

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **POPE PIUS X CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

Wath-upon-Dearne

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106962

Headteacher: Mrs A M Winfield

Lead inspector: Roy Hedge

Dates of inspection: 3 - 6 November 2003

Inspection number: 258732

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	719
School address:	Wath Wood Road Wath-upon-Dearne Rotherham
Postcode:	S63 7PQ
Telephone number:	01709 767900
Fax number:	01709 875106
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr Brian Davies
Date of previous inspection:	11 January 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This Catholic comprehensive school is smaller than average, with 719 boys and girls. It serves an area of relatively high unemployment where there are pockets of considerable deprivation and in which many fewer than average families have experience of higher education. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average, though the school believes that many pupils do not make their eligibility known. Standards on entry to Year 7 are below average and there are fewer than average higher attainers at that stage. Very few pupils are of minority ethnic heritage and none were at an early stage of English language acquisition at the time of the inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or for whom statements of special need are maintained is broadly average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9424	J Cassidy	Lay inspector	
30702	P Bowyer	Team inspector	Mathematics
4922	M J Driver	Team inspector	Science
4355	F Earle	Team inspector	History Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE)
11969	J Hardy	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology
20287	D S Harris	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
11044	J N Hedge	Team inspector	English Special educational needs
27665	A Lees	Team inspector	Music Citizenship
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory, as is value for money.** Pupils achieve at least satisfactorily in all subjects except information and communication technology (ICT) and in Years 10 and 11 in modern languages. Management is satisfactory.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and leadership are unsatisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT) so the level of pupils' achievement is not good enough.
- The leadership of the relatively new headteacher is good and the school has the capacity to improve.
- The quality of teaching is not monitored with sufficient rigour to enable remedial action to be taken where it is unsatisfactory.
- The school is highly regarded by its community and is oversubscribed.
- Teachers place little emphasis on the spoken language in French in Year 11 so pupils do not do as well as they should.
- Care for individual pupils, especially those experiencing difficulties, is good.
- Many classrooms are too small and this prevents teachers from using the full range of potential teaching methods. The library is inadequate and fails to encourage independent reading and study.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen and the quality of leadership and management has improved. There is now more unsatisfactory teaching but also more teaching which is either good or better. Most of the issues raised in the last report have been satisfactorily tackled. The quality of provision in ICT and French has declined.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is good by the end of Year 9, satisfactory over Years 10 and 11 and **satisfactory** overall. Girls do better than boys but by less than is the case nationally. At the end of Year 9 and Year 11 standards are average. Achievement is not good enough in ICT, and in French by Year 11. GCSE results fell in 2003 because of staffing difficulties. Results did not meet the over-ambitious targets the school set itself.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and cultural development develop well.** Although the school has a significant minority of challenging pupils, attitudes to lessons are good and behaviour is generally satisfactory, though in a few lessons unsatisfactory classroom management leads to disruption. There is rich provision for pupils' spiritual development. Over half of younger pupils are aware of bullying which, in spite of considerable efforts, the school does not entirely succeed in preventing.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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

**Teaching overall is satisfactory.** It is unsatisfactory in ICT and in Year 11 in French. Lessons in ICT, particularly in Years 10 and 11 are undemanding and are not adequately planned to meet the

needs of the range of pupils. Many waste their time as a result and make too little progress. In French there is too little emphasis on the spoken language with older pupils so they underachieve in this important aspect of the GCSE course. The school has more inexperienced teachers this year than is usual. Sometimes lessons are disrupted by a failure to manage challenging pupils well enough. For these reasons there is too much unsatisfactory teaching of older pupils. Even so, teaching is good or better in six out of ten lessons. Otherwise teaching is at least satisfactory. It is good in English, geography, history, art and design, music and personal, social health and citizenship education. The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils are cared for well. The school works well with parents, its community and with other schools. Many classrooms are too small and the library is inadequate.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall impact of leadership and management is satisfactory.**

The leadership of the headteacher is **good** and the school has made good progress during her time in office. Shortcomings in management noted in the last report have been put right. Finance is managed much better and there is a clear and effective management structure. Planning is directed towards raising standards. Departments are supervised by senior staff. As yet, although there is routine oversight of the quality of teaching, the process has not been rigorous enough to identify and remedy unsatisfactory teaching. Supported by the open style of the headteacher, **the governing body is effective** in exercising its responsibilities in planning and holding the school to account.

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

Parents think highly of the school, which is oversubscribed. They like the teaching and feel that pupils are encouraged to work hard and do their best. Some have concerns about bullying, though almost all think that the school deals well with the issue. Pupils are less sure. More than a half of younger pupils believe that bullying is a problem, though they think it is largely to do with name-calling and other relatively minor harassment rather than violence. The school is well aware of their views and is seeking to remedy the situation. Pupils are confident that they are well taught and that the school has their best interests at heart.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Tackle unsatisfactory teaching, poor lesson planning and inadequate leadership in ICT.
- Check systematically on the quality of teaching and learning across all departments and take action to eliminate any which is unsatisfactory.
- Ensure that teaching is successfully directed towards developing pupils' abilities in spoken French.
- Work with the local education authority and the diocese to continue the improvement of accommodation, particularly the library.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Overall achievement is satisfactory. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Girls do better than boys but by less than is the case nationally. At the end of Year 9 standards are average in all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 11 standards are average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Overall standards are average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards on entry to the school are below average and the school has a number of challenging pupils so achievement overall is satisfactory.
- GCSE results fell in 2003, in part as a result of staffing difficulties.
- Achievement in ICT and in French in Year 11 is not good enough because of unsatisfactory teaching.
- Too few pupils are good at discussing their work.
- Pupils achieve well in English, geography, history, art and design and music because of good teaching.
- Higher attaining boys achieve particularly well in English.

#### Commentary

1. Standards as measured by national tests taken at the end of Year 9 have been at least average in English since 1999, though they declined in 2003, largely as a result of staffing difficulties. The quality of pupils' work seen during the inspection was average. Girls do better than boys but by less than nationally. Both achieve well. Standards of work seen and results of national tests in mathematics and science are average and achievement is satisfactory for both boys and girls. By the end of Year 9 achievement is at least satisfactory in all subjects and good in modern languages, geography, history, design and technology, art and design and music. Standards are below average in ICT, art and design and music, reflecting standards which are below average on entry to Year 7. In comparison with similar schools standards are also average. Results are improving faster than the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.0 (34.0)	34.0 (33.0)
Mathematics	33.6 (34.1)	36.2 (34.5)
Science	30.2 (33.4)	34.5 (33.5)

*There were 130 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. GCSE results declined in 2003. The school experienced considerable staffing difficulties in a number of key areas because of extended absence. From 1999 to 2002, though, results were average. In 2002 they were well above the average of other schools with a similar proportion of pupils claiming free school meals. Overall this represents satisfactory achievement over the five-year period to GCSE given that standards on entry to the school are below average and that there are fewer higher-attaining pupils than average at that stage. The proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSE passes at grades A\*-G has been well above average, indicating that lower-attaining pupils achieve well. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. Until 2003 results had been improving faster than the national trend,



though with significant annual fluctuations. The school did not meet the unrealistic targets it set itself for GCSE results in 2003.

3. At the end of Year 11, lower-attaining pupils and higher-attaining boys achieve particularly well in English because of well-organised teaching. There is satisfactory achievement in mathematics and science, though standards of work seen during the inspection were below average in science. Standards are well below average in modern languages because of a lack of appropriate emphasis on the development of speaking in French. This represents unsatisfactory achievement. Achievement is also unsatisfactory in ICT because of unsatisfactory planning and teaching. Elsewhere achievement is at least satisfactory and is good in English, history, design and technology, art and design and music. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily, as do gifted and talented pupils.
4. Pupils' competence in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, though too few pupils are fluent and confident in discussing their work at length. Classrooms are small and represent a significant impediment to organising pupils for discussion in pairs or groups, but even so more could be done in lessons to improve speaking skills.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	44.2 (49)	52.6 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96.4 (97)	88.6 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98.2 (99)	96.0 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	32.3	34.7 (34.7)

*There were 165 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

The development of pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

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

- Most pupils think highly of the school and have positive attitudes.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- Behaviour is generally good in lessons but can be boisterous and intimidating for some pupils around the school.
- A significant minority of pupils experience bullying and feel that attempts by staff to eradicate it are ineffective.
- The Catholic ethos of the school is strong and inclusive and fosters pupils' spiritual and moral growth.

#### **Commentary**

##### **Attendance**

5. The positive attitudes of pupils to the school are shown by their attendance, which is above the national average. Parents are supportive of the school and encourage their children to attend regularly. The level of unauthorised absence is low. Most pupils arrive punctually to school though bus delays affect some. This sometimes delays the start of the day in tutor groups and assemblies.

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

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
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School data	7.5
National data	7.8

School data	0.4
National data	1.2

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

6. Behaviour is satisfactory. In most lessons it is good because pupils are engaged by good teaching and discipline is firm and fair. When behaviour is less than good it is mainly a consequence of unsatisfactory teaching. There is often a great deal of boisterous behaviour around the school. Temporary exclusions are above average though permanent exclusion is rare.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
693	87	1
5	1	0

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

7. Pupils develop mature and responsible attitudes and respond well to opportunities to reflect on social and moral issues. The PSHCE programme makes a significant contribution to their development. For example, in a lesson in Year 9 on responsible attitudes to sexual relationships, pupils discussed in a mature and open way the moral and social implications of casual sexual relationships. Pupils participate in wider community life. There is an active group working with elderly people in the local community through the Society of St Vincent de Paul. The gospel choir has wide-ranging community contacts and many pupils are involved in special events for young children and the elderly at Christmas. The prefect system and the school council give older pupils experience of exercising responsibility in school. There are fewer opportunities for younger pupils to exercise responsibility and the school council as currently constituted does not include them. Some younger pupils feel that the school is not responsive to their views and opinions.
8. Most pupils like the school and are happy in it. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all the school's activities and benefit from them. However, a significant minority, mainly of younger pupils, recognise that there is some degree of bullying and do not think the school is effective in curbing it. Bullying rarely takes the form of physical aggression but name-calling, spreading false rumours and unkind laughter at the expense of others were all cited as examples of harassing behaviour. The school has taken active steps to deal with this problem and is involving pupils in drawing up the anti-bullying policy. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 10, pupils were asked to comment on the draft policy and to consider the effects of bullying on its victims. Currently, however, pupils who feel bullied experience inconsistent responses from teachers when they speak about their problem, think that bullies are not effectively dealt with and think that the school should be doing more to stop bullying. More needs to be done to reassure them.
9. There is rich provision for pupils' spiritual development. Opportunities for pilgrimages, retreats and voluntary masses are taken up by many pupils. Assemblies are stimulating events in which pupils respond thoughtfully and attentively. They are aware of other people's beliefs and values and show interest and respect towards members of other faiths. They listened carefully to Islamic speakers who visited the school during the inspection and asked thoughtful questions about Islamic belief and practice. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is enhanced in several subjects, such as the study of contrasting lifestyles in geography, of Mexican culture in art and Islamic civilisations in history.

10. The Catholic ethos of the school flows from a strong commitment to Christian values. These inform its communal life and set high standards for teachers and pupils. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and respond very well to opportunities to show practical moral concern. They are energetic supporters of charity events and participate enthusiastically in activities through which the school reaches out to the wider community.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Pupils are cared for well, especially those experiencing difficulties, though there is some bullying. There are good relationships with parents and other schools. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and limits learning in a number of ways.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality and use of assessment are satisfactory.

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

- Teaching and learning are good or better in more than six lessons out of ten.
- Learning is unsatisfactory in ICT, particularly in Years 10 and 11, because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low so they set work which is unchallenging.
- Standards of French speaking are not good enough in Year 11 because teaching lacks challenge and pupils have too little practice speaking and listening to the language.
- There are too many lessons in Years 10 and 11 where learning is not good enough, largely because of the shortcomings in ICT and French. There is also because of poor discipline of challenging pupils in a small number of other lessons.
- Lower-attaining pupils are taught well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

### **Commentary**

11. In almost nine lessons out of ten pupils learn at least satisfactorily and make reasonable progress. Good planning and engaging methods are features of teaching in more than six lessons out of ten; learning is good in these lessons. Some teaching is very good and has considerable flair. Younger pupils, including those with special educational needs experience vivid and engaging French teaching and develop a good accent as a result. Unfortunately this is not carried through to Year 11, so in the long run standards of speaking French are not good enough.
12. English teaching is good. There are good relationships and discipline and the work is demanding. Lessons are tightly planned and have good pace. As in French, though, there is too little emphasis on speaking and listening. Girls in particular are slow to develop confidence in speaking about their work at length because they have too few opportunities to develop confidence and skill through working in pairs and groups. This narrow range of teaching styles, encouraged by the difficulty of organising pupils in flexible ways in classrooms which are too small, is a feature of much of the school's work, and inhibits learning. Overall there is too little emphasis on encouraging pupils to speak at length rather than in short answers.
13. Teaching is satisfactory though inconsistent in mathematics and science. In mathematics there is good use of probing questions though many lessons rely too heavily on the textbook. In science most lessons result in good learning because teachers plan well and devise a variety of challenging tasks. On a few occasions, though, often with inexperienced teachers learning falters because the work lacks variety and challenge. In these lessons pupils' interest wanes. In both mathematics and science there needs to be more emphasis on strategies for bringing the quality of all teaching up to the level of the best in the department.
14. The teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory and as a result pupils make too little progress through their five years in the school. Most lessons are not demanding enough. Teachers' lesson

plans take too little account of pupils' different skills and needs. As a result many, often the highest attainers, are under occupied. They then waste their time and learn too little. The leadership of the department lacks ambition and senior managers have not been sufficiently rigorous in their monitoring of teaching across the school. As a result, there is too much unchallenging and unambitious work, so learning is held back. In French, teaching is good in the earlier years, but by the time pupils get to Year 11 they have fallen behind in the ability to speak French fluently and confidently. Teachers themselves lack the confidence to speak the language with authority at this level and do not insist rigorously on good pronunciation.

15. Other than in ICT and in modern languages with older pupils, teaching is at least satisfactory. It is good in geography, history, art and design, music and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PHSCE).
16. Pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily taught. Teachers are well informed about their difficulties and most adapt work carefully to match their needs. Teaching assistants support them well in many lessons such as Spanish and music though their impact is sometimes lost, in science, for example, through inadequate planning by teachers. Small groups of pupils are withdrawn for help with difficulties in literacy. This teaching is not well planned or sufficiently challenging. Higher-attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily.
17. In most areas teachers assess pupils' work with due care and have a clear sense of how well they are doing. In art and design, for example, teachers use assessment data to set appropriate targets. Assessment is used well in English, mathematics and geography. In ICT, however, progress is not properly checked and little helpful advice is given to pupils to help them improve their work.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 114 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (3%)	15 (13%)	33 (29%)	47 (41%)	12 (11%)	3 (3%)	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.*

**The curriculum**

The school's curriculum is satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of accommodation adversely affects the curriculum in a number of areas to the detriment of pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced.
- The ICT curriculum for Years 10 and 11 lacks appropriate challenge.
- There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. Opportunities for sport are good.
- The library is inadequate for independent study or as a means of promoting reading.

**Commentary**

18. The school's curriculum has adequate breadth and balance and meets statutory requirements. Pupils are grouped for lessons in a variety of ways and these arrangements work effectively. The school offers older pupils fewer vocational courses than is often the case and is planning to improve the range. Good arrangements are made for a small number of pupils for whom the full GCSE diet is unappealing, through off-site courses designed to fit their needs. Some of the work in these courses is very good. These pupils are supported well by learning mentors. Extra-curricular activities after school are somewhat limited by the transport arrangements, but

there is nevertheless a satisfactory range of opportunities. Music activities prominently feature the gospel choir and sports activities are good and much appreciated by pupils.

19. Subject courses are generally well planned to meet pupils' needs, though the ICT curriculum for older pupils lacks ambition and challenge for higher-attaining pupils, whose skills are often neither tested nor extended. There is good provision for pupils' personal, health and social education through a comprehensive programme which includes emphases on citizenship and careers.
20. Pupils with special educational needs follow the same basic curriculum as other pupils and provision for them is satisfactory. A programme to help lower attainers in Year 7 is just beginning. There is some limited use of computer software aimed at specific learning needs and small numbers are withdrawn from lessons for extra help. Older pupils successfully help younger ones with reading.
21. The school is very cramped and classrooms are small. This hinders the use of a flexible range of teaching methods. Work in pairs or groups is difficult to organise without a degree of disruption, so teachers are reluctant to depart from very formal arrangements. Subjects with a practical content such as design and technology, ICT, art and music are particularly affected. There is no specialist accommodation for drama. The library is inadequate. The number and range of suitable books is small and the room is dingy. Access to computers, though very much improved since the last inspection is still difficult for subject departments and learning is adversely affected in art, history, music, and science.

### Care, guidance and support

Care, guidance and support are good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Care for pupils experiencing difficulties is generally good though over half of younger pupils experience or are aware of bullying.
- Child protection arrangements are very good.
- Behaviour is generally monitored and managed well.
- There is good support for Year 6 pupils about to enter the school.
- Most pupils like school and believe that they are helped to make progress.

#### Commentary

22. Pupils are cared for well. There is evident concern among staff for pupils' welfare and the school environment is safe and secure. Teachers know their pupils well. Those pupils who experience difficulties are supported well by subject teachers, form tutors and heads of year. Pupils generally believe that teachers help them to make progress. Many pupils are aware that there is bullying, which typically takes the form of name-calling or other harassing low-level provocation rather than physical violence. Teachers are aware of the problem and have responded by taking sensitive action, but this is an area where further consistent vigilance is required if pupils are to have confidence in the school's arrangements.
23. The school has many challenging pupils. Behaviour is managed well and without recourse to permanent exclusion. Form tutors and year heads as well as senior staff work very hard to maintain a civilised ethos in the school and to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Arrangements for child protection are thorough and very well managed.
24. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school analyses test and examination data in order to identify pupils who underachieve. Form tutors review these findings and work with pupils as part of the arrangements for compiling Records of Achievement. In lessons, though, more could be done to analyse assessment data and use the results to identify underachievement and promote better progress. All pupils are supposed to have targets for all subjects, but this is not always so. In English there are appropriate targets, but not all science teachers set targets and make sure pupils know and work towards them.

25. There are good levels of care for pupils with special educational needs. Staff in the learning support base and in the school generally form caring relationships with them. Many learning difficulties are identified in primary schools and there is good liaison to ensure continuity. Subject teachers and form tutors provide additional information as pupils progress through the school. There is a thorough testing programme in Year 7 which helps to identify and assess needs. There are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and teachers are aware of their contents. Documentation is kept up to date, though the use of these plans is not yet well developed across the school. In particular, the process of reviewing pupils' progress against the targets on the plans is not yet well established as a regular part of classroom assessment. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils though special provision for them is at an early stage of development.
26. Transition arrangements to support pupils as they move from Year 6 in primary school to Year 7 are good, even though the school has to deal with many more primary schools than is usual. Parents speak particularly warmly of these arrangements and Year 7 pupils recognise the support they are given. The quality of support is maintained through pupils' choices of GCSE options and their career choices, which are discussed appropriately at age 16.
27. The school is highly regarded by pupils, who feel they are well taught and cared for. Many, though, particularly younger pupils feel that their voice is not heard. The school council has only recently been revived and only pupils from Years 10 and 11 are represented.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community is good.

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

- There are good links with other schools, especially those primary schools from which Year 7 pupils come.
- The school has a good range of community contacts that enhance pupils' education.
- Learning mentors and a diocesan social worker provide good support for many pupils.
- Parents think highly of the school, which is over subscribed.
- The role and constitution of the school council needs to be developed further.

#### **Commentary**

28. The school has established good relationships with parents, who generally appreciate the school's qualities, especially the levels of care and concern for individual pupils. The school is popular with parents and is over-subscribed. Parents' views are actively sought through surveys and individual contacts. The system for dealing with parents' complaints or concerns works well. There is a parent-teacher association which voices parents' views. A termly newsletter, written in an accessible style, keeps parents informed. All pupils have homework diaries which parents read and sign and which provide a means of communication between parents and teachers. This arrangement generally works well. There are home-school agreements which clearly lay out parents' and the school's responsibilities. Reports to parents about their children's progress are good.
29. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed and most attend annual reviews. Parents have a copy of individual education plans, the co-ordinator attends parents' evenings and invites parents' comments.
30. The school has surveyed the views of pupils and has a recently revived school council, though many younger pupils feel they too should have direct representation and be more involved in school affairs. By limiting membership to older pupils the school is missing opportunities to consult and engage with all pupils on significant personal development activities. Many younger pupils were able to express valid and constructive views on a range of issues to inspectors.

31. There is very good and productive contact with other schools. Year 11 pupils visit all local providers of sixth form education as part of their preparation for leaving Pope Pius. Contacts with primary schools are very good. Prospective pupils have a number of opportunities to sample aspects of life in the school before Year 7 and induction arrangements are held in high regard by parents and pupils.
32. A growing range of community contacts adds significantly to pupils' opportunities. Full-time staff are responsible for the development of enterprise and business contacts funded from the European Objective 1 Fund available to this economically deprived area. As a result a number of valuable educational opportunities have been identified and a wider range of vocational learning opportunities is now available. A learning mentor scheme supports pupils well. Mentors have a high level of contact with their parents as does a part-time social worker employed in the diocese.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the quality of leadership of the headteacher is good. Leadership of senior and middle managers and of the governing body is satisfactory. The quality of management is also satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher's clear vision for the school and her consultative style of leadership are at the heart of the school's good improvements since the previous inspection.
- Planning for the future is well focused on raising standards.
- Oversight of subject departments by senior managers is well established and supportive.
- Teaching is not monitored with sufficient rigour to ensure consistent improvement in quality.

### **Commentary**

33. The school has moved forward well over the past few years since the previous inspection. This is in large measure due to the headteacher's strong practical vision, shared with others, and her energy in ensuring this is translated into action. At the core of this vision, now well expressed in the school's planning, are two strands. The first is to uphold and perpetuate the school's values through care for the individual and the development of pupils' personal qualities. In this the school has been successful. The second, equally important, is to raise pupils' expectations and the standards they achieve. In this respect, too, there has been success, though there is much more to be done.
34. The headteacher has earned the confidence of the staff, governing body, pupils and their parents – all of whom speak highly of the quality of her leadership. As a result the school is popular and over-subscribed. The new leadership team shares the headteacher's vision and, through frequent consultation, is becoming an effective force for shaping as well as carrying forward the school's direction. All senior managers, for example, now have oversight of subject departments and have regular supportive meetings with subject leaders. There is scope for developing this productive partnership so that senior staff have a greater role in holding departments to account for their results and performance. Through a strong planning process involving all staff, the school now has a good plan for improvement that extends beyond the immediate academic year and has the raising of achievement at its core. The leadership team is effective at checking this plan regularly to ensure that key objectives are carried out. These good developments answer the criticism of planning raised in the previous report.
35. Governors are very supportive of the school and are playing an increasingly important role in shaping its direction and holding leaders to account. The headteacher's open, consultative approach is helping the governing body to achieve a fresh understanding of its function. The involvement of governors in recruiting new staff has drawn them more closely into the life of the school and their knowledge of it has increased as a result. Governors are more rigorous than before in questioning results and holding the headteacher to account for the school's



performance, for example where targets are missed and examination results are not as predicted. There is scope for the governing body to be more involved in forward planning and in the development of the curriculum.

36. Management of the school is satisfactory overall, though it has many strengths. The headteacher and senior staff encourage others to be critically reflective about their work. Examination data are effectively analysed to identify areas of weakness and deficiencies in provision. In the course of their oversight, senior leaders regularly observe teaching in subject areas. The quality of middle management – subject and pastoral leaders – is satisfactory overall and in a significant minority of cases it is good. They provide a strong role model for other staff and pupils. However, the leadership roles of these key staff could be further developed so that they not only analyse their subject’s performance but also take more effective avoiding action where they detect weaknesses. To this end, there is scope for more systematic and rigorous observation of teaching so that where there are weaknesses they can be more readily identified and put right.
37. The school has been awarded Investor in People status and takes seriously its obligations towards its staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Performance management is soundly established and playing a useful part in the professional development of staff. The induction of staff new to the school is good. Newly qualified teachers are well supported. A recent audit of staff skills has revealed important gaps in their professional training, which can now be remedied. The school has good links with a local university for the initial training of teachers.
38. The school’s finances are well managed. Significant sums have been carried over from year to year as part of the planning for improvements to accommodation in the future. Educational expenditure is carefully planned with the full participation of governors. Priorities are appropriate and focused on improving achievement. Problems in financial planning apparent at the time of the last inspection have been overcome. The school seeks best value in its spending, supported by the local education authority.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2014906
Total expenditure	1928585
Expenditure per pupil	2631

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	63974
Balance carried forward to the next	86321

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

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good so pupils learn well.
- Boys achieve well at GCSE, as do lower-attaining pupils; on average girls achieve less well than boys.
- There is too little focus on the development of speaking skills.
- There is no permanent head of department.
- Staffing difficulties have affected test and examination results in the last year.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good

Leadership of the subject	Satisfactory
Management of the subject	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

#### Commentary

- Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were average and not quite as good as the previous year. This represents good achievement, in that standards on entry to the school in Year 7 are below average and there are relatively few high attainers. The department did well by more able pupils – the proportion reaching Level 6 was above average.
- By the end of Year 11, standards are average. GCSE results bear this out, though the proportion of A\* to C grades was lower in 2003 than 2002. Girls do better than boys, in both English and English Literature, though by less than is the case nationally. Lower-attaining pupils achieve particularly well and in 2003 more boys than average achieved the highest grades.
- Standards in speaking and listening are below average. Although pupils generally listen carefully, many are very reticent speakers. Vocabulary is not well developed. Pupils respond to questions briefly but they rarely develop and exchange ideas in discussion without considerable prompting. They lack confidence in and experience of extended discourse. Standards of writing and the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar are average. Pupils are able to sift and categorise ideas to make useful notes.
- Overall teaching is good. More than half is good or better and a significant amount is very good or excellent. A small proportion of teaching is not satisfactory. The best lessons are rigorous, expectations are high and lessons move at a very brisk pace. Pupils are given demanding tasks. In all lessons relationships are positive and contribute to learning. Teaching is based on good knowledge of the subject and pupils are often introduced to the background

of the texts they study. Questioning is generally challenging so that pupils make progress with understanding. They respond well, work hard and listen carefully. Standards of behaviour and attitudes to the subject are good. Although for the most part lessons are carefully structured and planned, teachers use quite a narrow range of teaching styles. Although boys frequently respond well to questioning by the teacher, girls are much more reticent and less inclined to participate in this style of lesson. Girls in particular need many more opportunities to develop confidence and skill through pair or group tasks requiring extended speaking. In a small proportion of lessons pace is very slow and too little expected of pupils.

43. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Although the present temporary leadership arrangements ensure that the subject functions adequately on a day-to-day basis, the subject urgently needs a permanent head of department to provide clear vision and lead change. Efforts have been made to redress the staffing problems which have adversely affected recent test results. Curriculum planning, along with a review of teaching and learning styles, in particular the implementation of the national Key Stage 3 strategy, needs further development. Opportunities for drama are limited and the use of ICT as part of English is not yet well established. The library is poor and makes little contribution to promoting reading. Good progress has been made in the use of assessment information and target setting to promote progress.
44. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection. Teaching is still good. The department no longer benefits from strong leadership. There has been no improvement to accommodation described as 'just about adequate' in the last report.

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

45. The school recognises the importance of reading and pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are encouraged to read in tutor time. Reading logs are kept. However, planned and structured opportunities to improve pupils' language and literacy skills across the curriculum are too few. Good practice exists in geography where departmental planning includes regular and extended writing tasks and *eric* (everyone reading in class), is practised, in history where difficult language is explained and the use of writing frames helps pupils organise information and in science where Year 9 pupils were extracting information on electrolysis from a text. However, generally, the use of specific vocabulary is insufficiently emphasised and spelling errors in written work are often uncorrected. The study of grammar in French and Spanish helps pupils with their understanding of English but opportunities for pupils to practise speaking is mostly limited to short answers in response to questions. In physical education, pupils are encouraged to share and explain their ideas.

### **Modern languages**

Overall, provision in modern languages is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Standards in Year 11 and results at GCSE are too low.
- Teaching of French in Year 11 to pupils of higher and average ability, many of them girls, is not challenging enough. These pupils are underachieving as a result, especially in speaking.
- Many lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs achieved well in the 2003 GCSE examinations by gaining a pass grade in French or Spanish.
- A high proportion of the teaching to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good or better. As a result these pupils are doing better than expected.
- Pupils benefit greatly from working with language assistants and from the varied programme of trips abroad and language clubs on offer.
- Pupils of all ages do not receive enough written homework.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Well below average
Achievement	Good	Unsatisfactory
Quality of teaching	Good	Unsatisfactory
Quality of learning	Good	Unsatisfactory

Leadership of the subject	Satisfactory
Management of the subject	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

### Commentary

46. The modern languages department has suffered in recent years from disruptions in staffing which have taken their toll on the morale and achievement of many pupils. This is evident in the series of disappointing GCSE results the department has experienced in the past three years. This legacy remains in the low standards of work among pupils in Year 11, particularly in French. In contrast, however, pupils in the earlier years, who are well taught and eager to learn, are achieving well. The department is more settled than it was and is introducing good new initiatives to capture pupils' interest in languages and keep them alive.
47. In 2003 GCSE results in French and Spanish at grades A\* to C were very low, as they had also been in 2002. Pupils of lower attainment, however, and those with learning difficulties did well to gain a pass grade. The school entered all pupils for the examination – a much higher proportion than the national average. Although girls did better than boys in both languages, many of them underachieved because their results were well below what was predicted of them.
48. In Year 11, standards are well below average in French and below average in Spanish. At this level there is a significant amount of underachievement in French, especially in speaking and writing. Teaching is unchallenging and does not give pupils the opportunities they need to get better at speaking French. As a result most pupils have very English-sounding pronunciation. In both languages, pupils are not doing enough writing of a more advanced type that uses several verb tenses and a variety of words and idioms. This means that more able linguists, of whom many are girls, are not as far ahead as they need to be to gain good grades.
49. Standards in Year 9 are much better than they are in Year 11 and are in line with the national average in both languages. Pupils are achieving well. At this level teaching is vivid and engaging, encouraging pupils to speak and take an active part in their own learning. Many pupils therefore have good accents and pronunciation, even those with special educational needs. Pupils are not as well on in writing as they are in the other skills. They do not receive enough demanding homework that expects them to write about actions in the past or to express their opinions.
50. There are large differences in the quality of teaching and learning. At its best, teaching is very good, even excellent, and makes high but reasonable demands of pupils. Teachers have very good command of their first language which they use nearly all the time in lessons. This encourages pupils to listen carefully and to use the language themselves in a variety of productive ways, such as in pairs. Teaching insists on good pronunciation and carefully builds up language so that pupils surprise themselves by how much they can say. Pupils benefit from using ICT regularly and from brief sessions of speaking practice with the language assistants. However, most of this strong teaching is concentrated in Years 7, 8 and 9. In Year 11 the teaching of French is mostly unsatisfactory. Teachers are much less confident in speaking French and too often they allow poor pronunciation and sub-standard work to go unchecked. Teaching of Spanish in Year 11 is satisfactory and pupils learn correspondingly better than they do in French.

51. The head of department is a very good role model for staff and pupils. Oversight of the department by a senior member of staff is very supportive. Through many recent initiatives, such as a successful trip to Spain and weekly language clubs, the department is gradually raising the profile of modern languages in the school, especially among younger pupils. Pupils know how well they are doing through good regular assessment and the setting of clear targets for improvement. However, the department has not yet tackled the widespread underachievement in Year 11 by ensuring that teaching demands more of the pupils and gets them to speak in the language. Because of the low standards still prevailing at GCSE level, the department has not made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection. However, the good work happening in Years 7, 8 and 9 and the department's strong new initiatives bode well for its potential to improve in the future.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management give the department clear direction.
- The assessment of pupils' work is thorough and effective.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.
- Some teaching relies too heavily on textbooks.
- There needs to be more effective spread of best practice so that all teaching matches the standards of the best.
- The use of numeracy in other subject areas needs more development.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership of the subject	Good
Management of the subject	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Very good

### Commentary

52. The results in national examinations at the end of Year 9 were above average. The results in the 2003 GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 were below average. The trend in examination results is upwards in Year 9. The 2003 GCSE results were worse than those of 2002 and fell after three years of steady increase. GCSE marks already obtained by pupils in Year 11 show that the GCSE 2004 examination results should be in line with those of 2002. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school has varied over the years and both of these sets of examination results represent satisfactory achievement. The standards of work seen were average although some examples of coursework by high attaining pupils are very good, showing strong pupil commitment and a very good understanding of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, largely because of good teaching in lower-attaining sets. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress. Over recent years boys and girls have achieved similarly well.
53. Teaching is satisfactory although it is not consistent. The best lessons are challenging and have high expectations of pupils. Good use of questions engages pupils in these sessions, leading to positive attitudes and good learning, most clearly in many lessons with low attaining pupils, where teaching is usually at least good. Where teaching is less effective, however, there is a lack of engaging discussion leading to a loss of interest and unsatisfactory learning. Most lessons use a three-part format with a numeracy starter although this approach needs

development so that lessons maintain focus. Many lessons rely too heavily on textbook exercises and teachers need to vary their styles and develop alternative learning resources. Key mathematical words are not used consistently enough. The routine marking of classwork and homework, whilst thorough, does not reflect National Curriculum levels, so pupils do not know how to improve their own work. The use of homework is appropriate.

54. The leadership and management of the department are good. There is good organisation and policies are clear. The procedures for assessing pupils are good and allow teachers to identify underachievement. Examination data are used well and analysed, although the analysis needs to be more clearly reflected in the departmental development plan. The monitoring of teaching is satisfactory though not enough is done to spread good practice across the department. This process is made more difficult because lessons are spread around the school and there is no identifiable mathematics area. The use of computers is satisfactory but development is being frustrated by a lack of access to appropriate facilities.
55. The impressive improvements in both examination results and in departmental organisation represent very good progress since the last inspection.

#### **Numeracy across the curriculum.**

56. The use of numeracy in departments other than mathematics is satisfactory. In science pupils rearrange equations and draw a variety of graphs. In geography, pupils analyse data in various ways and use their results to draw graphs and charts. In design and technology pupils make routine calculations, such as the determination of resistance. There has been staff training on common practices in numeracy though it seems to have made little impact. There is a need to develop the teaching of numeracy in other subject areas so that all staff use similar methods. Currently, few departments have developed numeracy strategies or policies within their schemes of work, and this is an area that needs attention.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Results at GCSE were broadly average in 2003 but girls did not do well enough.
- Results at the end of Year 9 were below average in 2003 and standards attained by girls were better than by boys.
- The staffing situation has been stabilised but less experienced staff need more support.
- The range of teaching and learning approaches is too narrow.
- Target-setting procedures are insufficiently developed.

#### **Summary of key inspection judgements**

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership of the subject	Satisfactory
Management of the subject	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

#### **Commentary**

57. Results in the national Year 9 tests improved in 2003 but were below average. Results were in line with expectations resulting from analysis of pupils' prior attainment. Girls did better than boys. At GCSE, results increased slightly in 2003 and were broadly average, but there was

significant underachievement by girls. This corresponds to underachievement by girls at the end of Year 9 in 2000.

58. Standards in Year 9 are average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in knowledge, understanding and skills, and their achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 11 are below average, for example, in terms of understanding of different types of bonding and calculations on power. Achievement is satisfactory. No differences were found in the progress and achievement of boys and girls.
59. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there is a significant core of good and occasionally very good teaching. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations, the lessons are well structured and conducted at a brisk pace, with a suitable variety of tasks to engage and motivate pupils. As a result pupils respond with interest and make good progress, achieving well.
60. There is a large proportion of less experienced teachers, however, and they need more support in order for all teaching to reach this standard. Whilst many lessons are satisfactory, the teaching methods chosen do not lead to a high level of interest from most pupils. Teachers do not always use appropriate diagrams, demonstrations and models to illustrate concepts. Some lessons lack sufficient variety of activity. Teachers' expectations, in terms of the pace and level of work, lack real challenge. There is some unsatisfactory teaching where too long is spent on low-level tasks and the pupils make insufficient progress. The range of teaching and learning approaches has been increased with some group work, pupil presentations, modelling, imaginative writing and use of the interactive whiteboard. The range and balance of styles is still too narrow, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The use of ICT is increasing, but is insufficient and is restricted by a lack of resources. There is not enough independent work and open investigative work. Good practice has been introduced in marking pupils' books with constructive comments but is not yet consistent across the department. Tracking of pupils' progress has been improved but there are no year-by-year specific targets in science in Years 7 to 9.
61. Leadership and management are both satisfactory with significant good features. The department is well organised and standards improved in 2003. There is regular checking of teaching and feedback to staff. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 have been revised but vary in detail of teaching and learning activities. The national Key Stage 3 strategy for science has a positive impact where implemented, but this is not consistent across the department. Considering the staffing difficulties experienced in recent years, which are now resolved, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Some laboratory accommodation is cramped and this restricts the teaching and learning approaches used.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching in the information and communications technology lessons is unsatisfactory, so there is too little learning and pupils make insufficient progress.
- Assessment does not tell pupils how well they are doing or how to do better.
- The curriculum offered for the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 does not meet the needs of all pupils.
- Leadership and management are not focused on raising standards.
- There is a good level of technician support for both discrete and cross-curricular provision.
- Teachers have a good understanding of their subject.
- There are not enough modern computers and rooms are small and cramped.

## Summary of key inspection judgements

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Quality of learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership of the subject		Unsatisfactory
Management of the subject		Unsatisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection		Unsatisfactory

### Commentary

62. When pupils enter the school they have had a variety of ICT experiences but overall the level they have reached is below average. By the end of Year 9 teachers' assessments show that standards are still below average. The highest attainers reach an average level. The majority of pupils have the basic skills to manipulate text, change fonts and colours when using the generic software, but little more.
63. By Year 11, the work seen during the inspection and the outcome of discussions with pupils indicate that standards are below average. The majority of pupils are competent with the hardware they meet and understand the use of software available to them, but they operate below the expected level. The department has no assessment data for Years 10 or 11.
64. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their first three years and achieve at an average level. They acquire knowledge of the main aspects of a range of software. Most Year 7 pupils have experience of Power Point and they are competent in the use of the hardware available. Their progress is hindered by the need to share equipment. In Years 10 and 11 pupils do not achieve as they should. The work set does not recognise that many pupils have a sound foundation in the use of computers, either from earlier lessons or home use. Achievement is unsatisfactory.
65. Teaching is unsatisfactory. In most lessons pupils at all levels are not challenged. In the satisfactory lessons, teachers work with individual pupils, keeping them on task to ensure work is completed. Effective use is made of the interactive whiteboard but pupils have little opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge using the equipment. In unsatisfactory lessons planning does not take account of pupils' differing needs. Objectives lack clarity and are not adequately explained to pupils to ensure that they know what to do and why. Pupils are frequently unable to explain the purpose of the task or what they should achieve. Expectations are low, pupils are not managed well enough and therefore they underachieve. Lessons lack structure and teachers do not vary their teaching style to meet the needs of all learners. Time is poorly managed. An absence of good diagnostic comment means that pupils are not sure what is required in order to improve their work. A large number of pupils are not well motivated in the lessons and this slows down their progress especially when they have to share equipment.
66. Sound schemes of work covering the first three years reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum and are still being developed. Courses available to pupils in the higher years match the needs of a small number but the majority are not suitably challenged. The monitoring of pupils' progress is rudimentary. Little written information is given to pupils and assessment information is not used to set targets for pupils. Any checking on the quality of teaching is ineffective in establishing improvement. There are fewer modern computers than in most schools, and accommodation is cramped. These two factors have a detrimental effect on pupils' achievement.



67. ICT was a key issue at the time of the last inspection. Statutory requirements are now met as a result of the introduction of separate ICT lessons and improvements in equipment levels. However, unsatisfactory subject leadership and management together with unsatisfactory teaching means that progress since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory.

**Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

68. Provision for ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. However, there are not enough computer rooms to meet the demand of other subjects. Almost all subjects have ICT plans in their schemes of work though they are not always implemented. There is effective use of ICT in design and technology. Pupils use computer-assisted design and manufacture to good effect although the opportunities are limited to demonstration in the lower years. In English computer use is well planned although there is little evidence of its use in pupils' work. Pupils in mathematics use ICT to support their statistics course but access to computers is a problem for most classes. All subjects ensure that they carry out sufficient work using ICT in order to satisfy the basic requirements of the curriculum. However work in science is underdeveloped. The school is well aware of the demands on the limited resources and has a clear strategic plan in place, some of which has been achieved ahead of schedule. A number of wireless facilities have recently come into use and more are planned. The school benefits from good technical support which is assisting in familiarising staff and pupils with the wireless facilities. All staff have received some training and are confident users of the technology.

**HUMANITIES**

**Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

**Main Strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are improving.
- There is good teaching, especially in Years 10 and 11, with well-planned lessons which pupils enjoy.
- In Years 7 and 8, the highest attainers are not sufficiently challenged and lower-attainers need better support.
- There has been good progress since the previous inspection.
- Strong leadership identifies and tackles shortcomings.
- There is a good, planned contribution to improving pupils' writing skills.
- Pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve.
- There is too little use of computers to aid learning.

**Summary of key inspection judgements:**

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership of the subject	Good
Management of the subject	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

**Commentary**

69. Pupils achieve well in geography. By the end of Year 9, their knowledge and understanding, below average when they enter the school, have been lifted to nationally expected standards. They have a much stronger awareness of place than the current Year 7 pupils. They use geographical terms appropriately and know how to read maps and use atlases. They can

recognise, for example, that there are two sides to development in National Parks and can respect, understand and briefly explain opposing points of view.

70. Changes to the option system have reduced the high numbers of pupils taking geography in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results have continued to fluctuate but the trend is upwards. In 2003, pupils generally did better in geography than in their other subjects. Shortcomings have been recognised and addressed. The quality of coursework has improved. The gap between the achievement of boys and girls has been narrowing and is now no wider than nationally. These examples illustrate the willingness of leadership to be self-critical and to find solutions which will drive up standards.
71. Much has been done in Years 9 to 11 to match the challenge of teaching to the wide range of pupils' abilities, including the gifted and those with special educational needs so that GCSE results include both high grades and relatively few low grades. Similar development is needed to cope better with the mixed ability groups in Years 7 and 8. A strong emphasis on skills training, especially to develop literacy, is evident throughout. Extended writing, for example, is built into schemes of work and pupils are being helped to improve their ability to describe geographical phenomena. Assessment is good. Pupils know what level they are currently at and how to improve.
72. A small minority of challenging pupils in Year 8 has the capacity to disrupt learning when inappropriate teaching methods combine with the effects of cramped classrooms. Otherwise, pupils' attitudes to the subject are wholly positive. Pupils enjoy geography and respond well to interesting and often innovative lessons. The Year 8 module on Amazonia, for instance, gives pupils the opportunity for charitable fundraising as a result of which the department now "owns" some acres of forest in Ecuador. The planning of lessons is generally a strength. Moving the pupils of a Year 7 class around the room was a graphic illustration of variations in population density. The subsequent use of world maps extended not only the pupils' understanding of why people are concentrated in particular regions but also strengthened, as intended, their limited knowledge of place. What drove learning was the extent to which pupils were involved and engaged and the teacher's high expectations of all of them.
73. The best teaching is in Years 10 and 11 because relationships with pupils are relaxed and positive and the work is challenging. An introductory lesson on farming engaged Year 11 pupils from the outset with a wide-ranging debate on the problems faced by British farmers. When they were set a series of stimulating tasks, learning was driven by their interest. All worked productively and quickly to understand the concept of farm systems. Homework is well used to reinforce class work. ICT is better deployed than previously reported but further opportunities need to be explored. The geography books in the school library are too few and too old to be of any real use for independent work by pupils.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching has raised standards in examinations, especially by boys.
- Good leadership and management are focused on raising standards further.
- The positive attitudes of most pupils make a significant contribution to the quality of learning.
- Assessment of pupils' work gives insufficiently clear advice about how to improve.
- Group work does not fully engage all pupils.
- The pace of some lessons in Years 7 to 9 is too slow.
- Computers for class use are too difficult to access.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good

Leadership of the subject	Good
Management of the subject	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

### Commentary

74. Results at GCSE in 2003 were above average. Girls' results were well above average. Boys' results matched the national average. There has been a significant improvement in boys' attainment and achievement over the past four years.
75. The standards reached by a majority of pupils aged 16 are average. Most pupils can draw upon sound knowledge to comment on historical sources and describe important events and developments in the period they study. They are weaker at explaining why there are different interpretations of past events and in using sources critically to support conclusions. In general, the written work of boys does not match the standard reached by girls. However, among higher-attaining pupils there is no significant difference between boys and girls. These pupils know how to evaluate sources, write well and explain their views clearly. Most pupils make good progress in their knowledge of the past and achieve well. Well-planned and purposeful lessons help pupils with special educational needs to make good progress and they too achieve well as a result.
76. The standard reached by a majority of pupils aged 14 is average. They have sound subject knowledge, know how to use sources to get the information they need and, in their key assignments, write clearly to explain their own ideas and opinions. They are weaker at identifying and evaluating sources independently and in supporting the conclusions they draw with reasons based on evidence. Pupils enter the school with widely differing standards of historical knowledge but overall are below average. They make good progress in their knowledge of the past and their development of historical skills. The achievement of the majority is good. Careful planning for developing literacy in lessons helps pupils with special educational needs to make progress and their achievement is good. In general the standard attained by girls is higher than that of boys. Boys' standards are depressed by lack of detail and poor presentation in their written work.
77. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils aged 11 to 14 is generally good with a little satisfactory teaching. For those aged 14 to 16 it is good. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to plan lessons which advance pupils' knowledge and skills. Good planning for literacy helps pupils to improve their vocabulary and very well-planned assignments provide good opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in research and written presentation. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards the subject. This is a significant factor in the quality of learning. In some lessons in Years 8 and 9 inattention by a minority of pupils slows down the pace of the lesson and group work does not always productively engage all pupils. Assessment of written work does not always clearly indicate how improvements may be made.
78. Good leadership is focused on raising standards. Management is good. Examination results are carefully analysed and curriculum changes made to meet the needs of pupils. Teaching is checked and there is a reflective response to new initiatives. Text-book resources are adequate but difficulty in gaining access to computers is hindering the effective use of ICT. The library is not well-suited for independent learning.

79. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Text-book resources have been improved, although only adequate and standards in public examinations, especially those of boys, have improved.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' progress is checked carefully and achievement is good in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Teachers' good command of their subject encourages pupils in their work.
- There is good assessment of pupils' work in Years 10 and 11 and pupils are told how to improve.
- Pupils have experience of a good range of materials for designing and making.
- The poor quality accommodation is spread around the school, which hinders the establishment of a corporate identity for the subject.
- Resources are just adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum but there is insufficient access to computers.
- Technical support is unsatisfactory in food technology.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

  

Leadership of the subject	Satisfactory
Management of the subject	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

### Commentary

80. In Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils make good progress and reach an average standard, having entered the school below average. Pupils are competent and confident users of basic hand and machine tools. They understand the design process and characteristics of different materials. A large proportion of pupils find it hard to use appropriate technical language when talking about their work. At the end of Year 11, whilst the overall percentage of those gaining higher grades is below the national figures, in some disciplines they match the performance of schools nationally. Resistant materials matched the national average and food technology was close to it in 2003.
81. In the first three years, from a low base, pupils develop their skills and knowledge at a better than average rate. Quality of design, creativity and standard of finish are good. Pupils in the upper years generally achieve at an average level. Some pupils do better than predicted. In graphical products both boys and girls achieve as expected. In resistant materials, girls tend to under-achieve. In food the positions are reversed. Overall GCSE results show a much more even performance than in previous years where the underachievement of boys was more marked.
82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the good lessons, teachers make sure that pupils know the objectives for the lesson and what is expected of them. They know what to do and work productively. Pupils are well-managed and control is firm. Teachers use a range of teaching styles to maintain a good pace and pupils respond positively. The better lessons involve the pupils, which results in good learning. In less effective lessons time is not

managed well and pupils are given too much opportunity to determine the pace. Teachers do not test learning through targeted questioning. There is inadequate time allowed for reviewing how well pupils have tackled the objectives of the lesson. However, learning is sound and the majority of pupils have positive attitudes and a desire to achieve. Teachers know those pupils with special needs and although there is little evidence of subject-specific targets, they do give the extra help that ensures that learning matches that of other groups. Assessment of work, particularly for those on examination courses is good. Pupils know what is necessary in order to achieve higher grades. A significant number seem unconcerned about achieving well, believing that higher grades are beyond them. In attempting to overcome this attitude, teachers give freely of their time outside planned lessons.

83. In the temporary absence of the head of department, the subject is being effectively led and managed. Assessment information helps pupils to improve but analysis could be taken further to influence planning and overall subject management. Teachers generally work to their strengths. The lack of a technician in food technology places considerable pressure on teachers. There have been no changes in the accommodation since the previous inspection. Rooms are small and in need of refurbishment. Equipment levels, with the exception of ICT, are adequate to support the curriculum. There is a need for more opportunities for pupils to use computer-assisted design and manufacturing equipment. The situation within the department has been maintained since the previous inspection. Standards have been consistent. There has been satisfactory progress.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art and design

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and pupils achieve well.
- Leadership and management by the head of department are good.
- Assessment is well used to allow GCSE pupils good knowledge of their progress.
- Sketchbooks are not used for investigation and experimentation and a personal response to the world around us.
- The accommodation and difficulties gaining access to computers detract from pupils' learning.
- The pupils' ability to talk about their work is very limited.
- The non-specialist teachers require in-service training to improve their subject knowledge.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Leadership of the subject		Good
Management of the subject		Good
Progress since the previous inspection		Good

### Commentary

84. Standards are rising. GCSE results have improved year-on-year since the last inspection. Boys' results have improved significantly – more so than girls. Observational drawing features in pupils' work from Year 7 but occasionally shading flattens form rather than accentuating it. Sketchbooks are not used for investigation. Pupils look at European and multi-cultural art but there is little evidence of the local culture with its rich industrial and political traditions. Pupils

produce good ceramic pots inspired by the spiral forms in the Lindisfarne gospels. Portraits indicate increasing awareness of painterly methods. There is limited evidence of the use of computers to generate and manipulate imagery. Pupils enter school with low self-confidence and well-below average knowledge and understanding of art and design. By the end of Year 9 achievement is good and standards have improved but are still below average.

85. Pupils continue to achieve well through to Year 11. They develop above average designing skills and confidently employ a range of two- and three-dimensional processes. They look at Escher, Riley and Dali and are influenced by material as diverse as Venetian masks, New York City and reptiles. Pupils have difficulty developing ideas through drawing and are reluctant to leave their work in what they consider an unfinished state, limiting their independent learning. Their sketchbooks usually remain closed alongside them rather than being a valuable reference source. Their annotation tends to be descriptive rather than evaluative, echoing their difficulties in talking about their own work. The girls are more mature in their approach, reflecting on their efforts more readily. Lower attaining pupils achieve well because lessons offer every pupil the opportunity to develop their skills at an appropriate pace. The highest attainers also achieve well and approximately double the national average were awarded a GCSE A\* grade in 2002 and grade A in 2003.
86. Teaching and learning are good, although non-specialist teachers who teach a small proportion of classes in Years 7 to 9 have insecure subject knowledge and lower expectations of pupils. These teachers need further support or training. Subject specialists teach Years 10 and 11 and learning is consistently good. Pupils are introduced to Australian, African and Mexican art, challenging their understanding of the content and spiritual capacity of painting and sculpture. Lessons are well-planned to build on previous learning but they often end without a review of progress. Team teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very effective, providing a variety of directions for pupils to develop their talents. Assessment is used well to set targets and give pupils a clear view of how well they are doing. There are occasions when pupils might be further stretched with more challenging homework.
87. Leadership and management in art are good. Planning is clearly linked to the school's development plan. Assessment data are particularly well used to analyse the department's performance and inform improvement. Teaching and learning are monitored. Visits to Lindisfarne and local galleries enrich the curriculum although printmaking and ICT play too little part in the department's work. A small proportion of lessons are held in classrooms unsuitable for practical work. The difficulty in gaining access to computers and specialist software makes delivery of the National Curriculum difficult.
88. The department has made good improvement since the last inspection. Achievement is now good and standards have risen. Pupils' observational drawing has improved. There remains occasional disruption from a few pupils. Work for higher attainers is not always sufficiently challenging. Accommodation remains inadequate.

## Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils learn well in Years 10 and 11 because teaching is good.
- The gospel choir and brass group are of a very high standard.
- Musical skills are not sufficiently rehearsed to improve standards further in Years 7 to 9.
- There are insufficient computers for pupils' composition and the music classroom is very small.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership of the subject	Satisfactory
Management of the subject	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

### Commentary

89. Even though standards by the end of Year 9 are below average, pupils are achieving well overall because they enter the school with little experience of music. In Year 11, pupils reach average standards. In 2003 pupils did better in GCSE than in their other subjects. In all years, performing on keyboards and a variety of other instruments is the strongest aspect of music. Composing is the weakest in Years 7 to 9 and more computers are needed in addition to the two already in the department for this to improve. Listening skills are stronger in the early years of the school and in Year 11 there is too little practising of listening skills.
90. There were many good features of teaching and learning in the lessons observed. Teachers use a good range of activities and tasks to help their pupils learn with interest. They question pupils well and the majority of pupils respond accurately. Although they use music terms quite confidently, pupils do not always speak fluently in complete sentences. The quality of the questioning in Years 10 and 11 prompts good discussion and reveals a good level of knowledge. Here also, fluency can be a problem. There are opportunities to hear pupils play keyboards in class and occasionally they comment on the quality of the work heard. This is a useful feature from which pupils also learn and which is not yet established generally within the department. Lessons are lively and proceed at a good pace. They are well-planned with progressive activities to enable pupils to learn and deepen their understanding. Teachers look at pupils' individual work in lessons and encourage and praise what they see, but this is not always sufficiently focused to help pupils to correct mistakes and make progress. Too little time is spent rehearsing for them to improve their musical skills. Units of work are too short for pupils to get to grips with playing, and composition tasks do not make sufficient demands of them. Pupils are well-challenged at GCSE level though, both in music and in the expressive arts course. Good prompt-sheets guide their learning well.
91. Pupils behave well because they are well-managed in class. They enjoy their music lessons and are very committed to the excellent gospel choir and brass group. Small numbers of pupils learn to play instruments in school and teachers are actively trying to increase interest.
92. The leadership and management of music are satisfactory. The teachers, including a learning support assistant, work closely together to provide many enriching experiences for the children including a musical and many opportunities to perform in and out of school. The brass group and choir are greatly in demand in the community and have won awards. The music classroom is far too small for effective practical work and can become a hot and stressful place in which to work.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons.
- Relationships are good and pupils enjoy the lessons and activities.
- There is too little time in Years 10 and 11.
- Review assessment processes to include clear target setting, and consider how end of key stage descriptors are used as a 'best fit' model for pupil performance.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs though there is not enough challenge for higher-attaining pupils.
- The GCSE course is popular and successful.
- The department offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership of the subject	Satisfactory
Management of the subject	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

### Commentary

93. Teachers are committed, enthusiastic, are good role models and have high expectations. Their subject knowledge is good and they are deployed according to their strengths, so that a teacher qualified as a gymnastic coach leads on the gymnastic activities and non-specialist staff with interest and experience in outdoor activities are developing a good programme. Staff relate well to pupils and expect them to work hard yet are sensitive to their needs. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and encourage pupils to persevere.
94. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons. Pupils are given time to acquire and develop skills. Expositions are clear and objectives shared with pupils. Questioning and demonstrations are well used to extend learning and develop understanding. Older pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility. Resources have been developed well. There are photographs on the walls of the gymnasium with examples of balances and notice boards which display national and international-level performers, resource cards with sequences for Year 10 gymnastics.
95. Pupils have a positive attitude and show interest in the lessons. Participation rates and standards of kit are very good. Pupils work co-operatively, taking responsibility for moving equipment, making pairs or groups, showing respect for each other and for the equipment. Learning is satisfactory and all pupils achieve satisfactorily.
96. Standards are average. Boys in Year 7 rugby are above average. Most girls in Year 8 dance were repeating and refining a sequence. Year 10 boys showed good use of space in football. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and make good progress because teachers are sensitive to their needs and support them well. Higher attainers, especially in GCSE theory lessons, are not being challenged sufficiently to develop independence of thought and resourcefulness and become less reliant on a teacher.



97. The curriculum is inclusive and offers good breadth and balance. Gymnastics is a strong feature but there is too little time for core physical education in Years 10 and 11. Staffing is generous, enabling small teaching groups, which helps to compensate for the limited indoor teaching space and enables good relationships to be developed.
98. The department suffered major staffing problems during the last academic year, which had a significant impact on the GCSE results. Staffing is now stable, with three well-qualified teachers, supported by four additional staff, one of whom is a specialist, who bring a range of additional expertise to the department.
99. Assessment is satisfactory with good use of evaluation by pupils in Year 8 dance and feedback from teachers. Target setting needs to be further developed, especially with more able and GCSE pupils, in order to raise standards.
100. The department offers a wide range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities that many pupils attend, at a recreational and school team level. These help to raise standards with motivated and able pupils. The department makes a significant contribution to the life of the school and to the pupils' social and moral development through working together, taking turns, sharing and taking responsibility and with a good understanding of the need for rules in team games.

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

### **Personal, social, health and citizenship education**

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship is good.

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

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good.
- Leadership and management are good.

#### **Summary of key inspection judgements:**

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	-	-
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good

Leadership of the subject	Good
Management of the subject	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	N/A

### **Commentary**

101. In PSHCE lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning were good overall. Teachers are confident and know their subjects well. They are very well organised and plan lessons well with a variety of methods and resources that range from use of very good video tapes and written materials, to paired and individual work and whole class discussion. A video on bullying, which incorporated the experiences of well known personalities engaged all pupils in the class, and formed the basis of a Year 10 lesson where pupils were consulted as to what should be in the school bullying policy. Although not all pupils were confident enough to comment at first, the method adopted by the teacher, particularly paired work followed by class discussion, encouraged input from everybody. Their comments in the lesson showed they were sensitive to how others felt. Pupils' comments on this approach were very positive and felt it gave them a voice in the school. Teachers challenge and inspire pupils and expect them to work hard in lessons.

102. The programme for careers education is taught through the PHSCE course. There is satisfactory planning and preparation for options choices for Year 10 and careful guidance to help pupils to decide what to do when they leave school. Advice about future choices is good and relations with providers of post-16 education are satisfactory.
103. The PSHCE programme is planned carefully, though in Year 11 it is limited to careers education.

## Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- An audit of contributions made by different subjects, although underway is not yet complete.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	-	-
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good

Leadership of the subject	Good
Management of the subject	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	N/A

## Commentary

104. Citizenship is taught as part of the programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education. A dedicated team of teachers from subjects throughout the school, teach PSHE to pupils in Years 7 to 10. Year 11 pupils have careers education and religious education which cover some aspects of citizenship. There is no information on standards in this subject yet, but pupils showed in lessons and in interviews that they can be insightful, empathise with others, have firm opinions and want their voices to be heard. A school council has been formed, which it is hoped will become a voice for all pupils in the school.
105. The course has been well planned to acknowledge the close links between PSHE and citizenship and these are now tied together in a more meaningful way. Group work and involvement has been built into most activities so that teachers can assess pupils' skills of participation and responsibility. The co-ordinator has clear goals set out in the development plan. The audit of subjects is not yet complete but is currently being done by the citizenship teachers themselves. This needs to be completed without delay so that teachers can ensure that all the strands of citizenship are covered and pupils have the opportunity to develop skills of enquiry and participation. Some subjects already cover aspects of citizenship well, such as geography where pupils learn about the global economy, the link between trade and interdependence in developing countries. Year 9 pupils simulated a public enquiry into the re-opening of a quarry by taking on the roles of a local farmer, a café owner, a young unemployed man and a cement-works manager. In a French lesson, opportunities for insight and empathy were seen as pupils learnt how French pupils may have similar problems with English as they do with French. A genuine new understanding was evident here, and the lesson also made a good contribution to their cultural development. The assessment process is currently too new to judge its effectiveness but this appears sound and comprehensive. Certificates will be used

to acknowledge involvement in aspects of citizenship both in extra-curricular activities and those within the community.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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