pupils in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, inspectors spoke to pupils about bullying, but found no confirmation of this being a significant problem. Pupils indicated that where incidents were reported to staff, they were dealt with effectively.
15. The relatively high, but declining, number of fixed period exclusions is as a result of the firm line taken by the school over certain types of unacceptable behaviour. The school has worked hard to use what flexibility is available to minimise the number of permanent exclusions and to go the 'extra mile' to give pupils support. Initiatives such as 'the Compact Club' and the Inclusion Suite provide pupils with a range of support to help them stay in school, develop their self-esteem and make the most of the opportunities the school offers.

#### **Ethnic background of pupils**

#### **Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	235	95	1
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	9	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	206	14	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	44	12	0
Any other ethnic group	4	2	0

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

16. Relationships throughout the school community are good. Staff treat the pupils with respect and consideration. As a result, there is a high level of trust. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on what they do and how their actions impact on others. In tutorial sessions, assemblies and several lessons, for example in religious education and PSHE, pupils showed a good level of maturity, whether discussing major world events, the significance of Remembrance Day, or issues such as euthanasia or asylum seekers. Pupils are encouraged to become mature and responsible and to take on more responsibility as they move up through the school. Several Year 11 pupils act as mentors to primary school pupils and a considerable number are selected as prefects. Through initiatives such as Young Enterprise, charity fundraising and the 'Compact' programme, pupils across the school develop in self-confidence and independence. The wearing of uniform is strongly promoted and pupils take care to dress appropriately and comply with the school's regulations. They show respect for their surroundings and there is very little litter or graffiti around the school buildings and grounds.

17. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall with some very good features. The large stained glass window and panelled walls in the hall give a strong spiritual message to both pupils and staff. Where assemblies and form registration periods include a religious dimension, it is a spiritual experience for most of those taking part. Because pupils are taught to respect the values, beliefs and cultures of others the school is a very harmonious place. Pupils have a secure perception of what is right and wrong and generally follow the school code of conduct. There is an effective anti-bullying policy and peer mentors are trained to help when issues are raised. Decision-making skills are developed in the school council and in lessons when moral and ethical issues are discussed. Pupils are challenged to think for themselves and justify their opinions on issues such as crime, fair trade and euthanasia. Pupils relate well to each other and are generally pleasant and polite. They accept responsibility as prefects, show respect to adults and collaborate well together in lessons. Good causes are willingly supported and pupils' cultural development is improved through local trips, theatre visits and the many extra-curricular clubs and events that take place. Pupils' cultural values are reinforced when working with visiting artists and speakers and by the displays and posters around the school.
18. Attendance in the school is well below that found nationally. However, it has improved steadily over the last three years and is now just under 90 per cent. Truancy is not a significant problem; the rate of unauthorised absence is much lower than the national average. The improvement in attendance is because of the efforts the school has put in to making both pupils and their parents aware of the importance of regular attendance. Good attendance is rewarded and the strong partnership with the education welfare officer ensures that pupils with poor attendance are identified and appropriately supported and often successfully reintegrated.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	12.7
National data	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	1.2

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

Overall, the school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is good and the systematic programme for monitoring its quality is leading to improvements and is helping to raise the quality of learning. The use of assessment data as a tool to develop learning further is also good. Where some weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning remain, the school is aware of these and suitable remedies are in place to tackle the issues identified. The curriculum is good and the school is developing what is offered to pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11, so that their needs are more extensively met. The school's site is cramped, but accommodation has been improved and it is very well cared for by site staff. Resources are good and are improving. Pupils receive very good care, guidance and support and work with parents and the wider community is good; and it is very good with partner schools.

**Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The quality is good in Years 7, 8 and 9 and in Years 10 and 11. The school invests much energy in monitoring the quality of teaching to gain improvements in learning. The quality of learning is also improving because of the use of examination data to set targets and monitor each pupil's progress.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching is good and helps pupils to learn well.
- Pupils' learning is benefiting as most teaching is now done by subject specialists and because of the monitoring of teaching that is now systematically undertaken.
- The overall use of assessment data to track and monitor the performance of each pupil is good, but the way such information is used by departments needs to be more consistent.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language learn well because of the support and encouragement they are offered.
- Though much teaching was good, thought needs to be given about how to improve it so that more is very good or excellent.

## Commentary

19. Much of the teaching and learning seen was at least good. One in five lessons were good and there was one excellent lesson. The very good teaching was spread across year groups and across subjects. Only a minority of lessons failed to offer teaching and learning of a suitable quality. Where this happened the pupils were not sufficiently challenged and the lessons had been inadequately planned.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 105 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (1%)	21 (20%)	42 (40%)	36 (34%)	4 (4%)	1 (1%)	0

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

20. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was consistent both across subjects and year groups, and has improved since the last inspection. The findings of the inspection team mirror the views of parents and pupils, who commented favourably on teaching in their questionnaires. The quality seen reflects the work that the school puts into monitoring and evaluating its own performance, plus the care that is taken in recruiting specialist staff in a difficult labour market.
21. Many strengths of teaching can be identified, not least that in most lessons seen, teaching was delivered by subject specialists and this made a significant contribution to the learning of all pupils. Learning also benefited because most lessons were well planned, they contained challenge, the pace was pitched correctly and the pupils were given appropriate opportunities to enhance their learning by working independently or collaboratively. In the good and better lessons a range of strategies were used to engage and extend the pupils' learning. This is an important characteristic as the teaching groups in the school are rarely uniform and, in order to engage the pupils, staff need to use a range of strategies and often need to deliver learning in small bites rather than in large slices. This approach enabled the pupils to achieve well. Many staff showed good levels of initiative and enterprise, though computers are not widely used across the curriculum and the effectiveness of ICT skills to support learning in many subjects needs to be addressed. This is especially important, as some pupils may not have access to computers at home.
22. In Years 7 to 11, teaching and learning were good in most subjects inspected. In history, design and technology, physical education and business studies, teaching and learning were satisfactory, but in ICT they were unsatisfactory. During the inspection a healthy number of very good lessons were seen. Where teaching and learning were especially good, lessons were paced well, the pupils were challenged and very good opportunities were presented to pupils to work independently. Staff set the tone for the lesson based on careful planning, but the expectation was that the pupils came to lessons to work and to behave. This aim was achieved

with regularity. In a number of lessons learning benefited from the quality of classroom support that was offered. This helped pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language to progress. Where teaching and learning were less effective, teachers opted for tasks that were less demanding and their expectations of what the pupils might achieve were lower. Teaching became too teacher centred and pace slowed. These lessons lacked variety and had been inadequately planned. Such lessons, however, were in the minority.

23. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are taught well. The support teachers liaise closely with all teachers to consider carefully where to allocate support. Specialist teaching staff funded through the ethnic minority achievement grant, help in the preparation of appropriate and varied work, worksheets and subject specific resources and work very well as an enthusiastic team. They have prepared glossaries with essential vocabulary and phrases and purchased a selection of attractive guides and tables for reference, which support learning and are valued by the pupils. Support is mainly in lessons, so that pupils are not missing any areas of the curriculum. A very good example was seen in a Year 8 mathematics lesson on geometry. The support teacher had enlarged the teacher-prepared worksheet to enable the pupil to highlight in colour some of the lines on the diagram in order to find corresponding and alternate angles. The support teacher ensured that the pupil had understood the objectives of the lesson and spent time practising the tasks with the pupil, who then worked out answers for himself, slightly slower than the rest of the class, but nevertheless understanding exactly how to tackle the rest of the questions.
24. Achievement is monitored and reviewed regularly. This provides the opportunity for pupils to move sets in order to reach their potential. Targets are also set and reviewed with pupil involvement, in order to raise achievement.
25. The teaching offered to pupils with special educational needs is similarly good. Careful consideration is given to the type of support given to individual pupils and the great majority is in-class support, using a range of strategies. A large number of assistants are appropriately deployed. Pupils with special educational needs are involved fully in the activities of the school. LSAs are effective in the support they give, and in music a very knowledgeable assistant gives very good support. There are many examples of good materials being used in lessons to support pupils with low levels of literacy and understanding. This was seen in an exercise where materials were devised to enable pupils at different levels in Year 8 to write letters about Kibera township.
26. Subject teachers are fully informed of the needs of pupils with statements. They have copies of the individual education plans and they have opportunities to add subject-specific targets to them. All information is accessible on the school intranet. Extra provision is made for pupils in withdrawal groups, held in the Inclusion Suite, and pupils may attend these to help their literacy skills, or as a response to behavioural or emotional difficulties. The Inclusion Suite and WING are very well organised centres of support that are reported on elsewhere, as is the hearing impaired unit.
27. Since the last inspection the provision for special educational needs has improved and expanded both in its staffing and the range of needs catered for. Teaching in the withdrawal groups is of a high quality, as was seen in a literacy support group where a strong lesson plan was delivered with flair and energy and in a Year 9 behaviour support lesson in which very friendly teachers coaxed good responses from their charges.
28. The school is also endeavouring to improve attainment by working with a group of 'able and talented' pupils. Though work on this project is still at an early stage, a suitable group of pupils has been identified and staff are expected to cater for their specific needs when planning their lessons. Parents are also involved in the programme and during the inspection members of the inspection team attended a briefing meeting for parents and pupils on the scheme. One of the themes of the meeting was to inform parents about how they could be involved in their child's

learning. The school also seeks opportunities to celebrate the work of its talented pupils. This too was seen during the inspection when the school held a talent show featuring pupil musicians and dancers. The work the school is doing to improve the learning opportunities for its diverse range of pupils illustrates its very strong commitment to inclusion.

29. An evolving programme of assessment strategies, based upon a central collection of attainment data, is emerging as a strength of the school. The use of target setting helps to provide an accurate analysis of pupils' current standards, and a clear expectation of what they can achieve. All staff have access to the data bank, which is based upon two key indicators: Year 7 assessment tests and the results from national tests at the end of Year 6.
30. Teachers and parents are able to use the information in the data bank to challenge pupils to improve their standards. The Year 11 progress report is the most recent development, which includes targets and progress indicators for all pupils. Parents receive an information sheet with advice on how to provide suitable support for their children. Designated teachers monitor performance to identify pupils who are below target and require additional support. Target setting and reporting is an evolving system, the impact of which has yet to be fully realised.
31. Marking of pupils' work is variable, within and across the subjects. Where it is most effective, pupils are left in no doubt how to improve their work. However, in some cases work is not marked sufficiently. The use of assessment to help pupils improve is very good in modern languages and at least satisfactory in all subjects, except design and technology, ICT and music, where it is unsatisfactory.

## **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good in all years. The opportunities for activities outside of lessons are good. The school overall has satisfactory accommodation. The recently opened laboratories for the science department are very good. Resources for learning are good and include Internet access, which further extends the opportunities for independent learning.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs and interests of all pupils.
- The wide range of enrichment opportunities enhances the quality of learning.
- A good programme of personal, social and health education prepares pupils for their future.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is being modified to ensure that all needs are met, but clear success criteria for the alternative programmes should be developed.
- Accommodation on a cramped site is well maintained and there have been some good, recent improvements, but the existing accommodation still poses problems for teaching in subjects such as geography and physical education.

## **Commentary**

32. The overall quality of the curriculum is good. The school provides courses for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and these are supplemented by citizenship, personal, social and health education and careers education. The curriculum caters well for all needs, supporting well pupils with special educational needs, pupils for whom English is an additional language and disaffected pupils. Good arrangements are established through the Inclusion Suite to support pupils who have learning or personal difficulties to help them integrate into the curricular life of the school. This has led to improved attendance of pupils who previously were absentees.
33. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is developing a range of pathways that meet the different needs and interests of the pupils. In addition to the compulsory core subjects of English, mathematics, science, physical education and personal, social and health education the school offers a range of other courses. These include a good range of GCSE courses and vocational



courses in ICT and business studies. Some pupils have extra English, mathematics and ICT lessons and this leads to alternative accreditation via the ASDAN scheme. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to participate in activities beyond lessons. In sports for example, there are form and inter-school competitions in most major games. Similarly good provision occurs in music with many pupils learning musical instruments; there is also an orchestra and a choir. The department also runs a centre for Asian music with the help of visiting musicians. There is a good partnership in careers education so that pupils are given a good insight into potential career pathways.

34. The school is good at monitoring its provision for its older pupils and is acutely aware of the need to meet the requirements of all pupils. Various modifications to the curriculum have been made to meet the needs of some groups more effectively. The school's 'able and talented' programme is an example of this. Some vocational courses have been developed and the school is gradually introducing alternative programmes, such as work-related learning, which will be of more relevance to certain youngsters. In relation to such programmes, the school needs to identify some clear success criteria.
35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The curriculum caters very well for a variety of needs with its wide offering of support and courses including the Compact course in Years 10 and 11. The school has considered ways to improve the physical access for all. One pupil in a wheelchair has access to a large part of the school, but only by using a stair lift and access is not complete. It is unlikely that lifts can be provided to make all areas accessible. However, the school has done well to provide an impressive area such as the Inclusion Suite and the WING and SERF units offer good accommodation for special needs pupils. Refurbishment has been carried out in various areas with financial help from sources such as Excellence in Cities and resources have also been improved to a high standard. Much work has been done to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language can access the full curriculum.
36. The accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Praise is due to the work of the school's site staff, who work very hard to maintain the accommodation to a high standard. There is a good programme of refurbishment that results in a well-maintained and pleasant learning environment. Some older classrooms are cramped, especially for geography. At present the outdoor facilities for physical education are unsatisfactory. However, the school has a significant programme of improvement in partnership with the City of Preston Recreation and Leisure department. The learning resource centre is a high quality and well-organised area, which helps pupils develop their independent learning skills. Resources meet the needs of pupils and the curriculum. Resources for learning are good and support learning across the curriculum. In the learning resource centre there is a wide range of reading materials as well as video and audio resources. ICT resources are good.

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

The provision of support, advice and guidance is good. The steps taken to ensure the pupils' health and welfare are very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff provide a caring environment where individual needs are catered for very well, and pupils can flourish academically and personally.
- Good induction procedures prepare pupils well for their secondary education.
- Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good.

## Commentary

37. The school takes very good care of its pupils. The strong pastoral system leads to good communication between staff and ensures pupils receive a high level of support, which is backed up with very good liaison with outside agencies.
38. Procedures for child protection are fully in place and all staff are made aware of their responsibilities in this area. Particular care is taken over health and safety matters, with regular checks and risk assessments. Arrangements for first aid and other medical care are very good. Detailed records are kept of pupils with specific problems and, where necessary, individual care packages are drawn up in consultation with the school nurse. The school buildings and grounds are well cared for and provide pupils with a safe and attractive learning environment.
39. Pupils are supported well through the school's pastoral system. Apart from the head of Year 7, tutors and heads of year move through the school with their forms, so they get to know their pupils well and monitor their progress closely. Pupils' personal and educational well-being is a priority for staff. Numerous examples exist of the intensive support provided for individual pupils with problems. In most cases it is the heads of year who identify pupils with particular needs and they refer them for appropriate support, often from the head of inclusion, learning mentor or school counsellor. The inclusion suite provides individual and group support for school refusers, poor attenders or those with emotional or behaviour problems. Those who are underachieving are identified, supported and closely monitored. A counselling service provides weekly support to those pupils whom the school deems would benefit from this support. The school nurse also visits every week and breakfast is available to pupils every day from 8.15am. All this is very good practice, providing pupils with a high level of care.
40. Both parents and pupils expressed satisfaction with the steps the school takes to settle pupils in when they start in Year 7. Prospective pupils are visited in their primary schools and information is passed on to their form tutors. Before starting, pupils visit the school, meet teachers and have a chance to 'sample' lessons. The arrangements made for their induction into the school are well planned. The school provides a Year 7 base and Year 7 have access to their own outside recreational area. This enables the youngsters to settle in gradually and build on existing friendships from their previous schools. Older pupils are provided with a good range of information and advice to enable them to make appropriate choices for the next stage of their education.
41. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school meets statutory requirements for provision as outlined in the statements of special educational need. Reviews of IEPs and statements are carried out regularly with input from teachers. Good and up-to-date information on pupils with SEN is available for staff on the school intranet.
42. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good. There is an induction and assessment programme for pupils newly arrived from abroad, or new to the school. It is recognised that many of these pupils are highly intelligent, but that language may be a barrier to achievement. Education is greatly valued by the majority of these pupils. Staff and other pupils respect their beliefs and cultures and try to involve everyone in lessons and activities.
43. Pupils value the support they receive from individual members of staff and appreciate the recognition given to them for particular achievements. Awards are presented at the half-termly whole school assembly and each term a 'Citizen of the Term' is nominated. Pupils' views are canvassed through the year councils and the school council. This arrangement allows them to have a say in decision-making in the school, though pupils in Year 11 who were interviewed during the inspection said they would welcome greater consultation on school matters.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with its parents is good and much work has been done to establish a harmonious relationship. The quality of links with the community and with other schools and colleges is similarly good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's partnership with the community is good and these links have a positive impact on their attainment and personal development.
- The school encourages parents to take an active interest in their children's education; parental involvement in the school is limited but most parents provide support with their child's learning at home.
- The school has developed strong partnerships with a number of local schools and colleges, which give many pupils opportunities to take part in joint activities and initiatives.

### **Commentary**

44. Parents have positive views of the school; it is popular and oversubscribed and parents value the caring yet challenging ethos that the school provides. Although few parents help in the school, and there is a home-school association and many parents willingly attend concerts and special events which involve their children. During the inspection a considerable number were welcomed into the school to attend a talent show and an information evening for the parents of pupils who had been identified as 'able and talented'. Attendance at parental consultations is generally good and steadily improving and parent governor posts are filled with no great difficulty. Most parents ensure their children attend regularly and wear the correct uniform. They respond promptly if the school contacts them for any reason. Homework planners are checked and signed by parents, and most ensure, to the best of their ability, that homework tasks are completed on time.
45. Parents are provided with good information about the school and about their child's work and progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and the school works hard to maintain good communication with parents of pupils who have English as an additional language. Where necessary, documents are translated into the appropriate language before being distributed. Regular newsletters give a good picture of school activities and successes and remind parents of forthcoming events. Parents receive a termly report and a full annual report on their child's work and progress. However, pupils' annual school reports do not always contain National Curriculum levels of attainment and the targets set in the reports are not always specific enough to give clear guidance on what pupils need to do next in order to improve.
46. The school takes care to schedule meetings and events, including training days, at times which would be convenient for most parents and is continually reviewing ways in which it can encourage parental involvement. Heads of year and form tutors have good relationships with parents and contact them quickly if a pupil is experiencing problems. Parents are consulted about relevant school matters, such as the recent changes in timing of the school day. The school encourages them to contact the school without delay if they have any concerns about their child.
47. The school has developed some good partnerships with the community, which make a significant difference to pupils' personal development and, in many cases, to their academic goals and aspirations. For example, the Preston Park Rangers contribute to the Year 8 citizenship programme, and pupils from Year 11 take part in the Preston Youth Parliament. In partnership with the local football club, the school has developed a scheme to support pupils with poor literacy skills and a coaching programme to develop football and sports skills. Constructive partnerships with the local Education and Business Partnership have provided training for pupils as mentors and anti-bullying counsellors, as well as work experience placements for Year 10 pupils and longer term placements for pupils on the work-related

learning course. Other business partnerships, for example with Sainsburys, have benefited pupils on the Young Enterprise programme and those at risk of exclusion who attend the school's 'Compact Group'. Good relationships with the local police and fire services provide suitable contributions to the school's personal and social education programme.

48. Through the partnerships it has formed with other local schools as part of the 'Excellence Cluster', Moor Park has been able to offer pupils opportunities to take part in activities such as a dance workshop for the 'able and talented' and a mathematics challenge day. Close links with a feeder primary school have resulted in activities that have benefited both staff and pupils; staff from the physical education and music departments regularly teach pupils from the feeder primary schools and Year 5 and 6 pupils also attend events at Moor Park. Well-established relationships with two local special schools have resulted in several joint initiatives. For example, each week a group of pupils from one of the special schools visits Moor Park to take part in a design and technology lesson with a group of Year 7 pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good**.

Leadership is good by the headteacher and across the school as a whole. Governance and management are also good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision of how pupils can achieve and has set high expectations.
- Senior staff ensure that the school provides well for the needs of all pupils and strongly promote equality of opportunity.
- The school has developed very effective systems to review performance data of individuals and groups of pupils.
- Subject leadership is good overall, with particular strengths in English, modern foreign languages and religious education. The management of ICT, however, is unsatisfactory as there are weaknesses in the organisation and monitoring of performance.

### **Commentary**

49. The headteacher has been particularly successful in motivating staff and gaining commitment from the school community, parents and governors to improving provision and setting high standards of achievement for all pupils. This shared belief in what pupils can achieve is underpinned by an effective strategic plan, good curriculum provision and strong pastoral care. Leadership strategies encourage staff to be involved in review and development so there is a good sense of ownership of improvements throughout the school. Leadership and management are much stronger now than at the previous inspection.
50. A particularly strong feature of the work of the school is the system of self-evaluation and monitoring of provision. This three-tier system of individual performance management, thematic surveys and departmental reviews gives senior staff a very clear picture of the quality of provision. Subject leaders are required to produce action plans following review so that areas for development are tackled promptly. In addition the school has developed comprehensive systems to monitor the impact of this provision on pupil performance. Teachers monitor and record very well how pupils are achieving and analyses are produced for individuals and groups of pupils, for example boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs or those from different heritage groups. The information produced is then used to guide departmental and school development plans so that resources are targeted effectively in support of the commitment to equality of opportunity.
51. Leadership of subject and pastoral teams is good overall. Leaders have a strong commitment to improvement so that all pupils achieve as well as they can. Subject leaders are good role

models for effective teaching and learning. They provide support and guidance for colleagues and develop effective teams. There are, however, weaknesses in the management of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils do not have the opportunities they should have to develop their ICT skills and use them in other subjects. Teachers have neither identified what skills will be taught or used in specific subjects, nor how much time will be given to the ICT work.

52. Governance is good. The governing body is well organised and fulfils its statutory duties well. Governors are well informed about the work of the school through regular reports, and they obtain first-hand information by visits to the school and links to departments. There is an experienced governor attached to the special educational needs department. Plans and documentation are thorough and training needs for both specialist staff and subject teachers is good. Governors are confident in reviewing information and challenging progress, for example in the annual review of examination results. A very good Race Awareness Policy has been developed. Its implementation is monitored well and the governors are aware of how different ethnic groups within school perform. Their strategies for improvement are informed by their policy. Financial management is good. Staff make good use of additional grants available to the school to support teaching and learning. The school is rigorous in its use of best value principles and prudent in budget management so that there are satisfactory reserves, earmarked for refurbishment and curriculum development. At the time of the inspection, reserves were artificially high because funds for the recent completed building and refurbishment programme had not been debited from the school's accounts.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,006,284	Balance from previous year	234,050
Total expenditure	1,891,397	Balance carried forward to the next	348,937
Expenditure per pupil	3694		

*The figures for balances carried forward are artificially high because they include funds available for major capital expenditure, mainly new buildings, that has been allocated but not spent by March 2003.*

53. Staffing numbers and qualifications match curriculum requirements. Good provision is made to support newly qualified teachers in their induction year, teachers qualifying through the Graduate Teaching Programme and students in initial teacher training.
54. Improvement in achievement continues to be hindered by the low attainment of pupils when they enter the school, particularly their weak literacy skills. This affects their learning across many subjects. Assessment information shows that boys in particular are not achieving as well as they should be. Governors report that many families have very low expectations of what pupils should do and they do not see education as important, for example in ensuring regular attendance.

**CENTRE FOR SUPPORTING INCLUSION STRATEGIES**

The provision of this feature is **very good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The unit caters very well for pupils with a range of special educational needs.
- The unit is very successful in reintegrating pupils into mainstream school life.
- The leadership and management of this facility are very good.

## Commentary

55. Since April 2000 the school has provided extra support for pupils through the Inclusion Suite set up with the aid of the City of Preston Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme. In the three years of its existence the Inclusion Suite has steadily grown to include units supporting a wide range of special needs, many in the area of behaviour. The most recent addition to the suite is WING, a unit supported by EiC and staffed by a teacher and a learning support assistant. EiC have also financed the refurbishment and furnishing of the area. WING caters for 7 or 8 pupils in Years 7 to 9 and provides a very intense programme, mixing normal curriculum work with coping strategies and building self-esteem. WING, having opened in September 2003, currently has four pupils. A lesson seen in WING demonstrated the skills of the teachers in diagnosing pupils' particular needs and addressing them through patience, skill and high expectation. Reintegration is a major part of WING's work and flexibility is built into the system to encourage pupils back into mainstream classes. It appears to be an effective part of a very effective overall provision for younger pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties.
56. The area of the Inclusion Suite forms a central part of the school and has been adapted to form a useful and inviting centre for pupils for whom mainstream classes are not always appropriate. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 the Compact Club helps to motivate and support pupils who have become disengaged from school activities and may have a poor attendance record. The Club's activities can provide opportunities for national accreditation and is affiliated to the ASDAN course. It has a very positive influence on pupils' citizenship skills through involvement in community-based projects. In one observed 'club' lesson, pupils were eagerly involved in activities related to Children in Need. Levels of attainment were not high but the pupils achieved very well because of the very good teaching and the high levels of pupil involvement. One boy took pleasure in relating how he helped young pupils in a local special school. The lesson gave pupils opportunities to work independently and use ICT to improve their research and presentational skills. The Inclusion Suite quite clearly has a very positive influence on those pupils who are referred. Self-esteem and confidence is high. The Inclusion Suite also provides useful accommodation for some small withdrawal groups; pupils who have been identified from national tests as Level 3 or lower. They receive half-hour sessions once or twice a week, depending on their literacy needs. A long established part of inclusion at Moor Park is the SERF unit for hearing impaired pupils. At present there are five pupils benefiting from specialist help and, though most are supported in class, a small unit enables pupils to be withdrawn for extra help. This was seen in a lesson in which two pupils, with different levels of hearing loss, received good specialist teaching and benefited from using useful, if old, ICT facilities. The Inclusion Suite uses a wide range of outside agencies and among them is the Pupil Mentor, who spends 23 hours in the suite and is of particular help in the Compact Club.
57. The leadership and management of this provision are very good. The head of the Inclusion Suite has long experience in special schools and has used it well in establishing a very effective unit that clearly identifies pupils' needs and supports them very well. The Inclusion Suite monitors the progress of its pupils closely. Development plans are thorough and each of the suites' sections has clear aims and provides pupils with the support necessary to make good progress. Teachers are expert and committed and able to maintain the high standards already set.

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

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

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Pupils' achievement in Years 7, 8 and 9 is very good.
- The curriculum is very good and meets the needs of all pupils.
- Assessment is very good and helps pupils to improve their work, but moderation procedures need to be formalised in Years 7, 8 and 9.

##### **Commentary.**

58. In national tests in 2003, standards for Year 9 pupils were broadly average when compared to all schools, but were very high when compared to similar schools based on prior attainment. Indeed, on this measure, the results were in the top five per cent nationally. This is indicative of very good achievement. Girls do better than boys. Over the last four years, girls' performance has been improving faster than the national average for girls, and that of boys has been improving faster than the national average for boys. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, standards were well below average, though the girls' performance was broadly in line with the national average. Boys did significantly less well. When compared with similar schools, however, pupils' performance is well above average and the school's value-added data shows that pupils achieved well, with many gaining better grades than predicted based on their prior attainment. In the English literature examination, the proportion of those gaining grades A\* to C is significantly lower than the national average. Boys do less well than girls. A strength of provision is the increasing numbers being entered for GCSE English literature; numbers are now higher than at the time of the last inspection.
59. For present pupils, attainment in English is very low on entry to the school, but all make very good progress in Years 7, 8 and 9, until they reach standards which are broadly average; achievement is very good. Standards for girls, especially those from an Asian heritage, are higher than those attained by boys. By Year 9, pupils listen intently to the teacher and each other. In their study of the slaying of the Minotaur, they prepared questions to ask Theseus, working effectively in pairs and small groups and playing the parts of hero and interviewer. Pupils volunteer to read aloud, which they do clearly and expressively. Pupils have tackled a range of texts, including Shakespeare, and are capable of commenting on content and style. Higher attaining pupils are developing effective analytical skills. Pupils' writing is lively and, after drafting, substantially accurate. The best written work is written to good length, with a clear sense of audience. Their guides to Shakespeare and individual school prospectuses show good and striking use of ICT.
60. Standards in Year 11 are below average, but given their prior attainment, which was particularly low on entry to the school, their achievement on the GCSE English language course is good overall, though satisfactory for some disaffected boys. Standards look set to rise further, particularly in English literature. Pupils in Year 10 are only a little way into their course, but their rapidly developing skills of oral collaboration and annotation are helping them to deepen their analysis of a range of demanding texts; an improvement also apparent to a lesser extent in

Year 11. Lower attainers learn key skills including ICT and, when they attend school regularly, they achieve as well as their peers.

61. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In Years 7, 8 and 9 it is very good and pupils achieve particularly well in Years 7, 8 and 9 because they are eager to learn and respond very well to lessons based on the National Literacy Strategy, which demands much of them. Starter activities increase their vocabulary and improve the accuracy of their spelling. Teachers' clear objectives help pupils to know what is expected of them and very good assessment techniques enhance the learning of most pupils. Lessons are carefully planned and proceed at a rapid, but suitable, pace, and are conducted with energy and rigour. In Years 10 and 11, there is some very good teaching based on expert knowledge of the subject and of GCSE requirements, to which pupils respond very well. They readily engage in the tasks with a determination to succeed. Across the school, teachers have a good awareness of pupils' progress and manage their lessons accordingly. Very good, purposeful relationships create a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils with special needs are well known to teachers, are fully included in the lessons and achieve as well as their peers, as do the pupils who do not have English as their mother tongue.
62. The department is very well led. The head of department is dedicated to the highest possible standards and has a clear vision of how these can be obtained. He has shared this with his staff and has welded them into a highly effective and like-minded team. His support for teaching has been a significant strength. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good, with standards improving significantly. Over time, the proportion of pupils gaining A\* - C grades has doubled. The curriculum has been improved and now provides, besides a good measure of enrichment, an accredited and valuable course for all pupils. As a result nobody who continues to attend school leaves without a qualification in English. The summer school is a valuable feature of provision for able and talented pupils. Assessment is very good, despite moderation procedures that have yet to be fully formalised in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils have helpful targets to work towards, and marking leaves pupils in no doubt as to what they must do to improve.

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

63. Provision for language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory, though still incomplete. There is a cross-curricular portfolio, which is used as a benchmark for standards that support the continued strategies introduced in the last inspection. All heads of department have a subject specific file. The current focus is to improve pupils' writing and is in line with current national initiatives. Work from all departments has been sampled and areas for improvement had been identified. National Literacy Strategy techniques have been the focus of recent training for all staff. Monitoring of provision has yet to take place and standards of literacy still vary across the departments.
64. Literacy is well promoted in English, science and mathematics. Pupils listen carefully in music and comment on what they hear. There is a strong literacy policy in geography. Standards of writing are improving in religious education as pupils learn specialist vocabulary and have opportunities to use writing frames, but learning is not yet well reinforced, so pupils do not do as well as they could. Little attention is paid to correct writing in ICT. Standards of writing are low in history. The school acknowledges that some pupils need help to read the simple learning materials put before them in lessons. Paired reading, using selected pupils from Year 11, assisted independent reading in registration periods and help for parents who wish to improve their child's reading are currently provided and are helping to improve standards.

### **French**

Provision in French is **good**.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership and management are providing a very good role model for a committed team.
- The use of French by teachers to conduct lessons helps learning, but pupils should be encouraged more to develop their own oral skills.
- The effective use of the literacy strategy is helping to raise standards of written work.
- Assessment data are used well as a tool to improve standards by setting realistic targets.

## Commentary

65. In the 2002 GCSE French examination standards were below average overall but the proportion of pupils gaining A\* - C grades was broadly average when compared to all schools nationally. Results in 2003 were similar to those in 2002. In 2002 their performance in French was better than in some of the other subjects that these pupils took. Most pupils entered for the examination were girls. Very few boys took French, so no national comparisons in results can take place. The school's value-added data show that pupils performed better than expected based on their prior attainment. This represents good achievement.
66. French is new to the majority of pupils on entry. From lesson observation and work scrutiny, standards in Years 7 to 9 overall are below average, but pupils achieve well. A major strength is the use of the literacy strategy, which is having a positive affect on achievement in writing. Pupils understand how the language works and most pupils write accurately. Work is graded according to ability; this allows the higher attainers to extend their writing and be creative and imaginative. Lower attainers, pupils with special educational needs and those whose mother tongue is not English achieve well, as a result of good teaching strategies and support. The spoken language is readily understood, but many pupils are lacking in confidence, even though there is whole class repetition to ensure good fluency and intonation. Some pupils did say. "J'ai fini", or ask permission to do things using French. Group and pair work are enjoyed and further opportunities to use spoken French would enhance oral skills.
67. In Years 10 and 11, standards in lessons and work seen are average and pupils achieve well. Numbers studying French tend to be small and are often higher attaining girls. This skewed intake is reflected in the pupils' achievement. Listening skills are well developed. Examination techniques are constantly reinforced in all four skills as a reminder of what to pick out and how to develop an answer in order to gain high marks. Pupils are made to think for themselves, as teachers use questions effectively to tease out information. Questions are effectively used to ensure that pupils in speaking tasks give full answers, but some pupils are reluctant to speak voluntarily. Writing, particularly for higher attainers, is a strength, as a result of the way work is sequenced to build up a topic.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Some good and very good teaching was seen, but teaching is not without weaknesses. Lesson planning and sequencing of activities are good and ensure that everyone is motivated. Work is challenging and teachers have high expectations, which result in good learning; no time is wasted. In a recap session, Year 7 pupils demonstrated their numeracy skills as they did a count down to the bell. High numbers were reached. Pupils enjoy French and are keen to learn more. The lunchtime French club was well attended and the enthusiasm of both teachers and pupils was obvious. Marking of work is effective and pupils know how to improve through regular target setting and self-assessment. Support teachers play a very important part in the department, both in planning and in class support. All teachers are enthusiastic about their work and this impacts on the pupils. Weaknesses occur, however, where there is a lack of pace and challenge, which results in patchy learning.
69. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is good strategic planning, with a future aim to introduce a second foreign language and community languages. Course have been evaluated and chosen to suit all needs. Lessons are regularly monitored and this

contributes to the quality of teaching. Very good use is made of assessment data to inform teachers and pupils of standards and measures are taken using this information to improve standards at all levels further. Since the last inspection there has been good and sustained improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Years 9 and 11 exceed those of similar schools.
- The quality of teaching is good and contributes well to pupils' good achievement.
- Leadership is good and provision has improved since the last inspection.
- The implementation of the numeracy strategy does not enhance pupils' numeracy skills consistently enough in Years 7 to 9.
- The support of learning through the use of ICT is underdeveloped.
- The collection of assessment data and the tracking of pupils' progress are good but information is not used to plan appropriate work for the whole range of pupils in classes.

### **Commentary**

70. The 2003 national test results at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average, but were at least average when compared to similar schools. Given their very low levels of attainment on entry, the achievement of these pupils is good. GCSE results in 2003 were also well below average, but the school's value added data indicate that most did better than expected given their prior attainment; these pupils achieved well. Present pupils in Years 9 and 11 entered the school with well below average standards but, based on their present work, standards are below average, representing good achievement over time. Standards are rising because of the effectiveness of the school's monitoring procedures, but limited literacy skills, especially for some white British boys in Years 10 and 11, remain an obstacle to further improvements. The effective support provided for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language contributes well to this. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, when attainment in Year 9 was very low. Higher attaining pupils with average attainment in Year 9 now, for example, have a sound understanding of percentages and can calculate simple percentage increases and decreases, though they cannot yet do this using multiplying factors. They also use algebraic rules to develop linear sequences, while lower attaining pupils add fractions with the same denominator accurately. Average attainers in Year 11 have a clear understanding of the relative sizes of positive and negative numbers but are not secure using negative numbers in calculations or, for example, when solving simultaneous equations.
71. Two full time teachers were absent because of illness during the inspection, but the lessons observed and the scrutiny of work indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is good and the standard noted in the previous inspection has been maintained. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and lessons are appropriately planned and organised. They explain new work clearly and this is particularly effective in those lessons where ICT is used. In a Year 8 lesson the teacher started the lesson by showing pupils a range of vocabulary related to probability, which focused pupils' attention well at the start of the lesson. In a Year 11 revision lesson the use of a graphic pad enabled the teacher to concentrate and teach one group of pupils in the class, while others continued with a different topic. However pupils' use of ICT is limited to GCSE coursework and some practice for this in Years 7 to 9. Teachers support pupils' literacy development satisfactorily by displaying and clarifying lesson objectives, displaying key words and, occasionally, rectifying incorrect spellings in pupils' exercise books.

72. Suitable lesson planning has been established, including lessons having three distinct phases involving a warm-up session, a main development session and a conclusion, though teachers do not use the mental/oral starter sufficiently to rehearse the numeracy skills required in the main part of lessons or to extend skills and techniques in general. This has an impact on pupils' pace of work and the support they consequently need. Opportunities are also missed to consolidate learning in review sessions. Techniques that would enable teachers to assess the understanding of the whole range of pupils before they start individual work are limited. Teachers and teaching assistants support and encourage pupils well, however, and pupils generally work hard and respond well to the good challenge presented in the majority of lessons.
73. Leadership is good and the improvement in the curriculum provision, effective assessment analysis and monitoring of teaching and learning have contributed well to pupils' good achievement over time. Pupils in Year 7 who do not reach Level 4 in national tests are now placed on a 'springboard' scheme, whereby extra help is offered. Good analysis of assessment data has enabled the school to recognise the relative weak achievement of some white British boys so that teachers can address their needs in lessons. However, assessment overall is satisfactory as it is not used to plan appropriate work for the range of pupils in each class and, though pupils are aware of what level they are working towards, they are not sufficiently clear about what they have to do to improve. Overall there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

74. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented but effective strategies for promoting numeracy are variable. Recent staff training has increased awareness of numeracy across all subjects and there are examples of good practice evident. In science lessons, mathematical skills are reinforced well, particularly with lower attaining pupils, where data is represented graphically and analysed. In business studies, however, the low numeracy skills of some pupils impede learning and depress standards. Overall the use and support of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. However, the school has not mapped out the mathematical needs of different subject areas to ensure that pupils have the required skills at the relevant times, or identified areas of the curriculum where numeracy skills could be reinforced.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Accommodation has recently improved significantly and is contributing well to the atmosphere for learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the extra support they are offered.
- Pupils take great pride in their work and their standards of presentation are very high.
- Overall learning would improve if pupils were encouraged to work with more independence.
- The use of ICT as a means of enhancing and enlivening learning must be given more priority.

#### **Commentary**

75. Results for Year 9 pupils in 2003 were well below average when compared to all schools nationally, but were average when compared to similar schools based on prior levels of attainment. This outcome was expected following a long-term absence within the department during the 2002/03 academic year. Given the pupils' well below average standards on entry to the school, this outcome represents satisfactory achievement. Moreover, Year 9 results have shown a continual improvement since 1999 and the trend in the school's average points score

in science is above the national trend. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations for both boys and girls in Year 11 were well below average. When compared with similar schools the results were well above average. The school's own value-added data shows that overall, pupils did broadly as expected based on prior attainment, representing satisfactory achievement. The average points scored per pupil in science have gradually improved since 1998. Girls' and boys' results show no significant difference over this period.

76. For present pupils, standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average. Improvement over recent years is because of improved staffing. This represents satisfactory achievement overall, as standards on entry to the school were well below average. Pupils in Year 9 showed a good understanding of the principle of moments. They successfully completed calculations of the moments of force about a point, thus reinforcing their numeracy skills. Pupils are well behaved and work efficiently and co-operatively within the laboratory. Standards are below average in Year 11, but achievement is good as these pupils started their GCSE courses with standards that were well below average. A group of lower attaining pupils produced good results in a distance/time experiment. There was a pleasant working relationship between pupils, and between pupils and staff.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In Years 7, 8 and 9 it is satisfactory, but it is good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers demonstrated their knowledge, planning ability and enthusiasm to motivate pupils. Clear objectives and key words were a feature of the lessons, continually reinforcing pupils' literacy skills. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the support of permanently attached learning assistants. Teaching and learning are better on the GCSE course because the assessment and target grade system is well established, pupils are aware of the requirements for improvement and this enhances their learning. The efficient support given within practical lessons by the science technician provides an additional impact on learning. For teaching and learning to improve further, more pace needs to be injected into some lessons and pupils should be offered more opportunities to work independently or collaboratively. At present in too many of the lessons observed, learning was too teacher dependent.. ICT should also be deployed more effectively and more frequently as a means of enhancing and enlivening learning.
78. The quality of curriculum leadership is good. With a complete complement of staff, including two newly qualified members, the department demonstrates a pleasant working relationship. Overall, good progress has been made since the last inspection. The exception is the use of ICT, which remains undeveloped. The existing laboratories, together with the recently refurbished laboratories, provide very good accommodation. A rich and stimulating environment for learning is provided by attractive displays of pupils' work, key words and scientific information.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards and achievement are constrained because of unsatisfactory teaching, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Attainment and achievement are further constrained because the work set is not adequately graded according to pupils' needs.
- Unsatisfactory management is leading to lower than expected standards.

### **Commentary**

79. Pupils enter the school with differing experiences in their use of ICT but overall their standards are below average. The results of teacher assessment in Year 9 are above average but these results are not supported by inspection evidence. Standards seen in the inspection were below

average for the end of Year 9. Results at GCSE in 2003 were below average but in line with other results obtained by the school.

80. The overall achievement of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 is unsatisfactory. Insufficient time and a lack of continuity, resulting from the subject being taught as part of a carousel with design and technology, are factors limiting the progress pupils make. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are below average, but the achievement of these pupils, who are taking accredited courses such as GCSE and ASDAN, is satisfactory given their levels of prior attainment.
81. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9, but it is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In lessons observed in Years 7, 8 and 9, teaching and learning were satisfactory but a detailed analysis of pupils' work showed many shortcomings in teaching and learning and strongly indicated much unsatisfactory practice. A particular weakness identified is that teaching materials are not adapted to match the abilities of pupils or the time available and there is no coherent scheme of work. Whilst higher attaining pupils can produce good presentations using computers and digital technology, insufficient attention is given to identifying the skills that pupils are meant to learn. This results in work of a poor quality, which is disorganised and poorly presented with little attention given to titles, dates, spelling or grammar. Failure to consolidate learning means that many pupils are constantly relearning basic skills and are not confident or competent in using software. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning were better; in some lessons observed standards were good. Pupils taking examinations are encouraged and are able to work independently. They are set clear targets and are aware of what they have to do to improve. Their work is routinely and accurately assessed and they are able to complete the assigned examination work in relation to their abilities.
82. Whilst aspects of management are satisfactory, overall leadership of ICT is unsatisfactory and improvements since the last inspection have been unsatisfactory overall. Regular meetings are held and relationships are good. Support staff are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and used well to help pupils with SEN and pupils with English as an additional language. There is, however, no coherent scheme of work. Planning and organisation are weak and are not sufficiently focused on the limited time allocated to ICT. There is some monitoring of teaching but no monitoring of pupils' work. There has been significant improvement in the provision of resources and of computers to pupils is now above average. Accredited courses have been introduced in Years 10 and 11. Technical and support structures have been put in place.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

83. The provision for cross-curricular ICT is unsatisfactory. Whilst the senior management of the school are committed to improving the provision of ICT and this has resulted in a significant improvement in resources, network support and training and support for staff, these improvements have yet to impact on the quality of teaching and learning. There is evidence of some good practice, particularly in music and design and technology in Years 7,8 and 9 and business studies at GCSE. In English, geography, modern foreign languages, physical education and art and design in Years 10 and 11, the use of ICT is satisfactory. However, in mathematics, science, history and religious education there is little use of ICT and provision is unsatisfactory. The monitoring of the provision and the overall use of ICT across all subjects of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Moreover, there is no monitoring of pupils' progress across subjects in their use of ICT.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- More settled staffing is leading to better quality teaching and achievement is improving.
- Assessment procedures are improving, but moderation of work needs refining.
- The department's ability to cater for the needs of all pupils has improved.
- Recruitment strategies need improving to ensure that more higher attaining pupils are attracted to the subject in Years 10 and 11.
- Opportunities for fieldwork in Years 7, 8 and 9 are insufficient.

## Commentary

84. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were very low, but showed an improvement since 2002. Given the very low levels of prior attainment, the pupils' achievement was satisfactory. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection were higher, mainly because a more settled staffing situation now exists. Present GCSE pupils still commenced their course with well below average prior attainment, but standards are now below average, indicating that most pupils are now achieving well. Nevertheless, despite these improvements, pupils are not doing as well in geography as in other subjects and numbers choosing geography, especially higher attainers, are down. Many pupils also struggle with some of the concepts involved because of their limited literacy skills. This raises questions for the department to consider concerning image and recruitment.
85. In work seen in Years 7, 8 and 9 standards are below average but achievement is good. The pupils are gaining knowledge of basic geographical and number skills and many pupils are able to complete satisfactory mapwork exercises, even though their knowledge of places is not strong. Written skills are generally weak, but with carefully chosen materials, such as writing frames and worksheets, pupils of all abilities are able to attempt some extended and imaginative writing, as seen in a Year 8 letter-writing exercise about shanty towns. By Year 9 pupils are improving their enquiry skills and are able to use ICT skills to improve their work and graph the results of questionnaires. Major drawbacks to rapid progress are the very low literacy skills of many pupils and the inability to work independently. In addition, development of geography skills is hindered by lack of opportunities for fieldwork. Most work has to be carefully guided by the teacher. There is little difference in the quality of work in class of boys and girls, and the many pupils with special educational needs receive very high levels of support, enabling them to achieve to the best of their ability. In Years 10 and 11 standards are below average but higher attainers are able to reach their potential and gain a good understanding of geographical processes and patterns. Overall, achievement is good. There are some good examples, mainly by Asian pupils, of coursework involving the testing of hypotheses, gathering and analysing data and decision-making, based on fieldwork in Lancaster. These pupils are in the minority and most are lacking the skills, literacy levels and retention to do well in an examination situation.
86. As staffing is now more settled, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Well planned lessons allow teachers to show their knowledge and a variety of activities helps pupils stay on task and achieve well. Teachers are energetic and pursue attainable objectives. There is high expectation of pupils' involvement and behaviour and good reinforcement of knowledge and understanding, through questioning that involves everyone in the work. The very low literacy and knowledge levels are confronted with very appropriate, specially prepared materials and especially a very strong emphasis on basic writing skills and use of proper vocabulary. Teachers are beginning to use assessment well and targets are set. Pupils know how well they are doing, but more extensive moderation of levels is needed. The friendly, firm approach to lessons, the humour and the good relationships all help to encourage an environment in which many pupils with low ability and self-esteem can improve their learning. No pupil is neglected or ignored and as a result behaviour is good and pupils generally display positive attitudes. The school and department are well aware of the low standards that have existed for some time and have created a faculty structure to help improve matters. Leadership and management are good and improving and revised schemes of work, development plans, and a stable staff are

already having a positive effect on standards, particularly in Year 9. The team has the ability to sustain progress and maintain the satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, achieve well because of the additional support provided and careful lesson planning.
- Most teaching is good or better and provides a wide range of activities to help pupils to learn but occasionally teaching fails to capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
- The department has been slow to introduce ICT into teaching and learning.

### Commentary

87. In 2003, teacher assessments of pupils in Year 9 showed that standards were well below average. Girls, particularly those of Asian heritage, reached much higher standards than boys. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were very low and had declined from 2002. These results are broadly similar to those in the last inspection report for pupils in Year 9 but show a decline in standards of pupils in Year 11.
88. Standards are well below average when pupils enter the school. Inspection evidence shows that standards now are better than in previous test and assessments when there were problems in regular attendance and completion of coursework. Standards of work seen in Years 7, 8 and 9 are below average but improving, because of better monitoring. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the topics they have studied and make relevant points in discussion, for example about the problems of the Roman Empire and the death of Julius Caesar, but they have difficulty in expressing their knowledge and understanding in written work. Pupils in Year 10 are drawn from a higher attaining group and standards seen were broadly average. In Year 11 the group is from a wider background and standards are below average. Most Year 11 pupils know the basic facts about the life of American Indians but only higher attaining pupils could recognise bias in primary sources.
89. Pupils' achievement in history is good overall. Inspection evidence shows that by Year 9 pupils have achieved well from their low starting point. Achievement is also good in Year 10, and noticeably better than in Year 11, where it is satisfactory. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, some pupils benefit from good and very good teaching, while others have a more pedestrian and less challenging experience that reduces achievement. There are occasional unsatisfactory lessons that lead to unsatisfactory learning, but where the teaching is good and better, pupils learn well because they are challenged and enthused. Planning in the better lessons meets the needs of the pupils well, and the lessons feature a variety of tasks that help to ensure that pupils of all abilities are given tasks that they can do and where their learning is enhanced. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well because of the additional support provided and careful lesson planning.
90. Leadership and management are now good following recent restructuring and strategies are being deployed to tackle the isolated incidents of unsatisfactory teaching. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall, with much more rapid improvements recently. The revised scheme of work identifies a more relevant curriculum, opportunities to develop literacy skills and more effective opportunities for assessment and target setting so that pupils know what they have to do to improve. The curriculum and teaching methods provide good support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are, however, few opportunities for pupils to experience ICT in teaching and learning and this remains a weakness.

## Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department provides strong leadership, is a good role model and has introduced many improvements in a short time.
- Teaching and learning are good, with particular strengths in Years 10 and 11, but some pupils have different experiences where teachers do not have the same high quality subject expertise and teaching strategies.
- The department has been slow to introduce ICT into teaching and learning and pupils have not had access to the full range of ICT resources and learning activities.

### Commentary

91. Inspection evidence shows standards to be broadly average in Years 9 and 11, and better than recent examination results would suggest. GCSE results in 2002 were well below average and results in 2003 were similar. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a secure knowledge of the features of major world religions and an appreciation that religious beliefs affect the decisions people make about their life. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are developing an understanding of moral issues and they use religious texts in evidence of their views. Pupils demonstrate their knowledge and understanding well in discussion but have difficulty in expressing this in notes or extended writing because of weak literacy skills. Standards are much the same as those seen during the last inspection.
92. When pupils enter the school their standards are well below average and they have had very variable experiences of religious education. The head of department brings very strong leadership and has ensured that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. This, together with good teaching and additional support for pupils with special educational needs, means that pupils' achievements are now good in all years for both boys and girls. Pupils respond positively to well planned teaching that provides challenge, is interesting and encourages self-initiative and self-discipline so that learning is good throughout the school. There are a few lessons where teaching and learning are affected by a lack of specialist teaching, but in most lessons good quality teaching leads to high expectations and good quality learning.

### Example of outstanding practice

**In a Year 11 mixed ability non examination group, high expectations, careful planning and interesting tasks provided challenge and very effectively demonstrated the difficulty of making moral decisions in line with religious beliefs.** The lesson centred round people's attitudes to euthanasia and arguments for and against in religious texts. An initial brainstorm was a very effective recap of the previous introductory lesson and quickly followed by pair work to interpret and prioritise arguments for and against euthanasia. In the subsequent whole-class session the teacher picked up views, demanded a clear exposition, challenged for further reasons and made links to religious beliefs and contemporary examples from the media. To put this information into context, the teacher then provided five case studies of difficult situations, for each of which pupils had to physically move to stations labelled agree, disagree, not sure. After each movement the teacher demanded a rationale for the decision, "no opinion without a reason please!" Needless to say there were a variety of views for and against and the activity graphically demonstrated the difficulty of moral decisions. Higher attaining pupils realised that texts could sometimes be used both for and against and all pupils understood that moral decisions are difficult, with or without religious beliefs.

93. The department has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection, with more rapid improvements recently since the new head of department was appointed. Pupils now benefit from a revised curriculum, enhanced resources and effective assessment procedures, so that they know what they have to do to improve. There is a continuing emphasis on developing



literacy skills but the use of ICT remains underdeveloped. Overall, the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of ICT and computer-aided design is good in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Good assessment and monitoring of work in Years 10 and 11 help pupils' achievement.
- Assessment and its use to help pupils improve are underdeveloped in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Coverage of systems and control work is unsatisfactory in all years.

#### Commentary

94. Standards are below average both in terms of teacher assessments for Year 9 and examination results for Year 11 pupils. GCSE results were well below the national average for the higher grades in 2003 with significant underachievement in textiles and graphics groups. The overall pass rate improved from 2002 and, though below the national average, indicates satisfactory achievement overall. Girls' achievement was much better than that of boys. Standards seen in lessons indicate further improvement. Year 8 work in computer-aided design and ICT is broadly average. Practical work in product design and resistant materials in Year 10 is in line with expectations for this stage of the course and achievement is good. Whilst pupils make use of specialist language and terminology their written work and design skills are the weaker aspect of their work.
95. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 9 are below average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have very little experience of technology skills and processes when they join the school in Year 7 and standards are well below average. From this low base they achieve satisfactorily in the presence of teaching that has improved since the previous inspection. Over Years 7 to 9, their understanding of the design process improves. Pupils apply practical skills effectively to a range of tasks and materials that include textiles and food. They lack experience of systems and control work, and knowledge and understanding here are unsatisfactory. Pupils make regular use of ICT to support other aspects of their learning and here they achieve well. Their understanding of computer-aided manufacture in particular is developed effectively in Year 8 work. Good support in lessons enables pupils with special educational needs to make similar progress to other pupils.
96. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 11 are below average and achievement is satisfactory. Current practical work in resistant materials and product design in Year 10 and 11 indicates pupils achieving satisfactorily with the best achievement in Year 10. Standards overall, especially for design presentation and research work, are below average. Pupils make satisfactory use of ICT to present their work and for research. Pupils in Year 11, following the food technology course, are making satisfactory progress now but their achievement and standards over time have been adversely affected by staff absence. Higher attainers show initiative in the development of their coursework.
97. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory overall as a result of more systematic planning and resourcing of units of work to ensure essential knowledge and processes are taught properly. In Years 10 and 11 the monitoring of coursework is now good and to a consistent departmental framework. This provides pupils with regular information about progress and what to do to improve, which helps them - especially lower attainers - to make progress. Standards are improving as a result with better work evident in Year 10.

98. The head of department has been in post for two years and against a background of staffing changes and prolonged absence has provided good leadership of the department. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection although standards remain low. Management of improvements and development of the curriculum has been satisfactory overall. Improvements to assessment have been good in Years 10 and 11 but more work needs to be done in Years 7, 8 and 9. Specialist rooms are now well organised and maintained to provide a good learning environment and a well-qualified technician provides good support for practical work.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in ceramics are very high.
- Teaching is good and often very good and supports good learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and boys, in particular, achieve very well because of the high quality support and guidance.
- Target setting is used very effectively to challenge pupils and support learning in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment and tracking of progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 needs to be sharper.
- The use of ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9 is underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

99. Teacher assessment of attainment in Year 9 in 2003 show standards to be average and pupils achieving well given their prior attainment. In public examinations in 2002 the proportion of pupils reaching grade C or above was above the national average. Similar results were gained in 2003 and this continued the trend from previous years. Achievement overall was good, with boys, in particular, achieving very well in their ceramics work.
100. In work seen, standards are above average for the end of Year 9. Achievement is good. Pupils' art skills when they enter the school in Year 7 are well below average. In work seen pupils are achieving well from Year 7 to Year 9 in developing skills, knowledge and understanding of art. They use a range of media and in Year 9 begin to develop skills in ceramics. Support for pupils with special educational needs is very effective and enables these pupils to achieve as well as others. Pupils' use of computers for research is often good but overall the use of ICT to support learning is underdeveloped. Standards for the end of Year 11 are above average and achievement is good. In Year 10 pupils opt to follow painting and drawing, general art courses or a ceramics based course. Year 11 ceramics work developed from observations of natural forms is bold and imaginative. Pupils are achieving very well as a result of very good individual target setting and advice from the teacher. The refurbishment of one art room and changes in staffing have impacted on the progress of painting and drawing groups. They are now achieving well and making good progress with their coursework, building on their experiences from earlier years.
101. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Well-structured lessons develop skills and knowledge systematically. Opportunities to develop literacy skills are used within units of work. Where teaching is very good in ceramics, high expectations for work and challenging individual discussions promote confidence and high standards. Teachers have good specialist knowledge and manage and support pupils very well, which leads to positive attitudes to learning and good achievement by all groups of pupils.

102. The department leadership changed at the start of the current term. The head of department provides an excellent role model through teaching, high standards and a professional approach. In the short time in post and against a background of disruption because of refurbishment, leadership and management have been good. The new member of staff is well supported and ideas and expertise are being shared. Priorities for improvements to planning the content and sequence of work and assessment have been identified and action already taken. The need to develop further the use and resourcing of ICT is recognised. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## Music

The provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned lessons encourage pupils to learn well.
- Standards are rising in Years 7, 8 and 9 and there is good access to ICT, which further promotes learning.
- Better use of assessment data is needed as a means of raising standards.

### Commentary

103. In 2003, the Year 9 teacher assessments indicated that standards were below average. GCSE results for Year 11 pupils in 2003 were well below average. For almost a year there was no permanent music teacher and consequently standards dropped significantly and the achievement of many pupils was unsatisfactory. The present head of department has worked hard over the past year to raise the profile of music and there has been a big improvement in standards and interest in the subject throughout the school.
104. The standards seen during the inspection in Years 7, 8 and 9 were average overall. This represents good achievement because whilst a few pupils join the school with musical ability, the skills of the majority are underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are progressing well because of the very good support they receive from the teaching assistant attached to the department. The standards of pupils in Year 10 are below average at this early stage in the course but they achieve well. There is no GCSE group in Year 11 but a couple of pupils have lessons after school. Good and often very good teaching is a key factor in improving the quality of learning. The good attitudes and behaviour of pupils also support their learning. A growing number of pupils play instruments and sing: this adds value and contributes to their personal development.
105. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning is good, with many features that enhance pupils' learning. Lessons often begin with multimedia presentations to reinforce the objectives of the lesson. Pupils support each other in group work and regularly use computers for improvising and composing, which helps to raise standards further. Homework is given regularly and is placed on the school's intranet system. Lesson plans are also here and pupils can access them from the school library as well as from the computers in the music room. Although assessment takes place, pupils are not clear about their levels of attainment and how to use these to improve their work. There is good teaching in Year 10 that leads to a positive commitment from this small group of pupils. Since lessons are well planned, pupils are exposed to musical experiences that are helping to raise their standards of interest and learning. Some pupils have started to learn orchestral instruments and the work of the visiting teachers adds another dimension to pupils' musical understanding.
106. Good leadership inspires pupils to do well. Management is effective, as is seen from the increased development of music throughout the school and the growing number of musical events that are taking place. Judgements about improvement are difficult to make because of

the staffing issues that have dogged the department. Staffing is now more stable and the prospects for the future are now far brighter.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management is focused on raising standards.
- Some good teaching and learning, which is raising standards especially in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The lack of consistency in the quality of teaching is adversely affecting learning for some pupils.

### Commentary

107. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well below average and there was little improvement in 2003. This was because of pupils' weak literacy and other learning skills. Against standards on entry to Year 10, which were below average, this represents unsatisfactory achievement and is mainly because of issues relating to staffing. By the end of Year 9 standards are below national averages. Given the pupils' variable, but generally low standards on entry, this represents satisfactory achievement. Across all years the standard of girls' work is better than that of boys. In Years 10 and 11 some pupils follow a non-examination course in physical education. Their standards are below average.
108. In work seen in Years 7, 8 and 9 the impact of strategies introduced by the new acting head of department has been to produce good achievement. Pupils in health-related fitness lessons are now able to explain the difference between health and fitness using appropriate terminology. They can organise testing which measures strength, flexibility and speed. Standards in Years 10 and 11 in both GCSE and core physical education are below average and achievement is satisfactory. However, Year 10 girls' achievement is now good. There is a mixed picture in Years 10 and 11 as staff changes and changes in departmental management that took place at the start of the term begin to impact. The improvements seen during the inspection arise because the teachers are committed to raising standards, and the pupils, especially older girls, are developing good basic techniques and some individual learning skills. In basketball, for example, they are developing good knowledge and performance of the set shot. While pupils are able to observe and analyse performance they are less able to give feedback to other pupils.
109. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, though in some lessons the quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. In some lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject, ensure that pupils work in a safe environment and intervene when necessary so that pupils know what they have to do to improve. Strategies to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are now used well. Where learning is less effective teachers do not make pupils aware of what they are expected to achieve when working at their own level and, in some cases, move them on before they are ready to do so. In some Year 10 lessons pupils are engaged well in a variety of interesting and challenging activities, which motivates them and keeps them on task. In some other lessons pupils' attention is less focused on learning. They do not have good independent learning skills and so have difficulties when set tasks that involve them in taking responsibility for their own work. A large number of pupils enhance their performance in sport through a good extra-curricular programme.
110. Leadership and management are good. The new acting head of department has a clear vision for raising standards. She has introduced strategies and materials that support teachers. Standards are improving because the quality of teaching is improving and the monitoring of teaching and learning that is newly established will help to raise standards further. Assessment

systems and procedures are now in place. Analysis of this data should now take place to inform further curriculum development. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, with much ground having been covered since the new management structure was established.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The full integration of ICT into teaching and learning enhances pupils' research skills and their presentation of business documents.
- Good partnerships with business provide a valuable resource that enriches the quality of learning.
- Pupils' language, numerical and analytical skills need to be improved to attain the higher grades.
- Very good learning support helps pupils with special educational needs to progress.
- Better use of assessment and more constructive written feedback are needed to help pupils improve their work.

### **Commentary**

111. Over the previous three years, three different courses have been taught with varying results. 2003 results for the small number of pupils entered for the GNVQ Intermediate award were well below average; however, these results do not accurately reflect standards currently being achieved because a number of pupils left the school, and some left the area, without completing the course. The current Year 10 pupils are making satisfactory progress and standards of work seen for the current Year 11 pupils are average, representing satisfactory achievement in view of their attainment at the beginning of Year 10. Higher attainers produce work that is substantial, widely researched and very well written. They critically evaluate how real organisations respond to customer demand, competition, and environmental constraints, for example, and make valid suggestions for improved strategies. Lower attainers' work is more descriptive, over-dependent on the Internet, and has evidence of weaker language skills.
112. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The teachers' secure command of their subject and previous business experience ensure that pupils' business knowledge and understanding and use of key business terms are sound. Frequent testing and reviewing of learning produce the solid retention evident in pupils' mainly clear and accurate responses. This was confirmed by answers from a group of pupils, ranging in ability, to a set of pre-prepared questions of suitable difficulty. The good partnership with local businesses, work experience, and the full integration of ICT in lessons are good features which enable pupils to achieve a satisfactory balance of first-hand and second-hand research and to give business documents a professional finish. However, because lessons are task-oriented and teachers' lesson planning does not incorporate extension tasks, average and higher attaining pupils are not stretched sufficiently. Teachers need to revise their teaching methods to include more active and independent learning activities in lessons so that pupils can practise communication skills, share ideas, and solve problems. Very good learning support, in the form of a departmental learning assistant and lunchtime and after-school booster lessons, helps lower attainers to keep pace and pupils with special educational needs to progress well. This is a new course for the school and though oral feedback is adequate, more constructive written feedback is needed to help pupils improve their work. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and attendance is usually good. At present, retention is good.

113. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department's Young Enterprise initiative, its good business connections and work placements all help to give the new GCSE course in applied business a credible vocational context. This department was not included in the last inspection report, so no judgement on improvement can be made.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching has resulted in good learning and good achievement by Year 9 and Year 11.
- Better monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is needed to ensure consistently high standards across the programme.
- The school's ambitious active citizenship programme makes a very good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Assessment and marking need to be improved further for clearer reporting to parents about their children's progress.
- Good planning and very good resources for this new subject have ensured full coverage of the programmes of study.

### **Commentary**

114. Standards of the current Year 9 and Year 11 pupils' work are average, which represents good achievement for boys and girls equally, of all backgrounds and ability. They have done well to reach the expected standard for this subject so early in its introduction. In Year 9, higher attainers write articulately and in detail about world poverty, for example, drawing intelligent comparisons with Western living conditions and making an effective case for change to the UN. Lower attainers' work on European Market member countries, for example, is descriptive rather than analytical and contains errors in punctuation, spelling and expression. By Year 11, higher attainers' arguments, about the gene revolution, for example, are cogent, sophisticated and very well illustrated. Lower attainers' work, about war in Iraq, lacks objectivity and depth, and is less articulate.

115. Teaching and learning overall are good though there is some teaching which is not good enough and which could be improved by rigorous monitoring of lessons. Teachers generally prepare lessons well and in suitable detail and depth for a National Curriculum subject. Pupils, therefore, have sufficient knowledge and understanding to discuss issues fully, both orally and in writing, and are encouraged to research further. They make judgements and defend them. Most teachers have high expectations and teach at a brisk pace, using a wide range of active and independent learning activities. As a result, pupils are enthusiastically engaged, have good attitudes to the subject and work hard. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and achieve well. An impressive programme for active citizenship has been embedded systematically across all years and includes a recycling project with local park rangers, an anti-racist project at the local football club, local youth parliament work and the setting up of a school Amnesty International group. One very good lesson seen involved Year 7 pupils, who, for an afternoon, took responsibility for the learning in design and technology of a group of pupils from a local school for the physically disabled. By the end of the lesson, the Year 7 pupils had gained considerable insight into the disabled pupils' world and their initial oral evaluations were clear evidence of good personal and social development.

116. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the planning and implementation of citizenship have been commendable. It has a high profile with pupils and all three strands of the programmes of study are in place and working. Now, consolidation is needed. In particular,

Year 11 provision needs to be strengthened and assessment, including the recording of pupils' achievements in active citizenship, needs to be refined for greater consistency. At present, there is careful monitoring of assessment and the curriculum. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is needed to ensure consistently high standards across the programme. This is the most important matter for improvement.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3