

INSPECTION REPORT

MURRAY PARK FOUNDATION SCHOOL

Mickleover

Derby

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 112991

Headteacher: Mr E R Baker

Lead inspector: Mrs S Simper

Dates of inspection: 24 - 28 November 2003

Inspection number: 258710

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Foundation
Age range of students: 11 – 16
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 1089

School address: Murray Road
Mickleover
Derby
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Telephone number: 01332 515921
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr D Kerwood

Date of previous inspection: 20th October 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Murray Park Foundation School is a mixed comprehensive school providing full-time education for students aged 11 to 16 and an extensive range of community education activities. The school is part of an Excellence in Cities cluster; has Investor in People status and received a School Achievement Award in 2000 and a Royal Horticultural Society Judges Special Award in 2003. There are 568 boys and 521 girls on roll. The school mainly serves two very contrasting areas in an outer city area of Derby. About 62 per cent of students come from an area of significant social and economic disadvantage and 36 per cent are drawn from an area of much greater affluence. Thirteen per cent of students have free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Ninety-two per cent of students are of white British heritage, 1.8 per cent are of mixed heritage, 1.9 per cent of Asian heritage, and there are small numbers of students of Black and Chinese background. At 1.6 per cent, the proportion of students with home language believed not to be English is below average. The school admits students of all abilities. Overall attainment on entry is above the national average but has been moving closer to average over time. The proportion of students on the register of special educational needs is below average but the proportion of students with statements is above average. Twenty-three students left the school during the school year and 34 joined which was average mobility for the size of school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12970	Sue Simper	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
9865	Susan Howley	Lay inspector	
32851	Christine Davison	Team inspector	Mathematics
18228	David Gill	Team inspector	English
30294	David Gower	Team inspector	Science
18834	Sharon Green	Team inspector	Music
7202	Elizabeth Hale	Team inspector	History and citizenship
32591	Gillian Harrison	Team inspector	Physical education
11684	Frances LePla	Team inspector	Religious education
15607	Gerry Lewis	Team inspector	Special educational needs
7431	Michael Lewis	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
3691	Philip Mason	Team inspector	Design and technology
8119	David Milham	Team inspector	Information and communication technology [ICT]
20533	David Rogers	Team inspector	Art and design
12957	John Stout	Team inspector	Geography

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Students are well cared for. Teaching, learning and the way the school is led and managed are satisfactory. Students now in the school are making satisfactory progress. Parents and students express satisfaction with the education provided. The value for money provided by the school is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good provision for students' care, welfare and guidance;
- Very good extra-curricular and out-of-school learning opportunities;
- Standards of achievement in drama, music and information and communication technology (ICT);
- Very good financial management to achieve the best value services for the school;
- Quality of links with the community and other schools;
- Very good procedures to promote good attendance;
- The achievement of students in GCSE examinations compared to similar schools is too low;
- Aspects of management including monitoring and evaluation are less well developed than found in many schools;
- Provision for students with special educational needs, especially those with behavioural difficulties, is not satisfactory and too many students are excluded;
- Assessment of students' work is inconsistent and does not help them to know how to improve;
- Statutory requirements are not met in a number of areas.

There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection. The previous report identified four main areas for improvement. Although action has been taken in response to all of these, there are still elements of each area which require further improvement. Provision remains unsatisfactory for worship and religious education, for assessment and for some aspects of special educational needs. Standards in GCSE in 2003 fell below the level found in the last report. However, standards in tests for students aged 14 have improved and the quality of teaching has improved, with more good and better lessons being taught.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	B	C	C	E

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

Achievement overall is satisfactory. By the end of Year 9, test results are in line with the national average and standards in similar schools. Achievement of the students now in the school is satisfactory. By the end of Year 11, standards attained in GCSE/GNVQ examinations have been similar to those found nationally, but too low when compared to similar schools. Across all ages, attainment has generally been higher in English and mathematics, than in science. The achievement of students now in school is satisfactory, but the most able students do not achieve as well as they could. Girls generally achieve higher standards than boys. In lessons, students achieve above average standards in English, music, drama and ICT, but standards for Year 10 and 11 students are below average in non-examination groups in religious education as too little time is spent studying this subject.

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory overall. Students' attitudes to school are good. The school is

harmonious and relationships are very good. Behaviour is satisfactory overall but there is some disruption to learning by a minority of students and fixed term exclusion rates are too high. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Students' moral, social and cultural development are good, but their spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and so is students' learning. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects, although in several there are a very small number of unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching is particularly good in drama, music, geography and ICT and in many lessons in English. The assessment of students' work is unsatisfactory as it is inconsistent and does not help students to understand how they can improve. The curriculum provided to meet the needs of students is satisfactory overall, but more time is needed for religious education in Years 10 and 11. The school is not fully inclusive in providing for students with special educational, behavioural and language needs. Extra-curricular provision and support for learning outside the school day are very good. Students are provided with a good level of care, guidance and support and this is valued by students and parents. Support for students care, welfare and safety is very good. Monitoring of academic progress is satisfactory. Links with parents, community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The governors challenge and support the school well but fail to ensure it fulfils all its statutory duties. A new well-focused senior leadership team has been created and there are strengths in subject leadership, but when compared with other schools, Murray Park has been slow in developing monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to raise achievement. Very good financial management achieves the best value services for the school.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the provision made by the school and value the care provided but would like better information about the progress their children are making and how they can help them. These are areas that have been identified by the inspection as needing improvement. Some parents and students also have concerns about the behaviour of some students. The great majority of students behaves well but the school does need to improve procedures to deal with aspects of behaviour by a minority which disrupts learning. Students are generally positive about the quality of provision made for their care, the way they are treated and the quality of teaching. The inspection supports the views of the parents and the students.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards of achievement by the time students leave the school at the age of 16, to at least the levels found in schools with similar prior attainment;
- Better meet the Code of Practice for students with special educational needs, particularly those with behavioural difficulties, and reduce rates of exclusion;
- Improve consistency in management at all levels to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to inform improvement planning;
- Put into place an effective and consistent system for assessment of students' work;
- Meet statutory requirements in full in respect of:
 - Provision for daily act of collective worship;
 - The Race Relations Amendment Act;
 - Religious education in Key Stage 4 to meet requirements of the locally agreed syllabus;
 - Code of Practice for special educational needs;

- Reporting on students' progress in the annual reports to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards of attainment and achievement are satisfactory overall. In past examinations, standards have been similar to or above those found nationally. However, when compared to similar schools, attainment has been in line at the age of 14 but well below average at the age of 16. Overall, girls achieve higher standards than boys in most subjects. The achievement of students now in the school, including those with special educational learning needs, is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Improvements in the proportion of students gaining five or more A*-G grades in the 2003 GCSE examinations.
- Above average GCSE results in English, food technology and graphics.
- Attainment of students in English and mathematics, in the most recent tests for students at the age of 14.
- Good standards seen in lessons for English, information and communication technology, drama and music.

Weaknesses

- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A*-C grades and their average points score compared to similar schools.
- Standards of achievement in science are lower than in English or mathematics.
- The most able students are not sufficiently challenged in many lessons.
- Boys achieve lower standards than girls at the age of 16.
- Students with special educational behavioural needs are at risk of under-achievement.

Commentary

1. Judgements in this report in relation to standards of performance are made against national data for 2002, the latest year for which validated data are available. Additional comments relating to 2003 test results are included to illustrate more recent achievement or changes, using unvalidated data.

Attainment on entry to the school

2. The attainment of students on entry to school in 2003 was above the national average. The school admits students from the full ability range. For most year groups attainment on entry has been above or in line with the national average and has improved slowly overall. The national average has been improving at a faster rate. The gap between national standards and those of students entering the school has therefore narrowed.

Standards in national tests and examinations

3. **In 2002, the attainment of students in national tests at the age of 14 was broadly in line with the national average. Comparisons for 2003 suggest that standards in the school have remained similar. Attainment compared with similar schools was broadly in line in 2002, but above average in mathematics and below average in science. Unvalidated data for 2003 suggest improved comparisons with similar schools, with well above average standards in English and mathematics and above average performance in science. Over the past four years, the attainment of students in national tests at the**

age of 14 has fluctuated when compared with national standards but has never been less than average. The school's trend of improvement has been below that found nationally, but comparisons with similar schools show that students have largely been making the progress expected. The changing pattern of attainment on entry mainly accounts for the difference. Performance in tests for students at the age of 14 has been satisfactory. In 2002, teachers' assessments of students in non-core subjects, which were not moderated nationally, show attainment was broadly average in most subjects, but well above average in music.

4. Performance in examinations by students at the age of 16 has been unsatisfactory overall. In 2002, the attainment in GCSE examinations was broadly in line with national averages in the proportion gaining five or more A*-C grades and in the average points score. It was above average in the proportion gaining one or more A*-G grades, and below average in relation to the proportion gaining five or more A*-G grades. When compared to similar schools, attainment in all categories other than one or more A*-G grades, was well below average. For one or more A*-G grades it was above average. Although remaining at or above the national average, school standards over the past four years have not improved as well as the national trend. Results for 2003 show a three per cent fall in the proportion of students gaining five or more A*-C grades to below the national average, but there was a significant rise of eight per cent in the five or more A*-G grade category. Unvalidated data in relation to standards in similar schools suggests that the school has remained well below average in relation to the proportion of five or more A*-C grades. It has improved in relation to the average points score, although remaining below average, and has improved considerably to well above average in the five A*-G grades category. In 2002 GCSE examinations, students performed relatively less well in art and design, geography, mathematics and physical education than in other subjects. Performance in English and French was comparatively better than other subjects.
5. In relation to the targets set by the school, at GSCE level, none of the targets set in 2002 were met. In 2003, targets for 14 year olds were met in English, but not in mathematics or science. Targets in GCSE examinations were not met in the five or more A*-C grades category or the average points score, but were exceeded in the five or more A*-G grades category.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	51 (57)	50 (48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	87 (92)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	37.2	39.8

There were 202 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Achievement by students currently in the school

6. **Students of all ages now attending the school, are achieving overall standards in line with those expected against National Curriculum levels and examination criteria. Students across the school achieve best in English, music and information and communication technology [ICT]. The achievement of students in non-examination courses in religious education is below average as insufficient time is spent studying the subject. Students achieve well in vocational courses, most of which will be examined for the first time this year.**

Achievement in English, mathematics and ICT across the curriculum

7. Students have levels of literacy in line with those expected for their age, and teaching of literacy forms an important part of many lessons. Standards of numeracy are average. By the age of 14, students have developed good skills in using ICT from their specific lessons in the subject, but do not always have the opportunity to use them in other subjects as there is insufficient access to computers. This is an under-developed area.

Achievement of more able and talented students

8. About one third of students enter the school with above average levels of attainment. Although good provision is made for the most able gifted and talented students through extra-curricular opportunities, even in the best taught subjects, these students are not fully challenged in most lessons. Exceptions to this are drama, ICT and music.

Achievement of other groups

9. Middle and lower attaining students are more effectively challenged and make sound progress and achieve standards in line with their abilities. Students with special educational learning needs make satisfactory progress in lessons and through special provision, but systems to record and plan for progress are inadequate and need improving. Insufficient provision is made to support the special educational needs of students with behavioural problems, some of whom find themselves excluded from school and under-achieve.
10. Comparative levels of attainment of boys and girls as they entered the school have fluctuated in each year group. In the past, there has been some under-performance by girls compared with national norms, especially in mathematics and science. This is not evident in lessons or in the most recent GCSE examination results, where girls out-perform boys very substantially. In lessons observed, there were very few examples of significant differences in performance between girls and boys, but nor were there many positive examples of teachers employing specific strategies to address the differences found between the way boys and girls learn.
11. The school has a below average but significant number of minority ethnic students from a wide diversity of backgrounds. Some of these students have a home language believed not to be English and a few arrive in the early stages of learning English as an additional language [EAL]. Small numbers within each year group make overall patterns by ethnicity difficult to establish. The school is not currently using this information to monitor the individual achievement of minority ethnic students. During lessons, minority ethnic students without EAL make progress in line with the rest of their class. Where students with EAL needs were observed, they did not always have the necessary support through the teaching to fully access the lesson and found some difficulty in understanding the more complex aspects.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

How well are students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed

Attitudes to school and learning are good. The school is harmonious and relationships are very good. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. However, there is some disruption to learning by a minority of students who generate a high number of exclusions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Most students have good attitudes to learning.
- The rewards system and celebrations effectively promote achievement.
- Year 11 students provide good role models and are supportive of younger students.
- Students feel safe, secure and free from harassment.

- Behaviour around the school is good.
- Systems for recording and monitoring attendance and punctuality are very good.
- Effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and the police to improve attendance.
- The *Moving Up* project is having a positive impact on Year 7 students.
- Students' moral, social and cultural development is well supported.

Weaknesses

- There are a high number of temporary exclusions involving too many students.
- Behaviour management of students with identified behaviour problems is inconsistent and not always effective.
- There has been little improvement in attendance over time and some parents do not ensure good attendance.
- Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

12. Students are positive about the school and are keen to learn and participate in the good range of opportunities available. They are friendly, helpful and polite. Year 11 students are good role models. They make a positive contribution to the life of the school and are supportive of younger students. In lessons, including those held at the colleges, most students get on well with their work. Parents feel that students work hard. In lessons and assemblies, students are attentive and listen well. They enjoy practical sessions and work well in groups. When teaching is not so good, however, some students are easily distracted.
13. Staff are building a positive achievement culture. Many students respond well to the awarding of merits and certificates. Celebration assemblies are an important feature for all year groups.
14. The school is harmonious and relationships are very good. Students feel safe and secure. They are confident that staff deal with any issues promptly. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Staff work hard to minimise disruption to learning. A minority of students with challenging behaviour, many of them with identified needs, generate a high number of exclusions. Current behaviour management arrangements, which are under review, do not always provide clear, consistent guidelines and appropriate support.
15. Attendance is satisfactory overall. The school has very good recording and monitoring systems, however, there has been little improvement over time. The unsatisfactory attendance of a significant minority of students has a negative impact on their achievement. Punctuality to school and lessons is good.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.2	School data	0.6
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1003	242	5
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	1	0
No ethnic group recorded	21	5	0

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

Students' personal development

16. Students' personal development is satisfactory when taken across all aspects of school life. Their social, moral and cultural development is good, but they lack sufficient opportunities for spiritual development.
17. There are good opportunities for students' personal development and these are effectively planned through the personal, social and health education and citizenship programme, visits, extra-curricular activities and the wide range of responsibilities offered to older students.
18. Students' moral, social and cultural development are good and the school promotes these aspects well. Students who take on responsibilities such as being prefects, house captains, 'Buddy' readers and junior student assistants, carry out their duties very well and are respected by others in the school. The wide range of extra-curricular activities available enables younger and older students to work together. The year, key stage and whole school councils provide valuable opportunities for democratic involvement. Across the school, students demonstrate a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. Students show a moral concern for the needs of others by raising money for local charities. Staff set good role models and their words and actions promote the moral principles of the school's aims. Provision to enable students to appreciate their own and others' cultures is good: there are theatre trips, arts events and trips abroad. The school is effective in preparing students for life in a culturally diverse society and in subjects such as religious studies, English, music and art, careful choice of a broad range of resources enables students to experience the cultures and faiths of other traditions. However, requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act have yet to be fully implemented.
19. The spiritual development of students is unsatisfactory and opportunities for reflection and consideration of the deeper meanings of life are too often missed. Assemblies contribute soundly to spiritual development through reflection on themes such as the importance of Advent but themes are not followed consistently during tutor time. Not all subjects plan effectively for this aspect of personal development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Principal strengths are the provision made to ensure that students are safe and cared for, opportunities for student participation in the arts and out of school learning opportunities. Weaknesses include the assessment of students' work and in areas of provision for students with special educational needs, especially those with behavioural difficulties.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are both satisfactory overall. Although 59 per cent of lessons are good or better, six per cent are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Consistently very good teaching in ICT and drama.
- Many good, very good and excellent lessons in English, music, geography and history.
- Teachers' expertise in their own subjects.
- The encouragement teachers give to students.
- Students' attitude to their work.
- Students' ability to work independently and collaboratively with each other.

Weaknesses

- Small numbers of unsatisfactory lessons in modern foreign languages, science, mathematics, geography and religious education.
- Regularity and quality of marking of students' work.
- Students do not always know how well they are doing or how to improve their work.
- Provision to support students with English as an additional language.
- Insufficient challenge for gifted and talented students.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 115 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (3%)	29 (25%)	36 (31%)	40 (35%)	7 (6%)	0	0

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

20. Teaching and learning are consistently satisfactory across all year groups but the best teaching is to be found in Year 9 where over two-thirds of lessons observed were good or very good. The lowest proportion of good and better lessons was found in Year 7 where about half of lessons were judged good or better. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects, and is very good in ICT, music, geography and drama. It is good in English and history. When provided with the opportunity, students are generally able to work well, both independently and collaboratively.
21. Where teaching was observed to be good, very good or excellent some of the characteristics of the lesson included:
 - High levels of subject expertise used to model good practice for students as in very good physical education lessons and to develop depth in students' understanding as in a Year 7 English lesson where clear guidance helped students to think deeply about a Louis MacNeice poem;
 - High levels of challenge in what students were expected to achieve as found in the accelerated Spanish course where students make rapid progress in language acquisition;
 - Activities to interest students, structured to help them make good progress in their learning throughout the lesson;
 - Very effective use of time so students make excellent progress through the lesson as in a geography lesson on interpreting weather maps where students gained new skills in

mapping and beginning to recognise weather patterns through a series of carefully structured activities throughout the lesson;

- Teachers checking that all students make good progress as *in a history lesson on Queen Elizabeth 1 where students developed their understanding and use of different historical sources guided and supported by the teacher;*
- High levels of student achievement developed and consolidated, *particularly good features of a lesson on vocal music which developed students listening and vocal skills and their understanding of a wide range of styles of music through different activities. The lesson concluded with an imaginative game which enabled the teacher to establish how well the students had learned new vocabulary;*
- Effective use of teaching assistants in supporting students with additional needs.

22. Unsatisfactory teaching did not enable students to make enough progress in lessons and limited their levels of achievement. In the small number of unsatisfactory lessons observed, one or more of the following weaknesses was demonstrated:

- Lessons were too dominated by the teacher talking, with not enough time for students to apply and develop their own skills;
- Activities which were too easy for students or did not interest them, leading to boredom, restless behaviour and very limited learning;
- Weak management of student behaviour, although unsatisfactory behaviour was almost always linked to other unsatisfactory features of the lesson;
- Teacher demonstration and modelling were weak, and did not provide good examples from which students could learn.

23. In many lessons, there is scope for greater challenge and higher standards of achievement for gifted and talented students and provision for these students needs to be improved.

24. Special educational needs students benefit from a wide variety of teaching strategies used by learning support teachers. These help to motivate and address the individual needs of students. Students are encouraged to take academic risks when challenging resources are presented. Support provided in lessons is generally effective and often good.

25. In the few lessons observed where students with English as an additional language needs were present, their needs were not recognised and no provision was made for them. Some students in the early stages of language acquisition receive some support through the external LEA services which they find helpful.

26. The quality of assessment is unsatisfactory overall and is an area of weakness in provision. There is too much variability in the regularity and quality of marking between teachers and between subjects. Although the school policy has been reviewed in response to the last report, it does not provide sufficient guidance on the use of assessment, or promote consistency in how work is assessed. Both students and parents find the different systems in use across subjects confusing. School systems which track student progress are used effectively to set general targets based on expected levels of achievement in examinations. However, at subject level where more detailed short-term targets are needed in response to the assessment of students' work, this information is not used sufficiently effectively to inform students how well they are doing or how they can improve. Although baseline information on reading and spelling skills are established for students with special educational needs, files do not hold evidence of current student progress. It is therefore very difficult to analyse student progress and the effectiveness of individual intervention programmes. This information is needed for diagnostic purposes and to assist with individual programme planning but is not available. This is unsatisfactory.

27. **The great majority of students believe they are well taught and so do their parents. Most are generally satisfied with the quality and regularity of homework and the inspection supports this view. Teachers are beginning to benefit from the introduction of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy and the involvement of senior staff who have taken a lead on improving the range of teaching and learning styles. These inputs are beginning to show signs of impacting on the quality of teaching and the structure of lessons. The proportion of good and better lessons is now higher than found in the previous inspection. However, there is also a higher level of unsatisfactory teaching and there has been too little monitoring of lessons in the past. The school has been relatively late in prioritising this area of provision as a key factor contributing to improving levels of achievement.**

The curriculum

The quality of provision is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Extra-curricular enrichment opportunities.
- Vocational and work-related courses in Years 10 and 11.
- Development of the curriculum to meet students' needs.

Weaknesses

- The school is not fully inclusive in providing for students with special educational, behavioural and language needs.
- Provision for collective worship and religious education in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

28. The school's curriculum provides an education which is broad, well balanced and relevant to the vast majority of students' needs.
29. **Statutory requirements are met in nearly all respects. The provision for collective worship remains unsatisfactory. New arrangements in Key Stage 3 for citizenship and PSHE (personal, social and health education) will theoretically cover all requirements. Timetabling arrangements create difficulties for science.**
30. **The provision for students in Years 10 and 11 is good. Options allow them to choose from a range of subjects which suit their own needs and capabilities. The provision for ICT, where students study for a short course GCSE and may then continue with a full course, is good. The availability of a second modern foreign language (Spanish) is a positive feature. The opportunities to follow work-related and vocational courses are worthwhile, popular, and well designed. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are not being fully met in the depth of the programme provided.**
31. Development of the curriculum in response to students' needs has been good. Increased flexibility in student grouping has encouraged innovation, has allowed individual subjects to match subject requirements more closely to students' needs, and has contributed to the effective inclusion of students. Vocational opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11 are a particular strength, and have made an important contribution to preparing students for the world of work.
32. Provision for students who have special educational needs is satisfactory for those with learning needs. However, targets set in individual education plans [IEPs] are not sufficiently

rigorous and the small steps of progression are not clearly identified. More than 70 students in the school have identified behavioural special needs but many do not have the required IEPs in place or documented supportive programme plans. This is unsatisfactory provision and contributes to the high levels of exclusion. Procedures for modifying the curriculum for a small number of students with special learning needs in Years 7 to 9 are appropriate but formal documentation is not complete. The Fast Track initiative in Years 7 to 9 is intensive and provides effective support for students who need to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills. Re-integration of these students into some subjects after a period of extraction has caused a loss of continuity and subject-specific knowledge or skill.

33. Although provision is made to support the small numbers of students for whom English is an additional language through additional support from the LEA, provision in lessons where students are not supported is unsatisfactory.
34. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities, at lunchtimes, after school, and during holidays. They include sport, visits, creative opportunities, social events, homework help, subject-related sessions such as ICT and dance, and the *Learning to Learn* skills-building programme. Further provision is available through the community programme. These contribute positively to students' personal, intellectual and physical development. Parents are very satisfied with the provision.
35. **The accommodation of the school is generally satisfactory and very well maintained, and it is particularly good in music and the performing arts. The number of teachers is sufficient to resource the school's curriculum, but the number of learning support and science technicians is low. In some subjects, staffing difficulties in the past have had a negative impact on standards, but these have now largely been resolved. Resources for learning are adequate, and good in music. There are too few computers and other equipment in the school to support access to the interactive technology needed for ICT across the curriculum.**
36. **Progress since last inspection has mainly been satisfactory. The taught day has been extended so that it meets expectations. Provision for students with special educational needs has improved. Vocational opportunities in Years 10 and 11 have flourished. Separate provision for art, music and drama has increased the effectiveness of these subjects. Provision for collective worship remains unsatisfactory as do some aspects of provision for special educational needs.**

Care, guidance and support

The quality of provision overall is good.

The school continues to place a high priority on providing a good standard of care. Staff are well aware of students' circumstances and make good provision to support them. Regular monitoring, review and target setting are still developing and are more advanced in Years 10 and 11 than for younger year groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The school provides a safe, secure and well maintained environment. Health and safety arrangements are very thorough.
- Vulnerable students are identified and supported effectively and child protection procedures are good.
- Transfer and induction arrangements are very good.
- Students are well known and there are very good arrangements to ensure their care and welfare.
- Student Services provides very good support to students and staff.

- Students receive good guidance when making Key Stage 4 options and post-16 choices.
- Under-achieving students in Key Stage 4 are identified and most are given good support.
- Students' views are surveyed and they have a good voice through the council.

Weaknesses

- School systems for monitoring students' academic progress across all subjects are not yet fully developed in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

37. There are thorough procedures to ensure the welfare of students. The buildings and grounds are well cared for and health and safety arrangements are very thorough. Arrangements for child protection are good and staff work closely and effectively with external agencies.
38. Students are well known by staff. Individual needs are effectively identified and well supported. There is good continuity of form tutors and heads of year. Staff work hard to make appropriate provision for students with particular needs. Student Services provide very good support to staff and students and effective liaison with parents and other agencies.
39. Transfer and induction arrangements are very good and provide students with confidence to settle quickly. Regular meetings with the primary feeder schools ensure that students are provided with appropriate support, for example, the very effective *Moving Up* project.
40. Students have access to good guidance for option choices and post-16 choices. Arrangements for work experience are good and many students have good access to work and college placements which provide a curriculum appropriate to their needs.
41. The routine use of monitoring and assessment information is not fully developed throughout the school. There is the beginning of good identification of under-achieving students at Key Stage 4 and good additional support is being provided, for example through learning mentors and out-of-hours learning. The system does not yet extend into Years 7 to 9. Monitoring for younger students remains within subject areas, and although well used in some subjects, for example within humanities, it does not provide a full overview of individual progress across all subjects.
42. Students say they have a voice and are listened to. Their views are surveyed and the school council system enables them to make suggestions which are acted upon.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The quality of provision is good

Parents are positive and supportive. The schools' partnership arrangements with other schools and colleges and the wider community are very good. The school manages extensive adult education provision and the Cedar Park Music and Arts Centre, offering significant provision for the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Parents are generally supportive and attendance at consultations is very good.
- The school works hard to meet the wide-ranging needs and expectations of parents, and involves them well, particularly where there are concerns.
- Links with primary feeder schools are very good.
- There are strong partnerships with local colleges and good links with local universities.
- Very effective working partnership with adult education has led to extensive community provision.
- Very good links with business and industry for work experience and placements are established.

Weaknesses

- Reports to parents do not always include enough information on the progress made.

Commentary

43. The school has maintained a good partnership with parents to respond to the range of needs and expectations. It produces helpful written materials and information sessions about the routines of the school and curriculum provision. Information booklets for each year group and planners are useful. Staff work closely with parents and parents are very satisfied by the way the school responds to their concerns. Parents are less satisfied with the information they receive about the progress of their children. Consultation evenings are very well attended but reports do not provide enough information about progress and attainment with clear targets for improvement, and some do not meet statutory requirements.
44. Links with schools and colleges are very good. Very good partnership arrangements with local colleges enable the school to offer a range of vocational education and provide students with valuable first-hand opportunities to explore post -16 choices. Links with primary feeder schools facilitate the smooth transfer of students and staff from several departments liaise on aspects of curriculum development, for example, through sport. The school has effective links with universities to raise students' aspirations. Business and industry links are also strong and provide students with good work experience and work placement opportunities which have a good impact on their personal development.
45. The school is used extensively by the community and is a popular venue for adult education and those using the Cedar Park Music and Arts Centre. Students benefit by accessing additional exam courses as well as sport and music provision.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- A cohesive, well-focused leadership team.
- Leadership of most subjects.
- Committed governors who challenge and support the school well.
- Skilful financial management that has considerably enhanced the quality of students' opportunities.

Weaknesses

- Failure by governors to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
- The development of strategies to raise achievement has been slow compared with many schools.
- Management of some aspects of special educational needs to ensure all students with behavioural difficulties or learning needs achieve as well as they should.

Commentary

46. A considerably enlarged school leadership team was created for the current academic year to lead the school through the next phase of its development. This is enabling leadership to be more clearly focused on the priorities set out in the school improvement plan to raise standards and to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. In a relatively short period of time the new leaders have made a positive impact.
47. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory because it has failed to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. However, the governing body takes a positive lead in determining the vision for the school. Governors are well aware of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. They have adopted a school improvement plan that addresses priorities that are well matched to the school's current needs. Appropriate committee procedures enable

governors to monitor progress towards targets effectively. They have particular strengths in financial planning and monitoring and in these functions their support and challenge is excellent.

48. The headteacher's leadership has ensured that Murray Park is a school where young people are supported well in their personal development whatever their background. He has built an effective leadership team which has complementary management skills, and responsibilities are delegated appropriately. He has been particularly effective in promoting initiatives that have improved the quality of accommodation and the learning environment. A strong feature of the headteacher's work has been the development of lifelong learning opportunities for the community and forging links with educational partners, from which students gain considerable benefits. These include a good level of involvement in the local Excellence Cluster and links with Derby College. Curriculum and pastoral management are effectively led by the deputy headteachers.
49. The school evaluates annually student performance in national tests, but has been less focused on monitoring the quality of provision made by the school which affects student progress. Monitoring of teaching and learning and the use of data to track individual students' achievement are relatively recent initiatives and are still not fully embedded. Poor behaviour is appropriately treated as a high priority and the school is orderly, but there are weaknesses in the range of management strategies used to avoid short-term exclusions. Commitment to staff development is reflected in the Investment in People status of the school, and the effective induction and professional development provision. Recruitment, retention and deployment of staff are well managed with support staff mainly well deployed to make the work of teachers more effective.
50. There is good leadership in most curriculum areas. Music is both very well led and managed, and leadership in the majority of other subjects is good or very good. The majority of subject leaders have a good vision for the development of their subject and they keep well abreast of national developments. Management in many subjects is not as strong as leadership, as departments are only now moving towards effective monitoring of teaching and learning, self review and improvement planning consistently focused on raising achievement linked to whole school priorities. The school has successfully incorporated many aspects of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, but monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the school is too variable. Day-to-day routines across the school are well established.
51. Leadership of provision for special educational learning needs and physical difficulties is satisfactory, but management is unsatisfactory. The special educational needs co-ordinator has made significant improvements since her appointment and has taken a lead in securing provision for students with learning and physical difficulties. However, a number of important improvements in management are still needed to secure effective targets and detailed planning to support students' needs, and systems to record and monitor their progress. Students with special educational behavioural needs are not designated as the responsibility of the special needs co-ordinator, but are managed through the pastoral system. Leadership and management of provision for these students are unsatisfactory.
52. Financial management is of high quality. Governors and senior managers are supported by the expertise of the school's finance officer. The budget is carefully planned and balanced. Energy devoted to raising additional finance has successfully resulted in considerable additional resources. The school's accommodation has been very well extended to match its growing roll. The arts centre, which was a major building development, is of high quality. Students benefit from a good level of improvement in their learning environment. Principles of best value are applied with rigour when spending priorities are reviewed, such as in determining contracts for banking, insurance, catering and premises.

53. The uncertainty of annual funding levels from the local education authority, which distributes comparatively less funding to schools by student numbers than most other LEAs, has been a barrier to management. The low funding of Murray Park compared with most schools in the city remains a concern to the governors and school's leadership.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3374886	Balance from previous year	12263
Total expenditure	3361473	Balance carried forward to the next	14556
Expenditure per student	3154		

EXAMPLES OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

Learning to learn Extra-curricular activity for Year 11 students:

An exemplary example of an extra-curricular activity for Year 11 students. Weekly one-hour sessions held over an 8-week period on strategies for *Learning to Learn*.

Initiated by two very enthusiastic teachers, the students explore how the brain works and strategies to improve revision techniques. In a supportive atmosphere, the students practise breathing and relaxation exercises before exploring the significance of different parts of the brain on learning. Techniques to alleviate stress and develop positive thinking, especially when revising and in examination situations, are explained to the students in a lively, interactive and humorous manner. Students participate fully, and discuss their responses and the effects of the activities on their learning openly and honestly. The teachers continually reference the activities to all areas of the curriculum and the different types of learning styles.

Greenfingers Project Extra-curricular environmental care activity:

As a visitor you are soon aware that the greenhouses within the school grounds are very much in use and, in a small garden, many plants and seedlings are being carefully nurtured. Closer inspection reveals well tended beds and borders and specially planted areas, including a herb garden. The school proudly displays certificates won in various horticultural competitions including the RHS Judges' Special Award. A chat with the groundsman and his work placement student, a former student at the school, reveals a bit of magic. For several years, students have been encouraged to spend time '*looking after the grounds in the same way that the school looks after them*'. A carefully kept folder, with plans and photographs of students hard at work and a diary kept since 1995 showing all the activities, precise planting records and the names of students involved, demonstrate the extent of their involvement. Indeed many students contribute throughout their time in the school. In 2003, new Year 7 recruits are so keen, they carry on working in the twilight. The project provides an outstanding example of personal development, growing from the ethos of the school and the goodwill of dedicated staff.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Good quality teaching.
- Good quality leadership of the department.
- Students' very positive attitudes towards the subject and the contribution made to their personal development.
- Students' thoughtful use of evidence when responding to literature.

Weaknesses

- Insufficient monitoring and evaluation of lesson quality.
- Insufficient challenge for the most able or motivated students.

Commentary

54. Standards in English are above the national average. Year groups enter the department with levels of attainment just above average. By the end of Year 9, students' work is of above average quality. This is beginning to be confirmed by the national tests for 14 year olds. The 2002 percentage for those reaching level 5 or better was broadly in line with national expectations. However, the 2003 percentage was well above the national average. This represents a recent but clear upward trend in results. Year 11 GCSE results are above the national average but there have been fluctuations over time. There is no evidence of a significantly rising trend.
55. **Students make good progress in Years 7 to 9, satisfactory progress during Years 10 and 11 GCSE courses and good progress overall. A typical mixed ability class contains students who struggle with spelling, grammar and punctuation and whose reading and understanding are below average. Also present are many able students capable of giving detailed responses to demanding texts using ambitious vocabulary and sentences. By the end of Year 9, most students are able to write extended pieces in a chosen style and use critical vocabulary to analyse a Shakespeare play. Students understand and use the department's approach to close textual analysis which, in turn, enriches the quality of group and class discussion. GCSE students have well developed oral skills. However, some are held back by their lack of reading fluency and written accuracy. Standards in speaking, listening, writing and the analysis of evidence are generally good. Standards in reading are satisfactory.**
56. Students of below average ability are stretched by lessons pitched more than half way up the ability range. Their progress is helped by learning support assistants, literacy catch-up units and careful placement in classes. The most able are being insufficiently challenged, along with those other students who would be most influenced by greater depth and pace of study. This occurred to some extent in most of the classes seen.
57. **The quality of English teaching is good with some very good features. Teachers' knowledge is very good, as is the skilled way they interest and encourage students.**

Lessons have pace and variety. Instructions and deadlines are usually precise. As a result, the clear majority of students want to work, enjoy the subject and respect their teacher's expertise. Behaviour is good and relationships are very good. Marking and assessment are generally good. Walls, ceilings and whiteboards are particularly well used to communicate learning objectives and keep track of individual student progress. Teaching is less effective when there are no significantly enhanced objectives for the most able or motivated. When extension activities were observed, they sometimes occurred too late in the lesson or did not involve the identification of the relevant students, making the extension virtually optional.

58. Leadership of the department is good with some very good features. The head of department leads by example and is committed to raising standards, valuing everyone's contribution and maintaining a very effective team approach. Management of the department is also good. Communication across the department is very good and much work has gone into developing materials and assessment systems for Years 7 to 9. Although some monitoring activities take place, the monitoring and evaluation of lesson quality is noticeably undeveloped. This limits the team's ability to set priorities and judge the effectiveness of key areas such as the use of extension strategies and homework.
59. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The good provision and standards described in the last report have been maintained. Good progress has been made in improving provision for the least able.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Students' use of language and literacy skills across all their subjects is broadly in line with national expectations. The school provides a good level of support which helps develop students' understanding of important words and their skills in reading, speaking, listening and written accuracy.
61. Literacy is a prominent and integrated part of music, ICT, English, drama, modern foreign languages, art and humanities lessons and materials. Key vocabulary is regularly reviewed and is supported by listening exercises, advice on writing and teachers' expectations. In mathematics, key words are displayed on a small board next to the main whiteboard and incorrect spellings receive appropriate attention during the marking of students' work. 'Word walls' are a common feature in design and technology and workbooks support various aspects of literacy, although the most able are not being sufficiently stretched by these approaches. 'Language for Learning' is well planned in the physical education schemes of work, although its application is inconsistent. There is too much copying from the board or books in science. Students do not always know the meaning or significance of what they have copied. Progress units provide effective support for those students who struggle with literacy, and reading is well promoted by the Learning Resources Centre. The school has made good progress in making literacy a priority.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French, German and Spanish lessons were sampled in Years 9 to 11, individual students talked about their work, and samples of students' work were reviewed. At the time of the inspection, staff absence was affecting the department.

Provision for the subject is **satisfactory** overall, but with important individual areas which need improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- An enthusiastic new head of department who is working hard to improve teaching, learning, consistency and students' attainment.

Weaknesses

- Teaching in some French and German classes.
- The challenge offered to higher attaining students.

Commentary

62. Over the last three years, the proportion of students reaching the national expectation by the end of Year 9 has declined to below the national average. The proportion of GCSE A*- C grades in French and German has fallen from above to around the national average; Spanish to well below. Boys' results have been well above the national figures in French and German, but are now below, and the gap between boys' and girls' results has widened. Girls' results have fallen significantly in French but have risen in German. Staffing and organisational problems have contributed to this movement, and the inconsistency within it.
63. Work seen in Years 7 to 9 indicates a satisfactory standard of attainment, in line with the national pattern. Most students can understand, write and say the words and phrases linked to their current topic of study, but pronunciation is often poor. In upper groups, students are beginning to combine phrases into longer compositions, to generate original statements, and to use the past tense with confidence, although not as intensively as is usually seen. Students in Years 10 and 11 reach a satisfactory standard overall. The proportion of current students due to achieve GCSE grades A* - C will reflect the national figure. There are examples of outstanding work in Spanish. In French and German, there are many examples of well drilled work which will lead to confident C grades. There are few examples of written and spoken outcomes, such as extended and original compositions, of potential B and A standard.
64. In Years 7 to 9, most students make satisfactory progress. Where students do not achieve as well as they should, it is either because the teaching is unsatisfactory, or, within an otherwise effective lesson, insufficient challenge is offered to students with the potential for higher attainment. In Years 10 and 11, students make rapid progress in Spanish. In French and German most students make satisfactory progress, but lack of challenge puts an upper limit on the achievement of many more able students.
65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are wide variations in the quality of teaching across the department, from very good to unsatisfactory. Within individual lessons there are often notable strengths and important shortcomings. This inconsistency limits the quality of students' learning. Where teaching is good and satisfactory, the lesson begins with a simple but purposeful activity which focuses students' attention, gets them ready for learning, and provides them with the words they will need in order to feel confident when the main lesson begins. Careful, deliberate and clear demonstration and explanation is used so that students can see what they have to do and can copy this in their own work. The objectives of the lesson are thoroughly explained, and referred to during the lesson, so that students can see the path their learning is taking. Teachers use praise, congratulation and reward so that students build confidence, motivation and self-esteem. This contributes to improved concentration and behaviour. Where the lesson, or a part of it, is unsatisfactory, it is usually because too long is spent in whole class speaking activity. This leads to boredom, loss of concentration, and misbehaviour. Often, there is not enough opportunity for intensive active practice of key language, so that many students do not acquire confident mastery of new language. Sometimes, instructions are jumbled or complicated, so that students do not understand what they have to do; they lose confidence, and do not achieve as well as they should. In Years 10 and 11, there are additional specific strengths and weaknesses. Lessons provide good coverage of the GCSE syllabus, so that candidates are well prepared for the tests, and are well supported to gain grade C. This same strength carries within it the seeds of an important weakness: over-heavy focus on routine speaking and writing work limits exposure to GCSE higher requirements, so that more able students do not achieve their maximum.

66. Modern foreign languages have an effective but inexperienced new head of department, who has been in post for three months. She provides a good role model for effective teaching strategies. Her policies and plans are thorough and comprehensive, and are creating a cohesive and consistent team. In order fully to promote change and improvement, these aspects of her subject leader role must be developed or strengthened:
- procedures for the monitoring of teaching, learning and standards, and targeted activity resulting from this analysis;
 - definition of a clear vision for future improvement, with strategies for achieving it;
 - definition and implementation of the features of good teaching;
 - promotion of challenging targets, related to the National Curriculum in Key Stage 3 lessons and schemes of work.
67. **Improvement since the last inspection has been insufficient. This is because levels of attainment have moved downwards, there is a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, or unsatisfactory elements in otherwise effective lessons, and the progress of more able students is often too slow.**

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Leadership of the department.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Positive relationships between students and teachers.
- Delivery of the four-part lesson.
- Appreciation by students of the help that teachers give them.
- A leading department for work on Year 7 intervention strategies.

Weaknesses

- GCSE results.
- Limited use of ICT within the curriculum.
- Limited range of teaching and learning styles.
- Use of assessment to inform students how they could improve and to identify under-performing students.
- Use of a greater range of differentiated materials.

Commentary

68. Standards are satisfactory. In the 2002 tests, results in Year 9 were in line with the national average and students' achievement was good in relation to their prior attainment, although in 2003 the percentage of students gaining at least a level 5 in the tests dropped. At GCSE level, standards were below the national average and results indicate underachievement overall as both boys and girls significantly under-performed in mathematics compared with other subjects. However, the work of students seen during the inspection was in line with national expectations. Lower attaining students in Year 9 attempted to use their knowledge of averages to test simple hypotheses and middle attaining students in Year 11 were able to solve simple equations with the unknown on both sides.
69. Teaching and learning in mathematics are satisfactory overall. Most teachers identify the learning objectives clearly to students at the start of lessons, but some plenaries at the end of lessons fail to offer students the opportunity to review their learning. Where teaching observed was good, the teacher had high expectations and through expert questioning encouraged the students to extend their thinking skills. These lessons were well planned in progressive

chunks with correct vocabulary stressed throughout. In a lower attaining Year 7 lesson, there was good use of National Strategy intervention materials to enable all students to identify decimal fractions on a number line. In a Year 10 lesson on trigonometry effective group work enabled students to investigate the ratios of side-lengths in similar triangles. There was good evidence of the use of individual whiteboards for starter activities, challenging all students to consolidate previous knowledge and to extend their thinking. Middle attaining Year 7 students were able to mentally calculate percentage increases. Where teaching was less satisfactory, the tasks were not suitably differentiated to be accessible to all students and insufficient challenge was provided for the more able and no provision made for student with EAL needs. There is regular marking of students' work but it is not always diagnostic and has limited guidance to help students improve. Some incorrect answers receive no obvious follow-up and several students are unaware of their predicted level. Targets in books and on reports are not always subject specific.

70. Leadership and management of mathematics are both good. The head of department has high expectations of staff and students and has a clear vision for the department. She monitors individual teachers and has considerably improved the learning environment, with good displays of students' work. She has also introduced a puzzle of the week. There are positive relationships between students and staff and active links with feeder schools occur to ensure continuity of learning strategies. Examination results are analysed but more detailed work on gender differences is needed and consideration given to the gender imbalance of teaching groups.
71. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection, although there have been staffing difficulties. Year 10 and 11 students attain mathematical levels below those in other subjects and there are insufficient strategies yet in place to identify under-performing students at all levels. There is also limited use of ICT and the range of teaching and learning styles could be enhanced through greater sharing of good practice.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Standards of mathematics across the curriculum are **satisfactory** and students are confident when explaining their calculation strategies. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson, students had a clear understanding of multiplication of decimals by partitioning. There is some contribution to the development of numeracy in other subjects. In geography there is good use of interpreting statistics to support students' learning in Year 10, and in art, geometrical shapes form the basis of three-dimensional work. For GCSE ICT, there is very good use of spreadsheets for data collection and constructing formulae as applied to diets, bank balances and electronic scoreboards. Students also apply skills in a practical way by measuring and marking out components, and in a food technology lesson by weighing ingredients. In science, appropriate use is made of bar charts, line graphs and scatter diagrams and in a Year 9 lesson, students were asked to calculate the speed of light. There has been some whole school training to promote the development of numeracy across the curriculum and there are plans to complete an audit and write a whole school policy later in the school year.

SCIENCE

Overall the quality of provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- There are some talented teachers who use lesson time both effectively and enjoyably.
- Systems for tracking students' progress by using test data are well developed.
- Students' behaviour is good when teaching is good.

Weaknesses

- Some teaching is ineffective because students are under-challenged.
- Marking gives students little idea of how to improve their work.
- ICT as a resource for learning is under-developed.
- Too little is being done to improve unsatisfactory practices in teaching and marking.

Commentary

73. National tests show that Year 7 students join the school with above-average standards in science. However, at the end of Year 9, standards are just average, with girls' performance over the past three years in line with national expectations and boys' slightly below. This compares unfavourably with results from other schools where students' prior attainment is similar.
74. GCSE results in science in 2002 were above the national average for both boys and girls, with almost 60 per cent achieving A*-C grades in comparison with the national average of around 50 per cent. However, in comparison with similar schools, this represents significant under achievement. The unvalidated 2003 data indicate some further decline in comparisons with similar schools.
75. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Over half of the 19 lessons observed lessons were good and, of these, two were very good, but two were unsatisfactory. The best lessons proceeded at a stimulating pace; teachers made good use of students' time and involved them in thinking about scientific ideas. Students found this challenging and interesting, so there is no serious misbehaviour. For example, a Year 8 lesson about solids, liquids and gases began with an imaginative starter activity involving every student. It continued in a series of well-paced steps in which teacher and taught interacted effectively so that students were constantly challenged to account for phenomena in particle terms. Achievement was consequently high, students enjoyed the lesson and their behaviour was good. In the poorer lessons, by contrast, teachers wasted students' time in long-winded activities and in copying paragraphs directly from textbooks. Students felt frustrated because they scarcely understood the material, learning was limited and off-task misbehaviour resulted.
76. Good teaching is not confined to particular year or ability groups. Students with special needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds are as likely as others to be taught effectively and are generally well integrated into main school science. Marking, however, is a problem across the whole department. It is conscientious, but achieves little because it does not tell students how to improve their understanding of science. Instead, where comments are made, they focus exclusively on the appearance of written work rather than its content.
77. ICT is under developed. Computers are used for registration and data analysis but under used in teaching. For example, in an otherwise good Year 7 lesson, students actively collaborated in collecting data about the class and compiling tables. However, no use was made of a spreadsheet to collect and sort the information, although a computer was readily to hand.
78. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has worked hard in evaluating student performance. He analyses information from Year 6 and Year 9 National Curriculum tests in order to estimate what students should be able to achieve. This facilitates target setting for students and, together with GCSE results, contributes towards evaluation of teacher performance. However, there is no programme for monitoring lessons and issues of poor practice in teaching are insufficiently addressed. Further leadership development is required that encourages teachers to work together in a spirit of professional openness, with a clear focus on teaching and learning and in collaboration with developments elsewhere in the school.

79. Financial provision for day-to-day departmental spending is meagre by comparison with national recommendations. The two technicians, though hard-working and willing, cannot prepare equipment for 170 lessons per week. Together with the limitations of laboratory space, which requires that some lessons to be taught in classrooms, this restricts the amount of practical work students can experience. The science timetable includes a substantial number of classes that are taught by more than one teacher, largely through constraints brought about by extensive ability grouping in Year 8 and Year 9. However, this does not work to all students' advantage.
80. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, although some issues related to teaching remain.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY [ICT]

The quality of provision is **good** when taught as a discrete subject, but further development is needed in some other subjects.

Strengths

- Students are able to work very well independently.
- Students' attitudes, behaviour and enthusiasm are very good.
- Time is used very effectively in lessons.
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good in taught lessons.
- Effective support materials are provided in lessons.

Weaknesses

- Formal monitoring of teaching is needed.
- A need to use existing good practice to build and develop consistency of marking across the subject.
- There is a need for the co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum.
- A support system for lower achieving students in all years is needed.

Commentary

81. **Over the last three years between 70 per cent and 75 per cent of students have achieved the expected level 5 and above in assessments at the end of Year 9. Girls have achieved more higher levels than boys this year. At the end of Year 11, GCSE results at A*-C grades were 57 per cent in 2001 and 67 per cent in 2002 with girls achieving more higher grades. Results this year show a drop to 47 per cent with boys achieving more higher grades.**
82. By the end of Year 9 standards are good. The national strategy is being successfully implemented and this continues to raise standards. A commercial software package is also used to provide a balanced and progressive coverage of the National Curriculum. Students work on a range of topics including posters, leaflets, cards, web page designs, Powerpoint presentations, spreadsheets and letters. Controversial issues are included in their web pages and students are taught how to look for bias when researching, and how to include both sides of an issue in their hyperlink pages. They can also develop effective data capture forms for their individual research. By the end of Year 11, standards are good, all students having continued to develop their skills through a short GCSE course with at least one half of each year group progressing to a full course. Their *Future Fashions* project allows them to create logos, spreadsheets, graphs, payslips, mail merge data and write reports. When creating spreadsheets they are taught how to write If/Then statements and how to use formulae to generate these statements. The majority of students produce quality work, but more support is needed for those of lower ability to ensure that all coursework elements are completed.

83. The progress of the majority of students in all years is good. They achieve well compared to their prior attainment.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers use four part lessons very well. All lessons begin with a short starter activity, which engages students quickly. Very clear introductions, sometimes including the use of Power Point, enable all students to understand what is required in the learning tasks. Very good support materials, in paper or electronic form, are provided for independent learning. Lessons are planned very well and all move at a fast pace with well-timed tasks. All students are challenged by the tasks with special educational needs students fully included. All lessons end well, with learning continuing to take place.
85. Leadership of the subject is good. Subject documentation is comprehensive and good quality schemes of work are detailed. There is a clear sense of direction for the subject and standards continue to rise. Data is analysed well and subject performance is evaluated. The department is highly regarded in the area and is supporting a graduate trainee well. Management is good. Organisation is efficient with regular meetings held. Staff have clear roles and there is good delegation of responsibilities. A wide ranging development plan is moving the subject forward. The monitoring of student progress is good and the development of whole staff ICT skills is supported.
86. Students behave very well in lessons enabling successful teaching to take place. They work hard throughout lessons. The subject is supported well by two technicians.
87. There has been satisfactory improvement and investment in the subject since the last inspection. National expectations are now met in all years in Key Stage 3. All students in Key Stage 4 now study a short GCSE course. The quality of teaching has improved to very good. Dated computers have been replaced, and software is much improved. However, the development of ICT in some subjects remains problematic. The ratio of computers to students is much lower than national levels and more investment is needed in quality teaching aids.

ICT across the curriculum

88. By the end of Year 9, students have developed good skills and are able to use them in some subjects. Those subjects that are using ICT as a learning tool are using it well. The design and technology department has recently introduced PRO-DESKTOP to develop CAD skills. In an introductory lesson students quickly understood how to draw an object on a work plane, extrude and rotate it, round corners and render it with different finishes. Very effective teaching enabled them to learn quickly and they made good progress. A computer-controlled sewing machine is available and used in textiles. Good use of ICT is made in music for composition, but with limited equipment, and in art, for digital imaging, research and recording of work in progress. The physical education department is involved in a project with external agencies and has recently invested in digital video and multi-media resources to help with their analysis of performance in sport. A project for gifted and talented students, starting soon, will help develop students' skills in evaluating and improving performance. Geography uses word-processing, desk-top publishing, spreadsheets and imported images effectively as a positive contribution to progress and standards, where students achieve a high standard with coursework at GCSE. Students with special educational needs use Successmaker well to develop and reinforce their mathematical skills and make good use of word banks. Computers are used in the library at lunchtimes and clubs are available after school. However, the use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped and not co-ordinated. A more efficient room booking system is needed to access spare capacity and more ICT resources, in line with national trends, are needed in subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography, history and religious education were all inspected fully in this inspection and are managed together within the humanities faculty. Provision is good. The new subject leaders have made significant improvements in key areas since the last inspection.

History

Overall the provision for history is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching. Lessons are well planned and structured, leading to good development of historical skills and knowledge and understanding of the topics covered. There is a good range of activities which engage and keep the students' interest and concentration.
- Leadership of the head of department.
- Assessments against the National Curriculum and GCSE criteria.
- Analysis and use of assessment and examination data.

Weaknesses

- Standards of attainment in GCSE examinations in 2003.
 - Further development is needed of the use of ICT and a broader range of resources including visits and visitors relevant to the curriculum.
89. The attainment of students by the end of Year 9 is in line with national standards. Over the last three years, assessments made by teachers show the percentage of students gaining the higher level grades has increased from well below to just above the national average. Students currently in Year 9 are making steady progress, although in many individual lessons progress is often good. However, as there is only one lesson per week this reduces the overall progress made. Students can explain and use the concept of chronology and are developing good use of specialist vocabulary. They can use a range of sources to answer questions set and can differentiate between primary and secondary sources. They can explain the impact of events such as the building of the railways. Students with special educational needs and gifted students are supported so that they make satisfactory progress, although further work is needed to develop the materials and tasks set for them. Students need to further develop their critical skills; for example to question the reliability or bias of the evidence available. Literacy skills are being developed well in history as students develop a wide range of vocabulary and a range of writing styles. There is also some good modelling of answers.
90. Attainment at GCSE has fluctuated considerably over the last three years. In 2001 the percentage gaining the higher grades of A* to C was just below national average, in 2002 well above, and in 2003 well below. The relative performance of boys and girls has also changed over the three years. This is partly due to the relatively small numbers taking the examination as well as some underachievement identified in 2003.
91. In Years 10 and 11, students are making good progress and the attainment in the work seen and in lessons was just above national standards. Students are able to extract relevant information from a range of sources and can use this to support an argument, as in a Year 10 lesson on the Munich agreement. They are developing good knowledge and understanding of the units of work being studied and the skills needed to successfully tackle examination questions. They need to further develop their skills of analysis and drawing of conclusions from the evidence they have used.
92. The standard of teaching is good. There are a number of strengths including the planning of lessons and the identification of clear learning objectives which are shared with the students. As a result, students are developing good knowledge and understanding of the topics covered. There is a good range of teaching activities including the use of questioning to include all students and giving relevance to the work. For example, a lesson which started with students looking at how some famous people of today present themselves in order to understand the

images of Queen Elizabeth 1. There are good relationships and students are given encouragement so that they are willing to volunteer answers and express their opinions. Where teaching is satisfactory, work is challenging but some students need to have more structured support to help them with the task set. Although there are opportunities for the use of information technology to help students, particularly with research, they are not always taken. There are limited visits or visitors to broaden the experience of the students. Assessment across all years has improved and now clearly relates to the National Curriculum or GCSE criteria so students are clear about their progress.

93. Leadership and management are good. The new head of humanities has a clear understanding of what is needed to take the department forward and there is a high level of commitment to improve standards. A very good analysis of the data available has been undertaken, leading to a clear picture of students' performance. Some strategies have already been put in place to intervene when needed, but further development is needed particularly at Key Stage 3. The department gives some students the opportunity to complete a Certificate of Achievement if a full GCSE is not appropriate.
94. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Many of the aspects defined as good have been maintained. Standards at Key Stage 3 continue to be in line with national standards although there have been fluctuations at Key Stage 4. However, there have also been improvements particularly in relation to assessment, support for students with special needs and the leadership of the department.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are improving.
- Teaching in geography is very good so students learn well.
- There is good subject leadership.
- Students have a positive attitude and behave well.
- Teachers make good use of assessment data to plan their lessons.

Weaknesses

- There is insufficient challenge for gifted and talented students in some lessons.
- Lesson plans do not always have sufficiently focused learning targets.

Commentary

95. The standard of attainment by the age of 14 has improved over the last three years. In teacher assessments in 2003, standards are similar to those normally seen. Standards of attainment are also improving at Key Stage 4, although in the 2003 GCSE examination results they were still below national subject standards.
96. Most students currently in Years 7, 8 and 9 are making sound progress. Work in Year 7 for example, gives them a sound knowledge of the causes and effects of river floods. In Year 9, case studies of Blackpool, Derbyshire and St Lucia, give them a sound understanding of issues of tourist development in different parts of the world. Some of the potentially higher attaining students are underachieving. Work in their books, for example, shows only a basic grasp of more difficult ideas about sustainable tourism.
97. Students now in Years 10 and 11 are working at a satisfactory standard overall. For example, their map work in Year 10 gives them a sound understanding of quality of life in more and less

developing countries. Students work hard on their examination coursework. This gives them a good understanding of local geography. It also helps them develop their skills of data collection, analysis and evaluation. Gifted and talented students also make sound progress. Their work shows very effective use of a range of statistical techniques to map and graph the geography of the city centre. Students also make very good use of ICT to improve the presentation of their work. Students with special educational needs are well supported in class, so they can take a full part in the lessons. For example in one lesson, a boy was given help to describe and explain the processes of cliff erosion.

98. Geography makes a useful contribution to mathematical skills. For example students in Year 7 make good use of a range of graphical techniques to analyse data showing environmental quality in the local area.
99. The standard of teaching is very good overall although one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Lessons are carefully planned to encourage students to work hard. There is an interesting range of activities. Teachers make good use of stimulating resources, including video, photographs, maps and detailed statistical and written information. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the teacher made sure all the students became quickly involved in the lesson, by asking them to sort a set of cards showing causes and effects of flooding. This gave students some good initial ideas about a key physical process. She followed this up with an interesting video extract about the River Severn. The class were all very attentive and as a result could describe and begin to explain the location of some of the river features. All students benefit from a programme of fieldwork in geography.
100. The leadership and management of geography are good. The new subject leader has already put in place a number of new ideas to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to raise standards of attainment. For example, teachers make very good use of assessment data to help with their planning.
101. There has been good progress since the last inspection. In particular the standard of teaching is better, and this is the main reason why standards are improving. Further work on setting individual targets for students should help in raising the achievement of all, but particularly the gifted and talented students.

Religious Studies

Provision in religious studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Standards at GCSE
- Good subject knowledge of teachers
- The variety of learning activities which students find interesting
- Effective subject leadership

Weaknesses

- Low standards in non-examination groups in Years 10 and 11
- Statutory requirements for Years 10 and 11 are not met
- Insufficient information provided to students to help them understand what they do well and what they need to do to improve
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning
- Work is not well matched to the needs of more able students

102. The 2002 GCSE examination results at grades A* to C of the small group of students who took the subject were in line with the national average and this standard was maintained in 2003.

103. Students currently in Years 7 to 9 are making sound progress and their achievement is satisfactory. Students have sound knowledge of Christianity and other major faiths. In Year 7, students recognise the main artefacts found in many Christian churches and understand their significance to believers. In Year 9, students show understanding of how beliefs influence the life of Hindus through their daily worship and observance of the principles of Karma. Overall, standards are in line with those expected by the City of Derby Agreed Syllabus. The achievement of students with special educational needs is satisfactory and they benefit from individual support given by the class teacher. More able students do not make the rapid progress they are capable of because they are not sufficiently challenged by their work.
104. In Years 10 and 11 students who have chosen GCSE religious studies are making good progress and their achievement is good. Students work close to standards typically seen. In their essay work students show they are able to write in detail about the topics they have studied, such as the role of the mosque in Islam, and make well informed evaluative comments. In the religious studies modules of citizenship, students make slow progress and their achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because they are not given enough time to learn about the topics specified by the agreed syllabus. Standards are below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. In their work on 'Ultimate Questions', students can express their opinions on whether or not they think God exists but show little understanding of the arguments usually put forward for and against belief in God. Their understanding of the way people's beliefs may impact on life choices is weaker than usually seen.
105. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and convey their enthusiasm to students. Lessons are planned carefully using a variety of activities that students find interesting. In one lesson, for example, the teacher lit a candle and played a recording of monks chanting to introduce the topic of prayer. This captured the interest of all students who were keen to discuss their ideas with the teacher about the reasons why people pray. The teacher then introduced the idea of different types of prayer which helped students to extend their understanding of the purpose of prayer. In another lesson, groups of students played a game about 'the most evil thing in the world' and this helped them consider their views on evil and suffering. Teachers successfully establish good relationships with students so that when they are given the opportunity for reflection, they feel able to openly share their ideas with the rest of the class. In the less effective lessons, the pace of activities is too hurried so that students do not have enough time to complete the tasks and reflect on what they have learnt. Occasionally, teachers are too tolerant of idle chatter and disruptive behaviour and this interrupts the learning of the rest of the class. There is too little use of ICT in lessons. Lesson activities do not extend the learning of more able students sufficiently.
106. The leadership of religious studies is good. The subject co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how to improve the teaching and learning to raise standards. This includes working to further develop assessment for setting meaningful learning targets for all students. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall but there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the department.
107. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There has been an increase in the number of specialist teachers of the subject and standards at GCSE have improved. More time has been allocated to the teaching of the subject in Years 10 and 11 but this is still not enough to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Students' application of the design process.
- Standards in textiles technology.
- Breadth of designing and making activities.
- School produced booklets that support students' designing and their knowledge of materials and processes.
- Good facilities that are well maintained.

Weaknesses

- Standards of graphic skills.
- Inconsistency in the assessment of students' work.
- Insufficient depth in designing and making skills in Years 7 to 9 due to repetition.
- Access to suitable products for students to analyse as a stimulus to their own designing.

Commentary

108. Results of Year 9 teacher assessments were above the national average in 2003 and broadly average in recent years. GCSE results at grades A* to C were at the national average in 2002, but declined in 2003 to below the provisional average. Food technology and graphics products results have been above average. Resistant materials results were above average in 2002 but well below the provisional average in 2003. Girls' performance has been much better than boys'. Fewer older students take a design and technology GCSE option course than usual.
109. Students' make steady progress and by Year 9 their achievement is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of design planning and use appropriate technical terms. Graphic skills, used in recording information and representing ideas, are below average. Making skills are average and students have a wider understanding of materials and processes than normally seen. In Years 7 to 9, making skills are developed well in food, textiles and CAD/CAM (computer-aided design and manufacture) activities. The quality of making is not good enough in other aspects, often because of insufficient time to finish work. This particularly affects standards of higher attaining students. In Year 10 and Year 11 options, achievement is satisfactory overall. Work produced in textiles is of a good standard. Year 11 students were observed working imaginatively on teenage fashion designs with decorative elements inspired from studying insects. Across options, girls' achievement is consistently higher than boys'. Students with special educational needs make steady progress and good progress when a teacher assistant provides support.
110. Teaching is satisfactory, with good or very good teaching observed in one third of lessons: mainly in textiles, CAD/CAM and some food technology classes. The most successful teaching has clear learning objectives and activities that are timed to give rapid pace. Learning is most effective when examples of products or students' work are used to show what can be achieved. For example, very good use was made of a wide range of hats for different purposes in a Year 9 textiles lesson to help students form a design brief. The teaching raised challenging questions about functions, materials and construction techniques. In less successful lessons, teaching covers too much content. Depth of learning and the quality in making is often sacrificed. Too often when designing, students' graphic skills are assumed rather than taught. In a few lessons, low level chatter detracts from otherwise satisfactory learning. Students learn effectively when working in small groups, such making plastic key-fobs in Year 8 using production-line techniques and producing small Christmas cakes in batches in Year 10. Assessment of work is too inconsistent in helping students to understand how they can improve achievement.
111. Leadership is good. The relatively new head of department has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve achievement and he has introduced work that extends computer

applications in designing. Management is satisfactory. The subject plan is well linked to school priorities and day-to-day routines effectively support students' learning.

112. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory overall. Teaching and subject leadership has improved. Modern materials and ICT are incorporated well into units of work. However, assessment remains an aspect that requires greater consistency.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The level of participation in the arts is very good. All students have the opportunity to study arts subjects throughout their education. There are also many activities outside school hours for those who are particularly interested or talented. Music facilities are excellent. Art and design, and music were inspected in full. Drama and dance were also sampled during this inspection.

Art and design

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Good improvement since the last inspection.
- Standards at the end of Year 9 are above the national average.
- Behaviour is good and students work well.
- Good range of courses in Years 10 and 11.

Weaknesses

- Standards at GCSE are below the national average.
- Provision for ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9 does not meet National Curriculum requirements.
- Pace and levels of expectation are insufficiently challenging in some lessons.
- Insufficient provision for gifted and talented students.

Commentary

113. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards on entry are in line with those seen nationally. In Year 9 students reach standards that are above the national average and are achieving well. Standards in Year 11 were below the national results for GCSE in 2002, but were rising with further improvements in 2003. Good features of the students' work in Year 9 are their manipulation of a range of two-dimensional media, with a strong emphasis on drawing skills. Students' experience in three-dimensional materials could be further developed. The provision for ICT does not meet requirements for the National Curriculum. Good teaching in Years 10 and 11 promotes some high standards of observational drawing in pencil and pastel, as well as some thorough approaches to research and experimentation.
114. Aspects of ICT are well integrated into the teaching programme. The more rigorous approach to skills teaching adopted in the last two years that has helped to raise standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 has not yet had sufficient impact in Years 10 and 11. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in all years. Students who are gifted in art are not given sufficient scope to develop their talent.
115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all years, sometimes good in Key Stage 3. Strategies that will increase pace and levels of expectation in some classes are needed, in conjunction with plenary sessions that involve students in the evaluation and appreciation of outcomes. Students in Years 7 to 9 are not well enough informed of the National Curriculum level descriptors to help them to improve. Students in all years are aware of the criteria by which their work is regularly assessed. Students are generally interested and they behave well.

116. Leadership is satisfactory and is strengthening. Following a very helpful external departmental review two years ago, approaches to teaching and learning, the suitability of schemes of work and the effectiveness of assessment systems have been changed for the better, and with good results in Key Stage 3. The development plan has clearly identified the steps that are now needed to raise standards in Year 11. Management is satisfactory and a good climate for learning has now been established. The new vocational course, with college links, is providing good additional curriculum opportunities to students in Years 10 and 11. Findings for this course can be found later in the report with other vocational courses.
117. Progress since the last report has been good. Attractive displays of artwork in the department and public areas make a good contribution to the school ethos.

Music

The quality of provision in music is **very good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is imaginative, consistently challenging and refreshing in its enthusiasm for improving students' understanding of music.
- Standards are above national averages and students have a particularly good understanding of musical vocabulary.
- The curriculum for students aged 11 to 14 integrates the activities of performing, composing, listening and appraising effectively.

Weaknesses

- Resources for ICT in music are unsatisfactory: there are not enough computers in the department.

Commentary

118. Test and examination results in music are very good. Teacher assessments of students' attainment recorded at the end of Year 9 were well above national averages in 2002 and 2003. GCSE results in music 2001 and 2002 were well above national averages. In 2003 there was a dip in standards at GCSE with results falling lower than national averages based on a very small number of students taking the subject.
119. Standards of the current Year 9 students are above the national average. The students have a good understanding of music from a range of styles and cultures and are able to appraise and evaluate music they perform, compose and listen to using appropriate vocabulary. For example, students in Year 8 understand and use time signatures, key signatures, chords and song structure. They are able to perform melodies and chord sequences on keyboards with an appropriate sense of rhythm and style. Singing in Year 7 is secure and students have a good understanding of how to improve the quality of their singing. The students' skills in using ICT for creating, refining and manipulating sounds is under-developed in Years 7 to 9 and at GCSE level because of a shortage of computers and software.
120. Standards achieved by students in Year 11 are above the national average and there has been a large rise in the number of students opting for the subject in Year 10. The current Year 11 have a good understanding of the areas of study in the new GCSE syllabus.
121. The achievement of students is good across all year groups. Students who learn instruments achieve particularly well at GCSE. Students with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress because the teaching caters for them well.
122. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. The structure of lessons is excellent and teaching methods are imaginative and challenging. The pace and rigour of the teaching leads

to high quality learning by most students. The teaching embraces the Key Stage 3 Strategy with lessons broken down into four phases. These are linked in a way that illustrates a very good understanding of the music curriculum and how students learn. For example, a Year 7 lesson began with a well prepared and imaginative starter activity that recapped the previous unit of work on guitars. The teacher then introduces a new topic of vocal music and taught musical vocabulary such as call and response, a capella and unison. Skilful questioning about carefully chosen pieces of music from a broad range of styles and cultures was used as the basis of a listening exercise to illustrate this new vocabulary. The students were keen to try out the new vocabulary and learn quickly. In the third phase of the lesson, the teacher integrated a singing activity. The focus of this was on improving the quality of singing through carefully chosen warm up activities and performing a song that the students knew. The students were then challenged to apply the new vocabulary to the song, such as splitting into two groups to perform a call and response version, before moving swiftly on to the plenary activity. This was a matching word and definition game focused on consolidating the learning of new vocabulary.

123. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department is committed to raising standards and planning for improvement is very well focused. The impact of recent professional development such as through the introduction of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and for improving singing, is evident within the department. Support for newly qualified teachers is very good.
124. Curriculum planning and evaluation focuses clearly on what students need to learn and is particularly effective in Years 7 to 9. Provision for extra-curricular activity and community music are very good. The accommodation for music is very good, but there is a shortage of ICT to support composition.
125. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. Standards have improved in Year 9. Teaching and learning have improved, but use of ICT remains under-developed.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Very good teaching.
- Very good student attitudes.
- Contribution made to students' personal development.
- Contribution made to provision for gifted and talented students.
- Very good leadership of the department.

Weaknesses

- Insufficient use of grade descriptions to inform students' self-evaluation and target setting.

Commentary

126. Three lessons were observed in addition to an analysis of students' work and departmental documentation. Standards are above the national average. Year 8 students quickly grasped the idea of open and closed positions and were able to use this technique to enhance their improvised pieces. The latter were notable for their inventive plots, convincing dialogue and the sustained concentration of the actors. Students' self-evaluation was less impressive but still satisfactory. Year 11 students have such confidence and commitment to the subject that they quickly understood and used a lengthy list of features and techniques. Detailed analysis of video footage helped them understand the need for rigorous evaluation in their own work. However, students' understanding of grade criteria and their personal targets was weaker than

other aspects of their performance. Teachers use very good subject knowledge, precise instructions and effortless movement between phases of the lesson to achieve their high expectations. Provision for the most able is a strength. A recent commedia dell'arte workshop helped prepare for a unit on farce. Teachers sometimes identify an 'extension' group in class and set appropriately enhanced objectives for them.

127. Subject leadership is very strong. There is considerable commitment to the review and development of departmental materials and procedures. For example, the creation of succinct yet ambitious documents, that provide each youngster with assessment, reward, targets and help with reflection. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory as the very good provision mentioned previously has been maintained.

Dance

128. In GCSE dance a very small sample of lessons was observed and students' work was inspected. The teaching seen was satisfactory. The standards of work are typical to those normally seen and students achieve well.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education [PE] is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and areas for development

Strengths

- Dedicated subject specialists.
- Students who want to learn and enjoy the subject.
- Teachers provide a good model for students to copy through careful explanation and accurate demonstrate of new skills and techniques.
- Well organised, pacey lessons in which students are given sufficient time to practise to improve.

Weaknesses

- Standards of attainment in GCSE physical education.
- Planned opportunities for students to develop skills in evaluating their own and others' work and suggest ways to improve.
- Planning and execution of lessons to challenge the more able students.
- Teaching strategies to develop students' knowledge and understanding of fitness and health.

Commentary

129. Results of teacher assessments of Year 9 students were below average in 2003. This is a decline from 2002. In both years, girls outperformed boys, but work seen during inspection shows parity in achievement. Over the last three years GCSE results have declined steadily. The proportion of students gaining A* - C grades in 2002 reflected the national average but fell well below in 2003.
130. In Years 7 to 9 students make steady progress. Overall, achievement is satisfactory and students reach standards comparable to those normally seen. However, lack of challenge for the more able students limits their achievement. Consequently they are working well within their capabilities rather than extending them. For example, in Year 8 gymnastics, students plan and perform simple group sequences demonstrating a range of skills, agilities and simple compositional ideas. The more able students' work does not have the complex combinations of gymnastics actions and the variety in speed, direction and dynamics expected.
131. In Years 10 and 11 standards of work are broadly typical of those normally seen. Students' performance skills are superior to their knowledge and understanding of fitness and health and their ability to evaluate and improve their own or each other's work. Achievement varies between activities. The use of only one trampoline in lessons severely restricts students' capacity to learn physical skills. In pilates, a combination of good teaching and very attentive students results in good progress. The students can perform chalk circles and arm openings with safe, accurate technique.

132. Overall, work in GCSE groups is in line with national standards. Most students can explain the main functions of the skeleton and bones. They understand the terminology tactics and strategy and can give examples from different sports to illustrate these terms. Fewer students produce work within the A* - A band than normally seen. The written work of some less able students is often incomplete and inaccurate.
133. Teaching is satisfactory with pockets of good and very good practice. When students learn well in practical lessons, it is because the teachers explain new skills clearly and give good demonstrations that provide a model for them to copy. For example in Year 9 dance, the teacher was able to show students how to devise a dance motif using a mobile phone, scarf and handbag as the stimuli. When students learn well in theory lessons it is because the teachers set interesting problems for them to solve. The students enjoy the challenge of working out and justifying their answers. This was demonstrated in a Year 10 lesson where the students had to sort statements about the function of the bones into true or false. In less effective lessons, there is an over-emphasis on acquiring and developing skills and techniques. Students have too few opportunities to design and carry out exercise routines such as warm-ups. They have limited opportunities to observe each other's performance and suggest ways to improve. Students are keen to do well and work with sustained physical effort throughout lessons. Their approach contributes to satisfactory achievement when they acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding.
134. Leadership is good. There is a clear vision for the direction of the department. The department development plan identifies the main areas for improvement and links well with whole school priorities. Management is satisfactory. The revised curriculum, new schemes of work and assessment system are too recent to measure their impact on raising standards.
135. Progress since the previous inspection has been insufficient. Standards have fallen. However there is now no unsatisfactory teaching.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Vocational GCSE in conjunction with Derby College

Year 10 engineering and Year 10 art and design sampled at the college and Year 11 art and design at the school

The quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Students' attitudes to their work
- Assessment of students' work and feedback in engineering
- Challenge in the work

Weaknesses

- Absence of assessment and feedback for art and design students in Year 11
- Provision for progression through briefs in art and design

Commentary

136. Students achieve well and make good progress. They enjoy the courses where much individual help is given and they have good relationships with tutors. In engineering students use industrial machines and equipment safely and they develop independent working skills. Their confidence is developed through working in an adult environment. They are taught

metalworking bench fitting skills and the accurate use of tools through a well-planned course. Their work is marked well and they receive good individual feedback for improvement. The ratio of staff to students is very good, with learning support provided by the school. Students are also taught CAD by using Auto-cad, an industrial software package. With individual help and good support documentation they are able to produce a drawing of a plumb bob, a challenging task. Gifted and talented students are able to extend themselves well.

137. Art and design students' research skills are developed through museum visits. In Year 10, they are taught a variety of drawing techniques and develop good skills. The majority are producing work of a good standard, whilst some are producing work that is very good. Very good resource material is provided to inspire students, who are highly motivated and are achieving well. In Year 11, both boys and girls show an interest in the briefs they undertake, but the briefs given do not offer clear lines of progression as the students move through the course, other than in the changing of context and material.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION [PSHE] AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Overall provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Overall planning and co-ordination.
- Good relationships between teachers and students and between students who have very positive attitudes to this subject.
- A detailed audit of citizenship activities has been undertaken and there are some good examples of cross-curricular provision for the teaching of citizenship.

Weaknesses

- Monitoring to ensure that all subject areas take responsibility for aspects of citizenship.
- Assessment needs to be developed further to include work from across the curriculum so that students' progress can be fully assessed and reported to parents.
- Lack of time means that some aspects are not covered in sufficient depth.

Commentary

138. There were limited opportunities to observe citizenship lessons during the inspection as this is taught as part of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and careers education and guidance at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 the course content is further expanded by the addition of religious studies. In Years 7 to 9, the responsible teacher deals with all aspects of the programme. For most Year 10 and Year 11 groups a team of specialist teachers deal with different elements. A detailed audit has also identified elements of citizenship covered in other curriculum areas. Standards are in line with those expected nationally. Students are making satisfactory progress across Years 7 to 11. They are gaining knowledge and understanding of the topics covered, such as a range of current ethical issues and aspects of government. They are also developing skills such as the ability to consider and put forward a point of view, as they did in a lesson on youth crime prevention.
139. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is also some good teaching. In a Year 8 lesson focusing on crime prevention, clear lesson objectives and a well-structured lesson led to a high level of interest and concentration by the students. Good opportunities were provided for students to discuss and reflect on their ideas so that students developed a balanced and well-informed view of the topic which they were then able to share and explain to others in the class. Where teaching was satisfactory, as in a Year 7 lesson on voting and Parliament, there

was a good range of teaching activities which involved the active participation of students providing them with an insight into the process of voting. However, knowledge and understanding of the actual parliamentary and democratic processes were limited, so that students could not relate the activities they had participated in to the real situation.

140. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management in this subject. She has a clear view of the strengths and areas for development of the current provision. The programme is well planned and a team approach is being developed, particularly at Key Stage 4, where teachers are developing specialisms within the overall PSHE and citizenship programme. There has been some training in citizenship for the co-ordinator and teachers, but further training is needed to ensure that all topics are dealt with accurately and effectively. A further plan is needed to prioritise the actions needed. Evaluation of the programme has started involving both students and staff. Monitoring of provision has also begun but needs to be developed to ensure consistency across the teams. A detailed audit has been completed across all subjects. This is important because the discrete time for the overall programme is limited. All departments now need to be clear about the areas for which they are responsible and carry out assessments to contribute to the overall record of progress being made by students.
141. Students' attitudes and behaviour are almost always good in citizenship. They respond well to lessons, showing that they value the work being done in this area of the curriculum. There was no statutory requirement or programme of study for citizenship at the time of the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

