

INSPECTION REPORT

QUEENSBRIDGE SCHOOL

Moseley, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103497

Headteacher: Mr T. Boyes

Lead inspector: Mr D. Cox

Dates of inspection: 27th – 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 258735

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

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Terms used in this report

*Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for of all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, students aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the students know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, students aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**).*

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 – 16
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	588
School address:	Queensbridge Road Moseley Birmingham West Midlands
Postcode:	B13 8QB
Telephone number:	0121 464 5566
Fax number:	0121 464 5588
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Jenny Baines
Date of previous inspection:	11 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Queensbridge School is much smaller than most other secondary schools and educates students between the ages of 11 and 16. The school shares its campus with Fox Hollies Special School. Queensbridge School is situated in a relatively affluent suburb on the borders of Kings Heath and Moseley in Birmingham. It is an area where there is a wide choice and range of schools, including selective and single sex schools. It draws the majority of its students from inner-city primary schools across a wide and varied area. Many of the communities where students live demonstrate a range of features of significant disadvantage and this is reflected in the high proportion of students who are eligible to claim free school meals. Socio-economic circumstances of the students are well below average. The school's intake is comprehensive and represents, in the 588 students on roll, the full range of attainment. Just under 73 per cent of the school population are boys, and 27 per cent are girls. Overall attainment on entry is well below average.

By the time students are in Years 10 and 11, student mobility is relatively high, with 23 per cent of students not having started in Year 7. The percentage of students' mother tongue not/believed not to be English is very high at 48.1 per cent; there is additional support for 60 students. There are five students for whom English is not their first language and who are at an early stage of English language acquisition.

The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs is above average; the percentage of students with statements of special educational need is also above average. Most students are on the register for moderate learning difficulties or social and emotional and behavioural needs.

A new headteacher took up post in January 2004. This year there has been an unusually large change in staff numbers. The school is a specialist performing arts college. The school also gained the Artsmark Gold in 2002, a School Achievement Award in 2002 and a High Value school award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10297	D. Cox	Lead inspector	
13395	J. Illingworth	Lay inspector	
33139	M. Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics.
19596	B. Treacy	Team inspector	English (Drama aspect of the performing arts)
4145	C. Harrison	Team inspector	Science
11933	D. Driscoll	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
12271	I. Thompson	Team inspector	Art and design
30973	G. Hancock	Team inspector	Design and technology
15462	C. Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography History
20124	J. Peach	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
30072	J. Skivington	Team inspector	Music Religious education
22590	R. Castle	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship (Dance aspect of the performing arts)
27485	M. Sims	Team inspector	Community languages
17923	M. Shaw	Team inspector	Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

3 Harrowby Road
West Park
Leeds
LS16 5HN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** standard of education but provides **unsatisfactory** value for money because of the higher than average funding it receives. Teaching, students' achievement, leadership and management are satisfactory; leadership of the headteacher is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The new headteacher is providing inspirational leadership and there is a clear strategy for moving the school forward.
- There is very good provision for the performing arts, with excellent out-of-school activities. Cultural development is very good.
- Poor attendance to lessons has an adverse effect on students' achievement.
- Many students have weak literacy skills that are a barrier to their achievement in many subjects.
- Students' achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is very poor in Years 7 to 9 as a result of very little teaching of ICT.
- The very good links that the school has with a wide range of local organisations enrich its curriculum.
- Provision for gifted and talented students is very good.

Progress since the previous inspection has been **satisfactory**. The school has gained specialist performing arts status. Standards are rising in line with the national trend. Many of the key issues have been resolved successfully although weaknesses remain in improving students' literacy and ICT skills.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Students' achievement is **satisfactory**. Standards are well below average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Levels of literacy and numeracy are well below average. Weak levels of literacy and poor attendance to lessons adversely impact on standards and achievement in many subjects. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, students achieved very well given their standards at the end of Year 9.

Students' personal development and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **satisfactory**. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development are satisfactory overall and, for the majority of students, make a positive contribution to learning. Attendance, although much improved since the previous inspection, is still below the national average and punctuality is poor. A significant number of students either arrive late for lessons or miss them altogether, and this seriously restricts their progress and achievement. Provision for spiritual and moral development is satisfactory whilst students' social development is good and their cultural development is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. The quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall because students in Years 7 to 9 are not taught enough ICT to allow them to reach the standards of which they are capable and there are not enough opportunities for students to practise their ICT skills in other subjects. The curriculum in art and design is unsatisfactory because it is too narrow. There is a very good range of extra clubs and activities. Provision for gifted and talented students is very good. The school has a good range of support staff. Satisfactory attention is given to the care and welfare of students.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides good leadership. Governance is **satisfactory**. The new headteacher is providing inspirational leadership and there is a clear strategy to move the school forward. Governors have a good knowledge of the school and are actively involved in monitoring its work although do not ensure that the statutory curriculum is provided for all students.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Comments are based on those students and parents who responded to the questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting. The school has the confidence of parents. Parents' views indicate that their children settle in well and staff expect students to work hard although they do have concerns regarding behaviour and being kept informed. Students are also supportive of the school although wish to be consulted more on whole-school issues; they also have concerns about behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve students' attendance to lessons;
- implement strategies to improve students' literacy skills;
- improve students' achievement in ICT.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure students have their full curriculum entitlement;
- provide a statutory collective act of worship;
- provide written reports for ICT and citizenship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Students join the school with standards of attainment that are well below average and by the time they leave Year 11 their standards remain well below average; achievement is satisfactory. There is no significant difference in the achievement of students from different ethnic backgrounds from that of other students in the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well in the performing arts because of very good teaching.
- Students achieve well in French and religious education as a result of the good teaching they receive.
- Gifted and talented students achieve well as a result of the very good provision made for them.
- Poor attendance to lessons has an adverse effect on students' learning and achievement.
- Many students have weak literacy skills that are a barrier to their achievement in many subjects.
- Students' achievement in ICT is very poor in Years 7 to 9 as a result of very poor teaching of ICT.
- Students' achievement in art and design is unsatisfactory because work lacks development and variety.

Commentary

1. In Year 9, standards are above average in the performing arts, average in French and physical education and below average in citizenship, design and technology, history, music and religious education. Standards are well below average in all other subjects with the exception of ICT where standards are very low. Students achieve very well in the performing arts and well in design and technology, French and religious education. Their achievement is satisfactory in all other subjects with the exception of art and design where achievement is unsatisfactory and ICT where achievement is very poor.
2. In Year 11, standards are above average in the performing arts and average in French and physical education and below average in citizenship, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education. Standards are well below average in all other subjects with the exception of ICT where standards are very low. Students achieve very well in the performing arts and well in French and religious education. Their achievement is satisfactory in all other subjects with the exception of art and design and ICT where achievement is unsatisfactory.
3. Achievement is very good in the performing arts because teaching is punchy and enthuses students, and lessons are well structured. Students are keen to do well and there are many examples of high quality productions performed by students.
4. Gifted and talented students achieve well. Teachers provide activities that extend students. The performing arts again stand out in this area, with opportunities for students to work with some of the country's best known dance, television and theatre companies. The successes of the school's approach are plain to see in the much better achievement of higher attaining students

in last year's GCSE examinations and the number who go on to work with professional performing companies.

5. Achievement is unsatisfactory in art and design because work in folders and sketchbooks lacks development and variety. Students' recall of previous work is poor. Teaching has not ensured that students have a thorough knowledge of the subject. Changes in teaching staff are ensuring that the achievement of students was satisfactory during the inspection, although it is clear from collected work that students have been underachieving until recently.
6. Achievement in ICT is very poor because they receive little in the way of an education in ICT in Years 7 to 9. Some work is carried out in geography, but this is far too little to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is unsatisfactory because of students' absenteeism.
7. The school's attendance rate remains below the national average, despite the significant improvement in recent years, and absenteeism continues to have an adverse effect on achievement. The effect of absenteeism can be seen in many subjects, with large gaps in students' coursework.
8. Standards of literacy are well below the national expectation and have an adverse effect on the standards attained in many subjects. The school's strategy for teaching literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory because practice is inconsistent. The work of many students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar but many of these are overlooked in teachers' marking. A very small number of students are at the earliest stage of learning English. The achievement of students who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. Standards of mathematics are well below the national expectation although the teaching of mathematics as a basic skill in all subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory.
9. Students with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. At the time of the previous inspection, achievement was unsatisfactory and good progress has been made in this area.
10. The school set and met realistic targets for improvement in 2003.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.4 (30.8)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	31.0 (29.9)	35.4 (34.7)
science	30.1 (29.9)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 117 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	32 (39)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	71 (73)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	89 (90)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	29.1 (29.5)	34.7 (34.8)

11. Because of the high turn-over in teaching staff, the current levels of standards and achievement seen during the inspection do not always match previous examination results.
12. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average in English, mathematics and science. Students' achievement was poor given their results when they were in Year 6. However, in comparison with schools with a similar percentage of free school meals, achievement was satisfactory.
13. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average. Students achieved very well given their standards at the end of Year 9. The trend in results is in line with the national trend.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development are satisfactory overall and, for the majority of students, make a positive contribution to learning and achievement. Attendance, although much improved since the previous inspection, is still below the national average and punctuality is poor. A significant number of students either arrive late for lessons or miss them altogether, and this seriously restricts their progress and achievement. Provision for spiritual and moral development is satisfactory whilst social development is good and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students show enthusiasm for the performing arts; cultural development is very good.
- The majority of students behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The quality of behaviour is improving following a period of decline.
- The poor attitudes to learning that a minority of students display have an adverse effect on their achievement.
- Some students lack motivation and are over-reliant on teachers.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory and punctuality is poor, and this impairs students' learning and achievement.

Commentary

14. The majority of students respond well to good teaching and enjoy 'hands on' involvement in activities in lessons. They are enthusiastic about the performing arts. They are proud of the school's status as a specialist college, and value the very good opportunities that this gives them to study drama and dance. These positive aspects of students' attitudes, that make a positive contribution to learning, are balanced by weaknesses. Students are not naturally keen and independent learners. Teachers have to work hard to engage and sustain their interest in lessons. A significant minority of students are not well motivated. They have a short attention span, dislike having to listen to their teachers for more than a few minutes, and have difficulty in recalling their previous learning. These students are inattentive and occasionally disruptive in lessons where the teaching is uninspiring and the tasks lack variety and challenge. Sometimes they skip lessons altogether.
15. The majority of students behave well in the classroom and during breaks and lunchtimes. Behaviour is satisfactory in most lessons. In general, it matches the quality of teaching. Students are orderly and focused, and follow instructions in lessons that are well taught, but are inattentive and chatty in lessons where the teaching is boring. Provision for the social

development of students is good. Most subjects can produce evidence of co-operative learning in lessons, in sports and in clubs. There is a long list of extra-curricular activities and many students regularly participate. Team sports foster sportsmanship, playing by the rules and fair play. Religious education brings awareness of social issues such as marriage, divorce and personal relationships.

16. The school has a minority of very difficult students. It has good arrangements for providing them with the support that they need, and for limiting the impact of their behaviour on their peers. Nevertheless, there are times when these students disrupt lessons and harm the learning and progress of the whole class. The number of exclusions is above the national average. The rate of exclusion was high during the previous academic year, but has now begun to fall. This is line with standards of behaviour, which students and members of staff say have improved in the current year.
17. Students with special educational needs have satisfactory attitudes. Their attitudes to work are good when a learning support assistant works with them because they appreciate the readily available help. These assistants often help these students to sustain concentration. Students get on well with learning support assistants because the assistants have a good understanding of the needs of these students. When support is not present, attitudes are less consistent. Students in the learning support unit have good attitudes to their work because they like the more individual attention they receive and enjoy good relationships with their teachers.
18. Provision for cultural development is very good. In religious education there are opportunities to widen knowledge and understanding of a variety of religious customs and practices. In design and technology the colour and textiles of different cultures are celebrated. Modern foreign languages introduce the students to different cultures and practices. The performing arts make a significant contribution to multicultural awareness, including drama and dance production, and a wide variety of musical styles from many different traditions, for example samba, blues, jazz, Indian and Caribbean. Diversity is celebrated and shared and there is an increasing focus on the richness of the cultures represented in the school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	124	13	
White – Irish	5	1	
White – any other White background	11		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	55	14	
Mixed – White and Black African	0		
Mixed – White and Asian	6		
Mixed – any other mixed background	10	2	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	40	4	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	165	39	
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	52	14	
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	1	

Black or Black British – Caribbean	72	23	
Black or Black British – African	6		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	2	
Chinese	3		
Any other ethnic group	29	5	
No ethnic group recorded	2		

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

19. The school has worked hard, and continues to devote much time and effort, to raising levels of attendance. Initiatives and new routines have succeeded in improving attendance rates by four percentage points since the previous inspection. Measures such as first day contact with the parents of absentees and rewards for good attendance have persuaded more students to attend school regularly. However, the school's attendance rate remains below the national average, despite the significant improvement in recent years, and absenteeism continues to have an adverse effect on achievement. There is also some internal truancy. Inspectors observed very low attendance in some classes during the week of the inspection. They noted that the school's procedures were failing to deal effectively with the problem. Teachers could not account for the absentees and did not know whether these students should be in the lesson. Punctuality for registrations and for lessons is poor. Students drift into school after the end of morning registration and large numbers of them are also unpunctual for lessons, disrupting teaching and learning by their late arrival in the classroom.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2002-2003) (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.8	School data	0.9
National data (secondary)	7.2	National data (secondary)	1.1

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all years. The quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Satisfactory attention is given to the care and welfare of students.

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in the performing arts and as a consequence students achieve very well.
- Teachers prepare their lessons well and use engaging activities to motivate students.
- External speakers and performers help to enhance students' learning.
- Teachers do not make enough use of ICT.
- Teachers do not focus enough on improving students' levels of literacy.
- The quality of marking is poor, leaving students not knowing how to improve.

Commentary

20. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in all years and leads to satisfactory learning and achievement.
The quality of assessment of students' work is satisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 106 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (2)	9 (7)	44 (42)	41 (40)	8 (7)	1 (1)	1 (1)

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

21. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is very good in the performing arts and good in design and technology, French, music and religious education. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects.
22. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good in the performing arts and good in French, music and religious education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects.
23. When teaching is most effective, teachers thoroughly prepare their lessons, there is plenty of variety and students are required to be active in their own learning. Resources are appropriate to the students' learning needs and chosen to motivate and generate interest. Very good use is made of external speakers and performers in areas such as dance and drama. Teachers encourage and praise good effort, and give additional time to support learning. This raises students' self-confidence, improves motivation and leads to them achieving satisfactorily.
24. When teaching is less effective there are a number of factors that affect students' achievement. Teaching is often inconsistent, a perfect example of which was seen in design and technology. When challenged and engaged as in food technology, students' attitudes are very positive, they work hard, are interested, take pride in their work and achieve well. In contrast, attitudes to graphics are unsatisfactory and students show little interest or pride in their work.
25. Teachers' marking is unsatisfactory overall; some marking is helpful but much is cursory and fails to correct important mistakes. Students' exercise books reveal weaknesses in the teaching that they receive over time. Teachers often fail to ensure that students' class work and homework are complete, leaving gaps in students' learning.
26. ICT is currently used poorly across the school to support students' learning and achievement. For example, there is infrequent use of authentic texts from the Internet that would improve students' literacy skills.
27. There is not a consistent approach to improving students' literacy skills. In general, students are given only limited opportunities to develop their skills in writing or to read extensively across a range of subjects. The work of many students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar but many of these are overlooked in teachers' marking.
28. The quality of teaching and learning of students with special educational needs is satisfactory. Learning support assistants work closely with teachers so they know how to assist with the lesson. In many subjects learning support assistants are not fully aware of how a sequence of lessons will develop and so do not make as great a contribution as they could. Students withdrawn from a lesson for disciplinary reasons are not taught well enough because the teacher supervising the room to which they are sent rarely has knowledge of the work they are set.

29. Assessment is satisfactory overall. There is a centralised system for co-ordinating assessment of students with detailed and up-to-date central records being kept. However, teachers do not always use this data effectively to modify their teaching to meet the needs of students. Individual education plans inform teachers of the needs of students. These plans are of greatest help to teachers when the plan gives detailed advice on how to meet the needs of students in each subject. This is not consistently the case.

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall; it is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There is a very good range of extra clubs and activities; there is a good take-up of these activities by students. The school has sufficient teaching staff and a good range of support staff. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in Years 7 to 9 are not taught the subjects to which they are entitled.
- There is very good provision for the performing arts, with excellent out-of-school activities.
- Provision for gifted and talented students is very good.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

30. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because students in Years 7 to 9 are currently not taught enough ICT to allow them to attain the standards of which they are capable and there are not enough opportunities for students to practise their ICT skills in other subjects throughout the years. The school is already working with partner schools to improve the provision at Queensbridge. The curriculum in art and design is unsatisfactory because it is too narrow. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.
31. The school has made very good use of its specialist status to provide a wide range of courses in the performing arts. These are not only responsible for developing quality in the performing arts, but also are very important in raising students' self-esteem and improving their social skills. The number and quality of extra activities in the performing arts are outstanding and the number of students attending the activities is exceptionally high. These activities are in addition to those on offer in areas such as sport and the good range of after-school and weekend classes to support students in their academic studies.
32. The school's strategy for teaching literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory because practice is inconsistent.
33. There is satisfactory provision for students with special educational needs. The support provided by Year 10 students for Year 7 students not only makes a good contribution to the learning of the younger students but also is highly valued by the older students as an important way in which they can exercise responsibility. The 'third pathway' in which students attend college for three sessions each week is a good provision. Students enjoy working at the college because of the different atmosphere. They are proud of their achievements in photography, stage design and music recording. They say they are more likely to continue in education after the age of 16 because of this course.

34. Students withdrawn from lessons because of poor behaviour too frequently do not have appropriate work to do. This means that they experience gaps in their learning when returning to their normal class. The curriculum for students in the learning support unit is unsatisfactory because work does not meet the needs of all the students.
35. One great strength of the school is its very good provision for students who are gifted and talented. These are exceptionally wide-ranging activities to ensure that these students are really stretched. The performing arts again stand out in this area, with opportunities for students to work with some of the country's best known dance, television and theatre companies. Students who are particularly gifted and talented receive extra support in many of their subjects, such as working with native speakers in foreign languages or working with university tutors for one day each week in mathematics.
36. Whilst accommodation is satisfactory overall, the new art room is unsuitable for its purpose and offers poor accommodation for the subject because it is too small for the classes that use it, restricting the size and type of work that can be undertaken. In addition, the layout of the room makes it unnecessarily difficult for teachers to supervise their classes. The facilities for physical education are poor and have an adverse effect upon achievement; during wet weather, activities have to be curtailed because of a lack of suitable space and the curriculum lacks breadth.
37. There is a good range of support staff who help students at all times of the day. Behaviour support staff and other adults are having a positive effect on students' behaviour, with the number of exclusions declining significantly last term.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides its students with a satisfactory standard of care. Arrangements to promote their health, safety and welfare are sound. The quality of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory, and there are adequate arrangements for consulting students and taking their views into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements for child protection are good.
- Good levels of supervision make a positive contribution to students' safety and welfare.
- Students have trusting relationships with adults in the school and feel able to turn to them for advice.
- Marking does not provide students with regular, consistent and constructive guidance on how to improve their work.
- Provision for health and safety, although satisfactory overall, is undergoing change and the new systems have yet to be implemented in full.
- Students feel that they do not have enough influence on the running of the school.

Commentary

38. The school's arrangements to safeguard students' welfare are sound overall and have some strengths. High levels of supervision contribute to students' safety. Many members of staff are on duty around the buildings and grounds at the beginning and end of day, between lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes. This reduces opportunities for rowdy and aggressive behaviour and encourages good order and discipline. There is good provision for child protection. The school's procedures comply with national and local guidelines. Members of

staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow in the event of an incident. The school has good policies and systems for ensuring the health and safety of students, staff and visitors, but has not yet put all of them into practice. This is the case with risk assessment, where procedures have recently been revised and improved. Currently there are some minor health and safety issues in the science department, where arrangements are not as rigorous as is usual these days.

39. The quality of personal support and guidance for students is satisfactory. The relatively small size of the school allows members of staff to know students well as individuals and helps them monitor personal development effectively. Activities such as residential visits enhance pastoral care by promoting good and trusting relationships within the school. In general, students have confidence in members of staff, and are willing to turn to them for advice. They respect heads of year for the effective way in which they deal with problems. Members of staff, outside specialists and volunteers give extra support to individuals or particular groups who are giving cause for concern. There are good arrangements for mentoring these students, including the use of mentors from ethnic minorities. All of these additional staff are helping to improve the achievement of students. The school gives students a good choice of sources of advice. Anyone who is reluctant to confide in a teacher can seek guidance from one of the school mentors. The majority of students are happy with the quality of personal support. They say that there is always an adult in school that they can turn to if they need advice.
40. The majority of students are also satisfied with the help that they receive from their teachers regarding their academic work. However, many of them are unhappy with the guidance that teachers provide in the marking of their work. Inspectors agree with their concerns. The quality of marking is uneven across the school. It also varies between teachers in the same department. Marking frequently fails to provide students with adequate guidance on how to improve their performance and reach a higher level of attainment. Comments are often brief and unhelpful, and in some cases students' work remains unmarked for long periods, which affects students' achievement.
41. Students who were interviewed during the inspection felt that the school rarely sought out their views and took them into account. They were aware of the school council but felt that it had little influence over the running of the school. Their negative views reflected their experiences in the recent past. The school has now put in place measures to develop the role of the school council and make it an effective instrument of student influence.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents, who are in general satisfied with the education and pastoral care that it provides for their children. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are very strong and make a major contribution to the curriculum and to students' achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school enjoys the support of some very active and dedicated parents, and students' learning benefits from their work.
- The school is working hard and with some success to improve links with the families of students from the diverse communities it serves.
- The very good links that the school has with a wide range of local organisations enrich its curriculum and enhance the quality of pastoral care of students.
- Partnerships with other schools, colleges and universities, are very strong and effective. They widen students' horizons and extend opportunities for students' personal development.

- Written reports on students' progress, although satisfactory overall, are of uneven quality and fail to meet statutory requirements on the reporting of ICT and citizenship.

Commentary

42. The school has the confidence of parents who in general are supportive of their children's attendance, behaviour and learning. Families are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of good attendance, and are now less likely to take extended holidays in term time. However, a hard core of parents does not make enough effort to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually.
43. Many parents are from ethnic minority groups. Many of them speak English as a second language, and some do not speak it at all. The school is aware that it needs to involve Asian and Black parents more fully in support for their children's learning and has already put in place some effective measures to improve links with these families. The home-school liaison team is a significant strength of the school's provision. Its members cover a wide range of ethnic minority languages, and between them is successfully developing the school's links with parents, as when they contact parents who have not replied to invitations to attend consultation evenings.
44. There is a strong and active parents' group that gives valuable support to the school and to students' learning. Members are involved in fund raising and in developing a scheme of volunteers who will assist students with their learning. Currently there are six parent-volunteers who regularly help in school and a much larger number who help with projects and with fund raising. This level of support is more than is usual in a secondary school of the size of Queensbridge. Governors also give strong support to the school.
45. Information on students' progress is satisfactory overall. The annual written reports inform parents of their child's level of attainment and indicate areas that require improvement. However, teachers' comments are sometimes confusing because they do not always match the grades for attainment. Reports do not contain a discrete section on citizenship or ICT unless the student is taking these subjects at GCSE. As a result, the majority of reports fail to meet statutory requirements.
46. The school has many links with the community that extend students' opportunities for learning and make a positive contribution to provision for pastoral care. Community links are strengthened by the school's status as a specialist performing arts college. It has a particularly strong and effective partnership with Riverside Church, one of its sponsors. Students benefit from the link with Riverside's own School of Performing Arts, and also from services of the church's mentors and youth workers. The Birmingham Royal Ballet is another much valued partner. This link enhances students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by widening their horizons and by providing examples of excellence in the arts.
47. Links with other schools and colleges and with universities are strong and extensive. They have a positive impact on learning; for example contacts with colleges of further education help to raise students' aspirations and motivation. The school is involved in numerous partnerships and initiatives with other schools that aim to improve provision and seek to promote good achievement. Its closest partnership is with Fox Hollies, the special school that shares the same campus. The link between the two schools is strong and effective and to the advantage of both parties. It gives students at Queensbridge the opportunity to develop an understanding of other people within the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory; the leadership of the headteacher is good. Governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher is providing inspirational leadership and there is a clear strategy for moving the school forward.
- The leadership of literacy across the across the school is unsatisfactory.
- The leadership of ICT is poor and results in students underachieving.
- There is a hardworking and dedicated support staff team who serve the school well.
- Effective leadership of French results in students achieving well.
- There is very good leadership of the performing arts, the result of which can be seen in the many high quality productions involving students.

Commentary

48. The school is going through a period of transition. The current headteacher has been in post for only a relatively short time. The headteacher has a highly visible presence around the school, and is approachable to students and teachers. His vision for the school is very clear and staff speak of his enthusiasm, energy and determination to create an environment within which every one of the students feels valued, respected and able to succeed. The school is involved in many partnerships with neighbouring schools. The arrangement is mutually beneficial allowing schools to both share and bring back development ideas. This 'networking' is key to the headteacher's vision for the school, one in which Queensbridge is a leading partner in educational developments and a focal point for working with the community.
49. There is a clear strategy to move the school forward. This includes not only plans to improve the provision for ICT and art and design but also to further develop strong and effective partnerships with other schools.
50. The school does generally run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. There is a hardworking and dedicated support staff team who serve the school well. Communications are effective, particularly with parents who can be assured of a rapid response when they contact the school. The financial management of the school is good. There are effective procedures in place for monitoring expenditure and making informed decisions about school priorities. The managers of the school, supported by a new administration manager, work closely with governors to ensure that the principles of best practice are applied. The school is also very effective in seeking additional resources and uses these effectively to improve its overall provision. However, whilst systems and procedures are clear, policies such as the marking policy are not always applied consistently.
51. There are examples of effective teamwork among staff. For example, in French, effective leadership, supported by a strong committed team, is moving the department forward with clear direction resulting in good achievement. There is very good leadership of the performing arts, the result of which can be seen in the many high quality productions involving students. On the other hand, leadership of the literacy strategy is unsatisfactory and that of ICT is poor. There has been a failure to bring about improvements in these important areas.
52. After a period of four years in which no teacher co-ordinated work for students with special educational needs, a teacher took up this role at the start of the current academic year. A senior post has just been filled to oversee all aspects of special provisions. These two teachers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the current provision and have a very clear view of how to make improvements. Careful checking of the teaching of each student is

beginning to improve the quality of learning. Leadership and management are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because achievement is now better.

53. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The governors have a good knowledge of the school and are actively involved in monitoring its work, either through careful scrutiny and evaluation of the school reports and results, and setting and checking of budgets, or advising on areas such as the development of the performing arts. The school fails to meet its statutory curriculum responsibilities of providing ICT; written reports for citizenship and ICT do not meet statutory requirements and a daily act of collective worship is not provided.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2560240
Total expenditure	2441377
Expenditure per pupil	4152

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	67750
Balance carried forward to the next	186613

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently appointed head of department is a good role model.
- Higher attainers have a good understanding of what they read.
- A significant proportion of the marking is superficial and too little attention is paid to accuracy at the word and sentence level.
- Some students underachieve, mostly because they do not attend lessons regularly.
- Students' levels of literacy are low, which reduces level of attainment.

Commentary

Examination results

54. In 2003, test results at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average. The trend in results is below the national trend. In 2003, GCSE results in English were below average and in English literature they were well below average. However, in English literature, approximately one tenth more of Year 11 was entered for the examination than is the average nationally.

Standards and achievement

55. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well below average, whilst examination results in 2003 placed them in the below average category. However, this does not represent a drop in standards, as the 2003 results only just fell into the below average category. In fact, standards have remained broadly similar.
56. In Years 7 to 9, there is a small group of higher attaining students who express themselves well orally, being fluent and able to use a wide vocabulary. The majority of students, however, are much more restricted in what they say, often expressing themselves briefly and not being able to expand their ideas in response to questions. Students' writing mirrors their speaking and listening, with the work of middle and lower attainers also being marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Higher attainers have a good understanding of what they read and some are able to read aloud with excellent expression. More generally, however, students have limited understanding and the lowest attainers are not able to read independently.

57. In Years 10 and 11, students improve their skills at a rate that means they remain well below the national expectation. Higher attainers learn how to adapt what they say or write to the needs of the situation. Many middle and lower attainers are not able to do this, with the consequence that they use colloquial language in most settings. Such students have only limited skills in structuring their written work to advantage, with the result that it lacks coherence and clarity. Many students continue to make basic errors. In general, students do not re-draft their work, to improve its quality, to the extent that might be expected. Whilst a significant proportion of students have a good understanding of what they read and can communicate this satisfactorily in speech, they frequently are not able to do this in writing.

Teaching and learning

58. When teaching is most effective, the teacher possesses good subject knowledge and has a good understanding of what constitutes high standards. This means that the teacher probes students, inviting them to look for deeper meanings in what they read and analysing how writers achieve their effects. This is all the more effective when the lesson is planned so that new topics or levels of complexity are introduced as the lesson progresses, thus ensuring that students are constantly being challenged and remain interested. In the best lessons seen, when the teachers set a task, they demonstrated to the students how it should be completed. This greatly helped students to know what was being expected of them. Most teachers maintain effective discipline and create an orderly environment in which learning can take place. Learning support assistants are effective and are generally deployed to advantage.
59. When teaching is less effective, the lessons do not include sufficient variety, the work set is not matched to students' needs and the teacher's discipline is ineffective. In general, the work set for higher attainers is not sufficiently challenging to enable them to make good progress. Some of the marking is of sound quality and provides useful guidance on what students should do in order to improve. However, a relatively high proportion of it is superficial and offers little worthwhile advice. In general, there is too little attention paid to accuracy of expression at the word and sentence level. Little use is made of ICT in teaching and learning.

Leadership and management

60. The recently appointed head of department is a good role model as a teacher. He and his colleagues have drawn up an action plan that, if implemented, should enable them to raise standards. The monitoring of teaching has not yet been effective in eliminating unsatisfactory practice and sharing best practice.

Literacy across the curriculum

61. Standards of literacy are well below average. Whilst higher attaining students are able to express themselves clearly and effectively, such students are in the minority. The majority of students are not able to structure their ideas clearly in writing and they do not understand how to adapt what they have to say for different audiences. Their written work is often marred by many errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students' understanding of what they read is often limited and the lowest attainers are not able to read independently. Whilst many students can give a satisfactory oral response to what they have read, they are frequently unable to express their response in the written form. Whilst higher attainers can read aloud with very good expression, in general students lack confidence and their expression is poor.

English as an additional language

62. Standards are well below average on entry to the school. A very small number of students are at the earliest stage of English. The achievement of students who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. Attainment is impeded by low levels of literacy in English and the home language. Students are taught mostly within the mainstream where they are well integrated into lessons. Targeted students have assessment profiles but they are not detailed and are insufficient to monitor their needs and progress made. Most students do not receive support in lessons.

Modern foreign languages

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

Both French and Urdu were inspected as part of modern foreign languages.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys do better in French than in other subjects they take in the school.
- Students enjoy the lessons and teachers use praise well to encourage them; the teaching is good.
- There are some missed opportunities for students to improve their listening skills by hearing more French used in the classroom.
- The use of ICT by students is underdeveloped, especially to increase the range of reading materials available.

Commentary

Examination results

63. In French, examination results at GCSE were above average in 2003, although a lower proportion of students were entered than would be expected nationally. Boys did better in French than in other subjects they took in the school.

Standards and achievement

64. Higher attaining students in French write accurately in a range of topics and can work in a variety of tenses but their listening and reading skills are better than their speaking and writing. Some are good at expressing opinions on where they live and their holidays. Lower attaining students write short paragraphs, and students with special needs, who often have literacy difficulties, write some basic phrases from memory.

65. Higher attaining students produce good quality written work as part of their coursework. Generally, however, writing is an area that is weaker than listening and reading but the difference between students' performance in the different areas is slight. Boys achieve well, because teachers modify tasks to match their needs; boys often volunteer answers in class and participate well. Students develop good skills in reading passages from textbooks but have fewer opportunities to read beyond this.

Teaching and learning

66. The strengths in the teaching are consistent across the department. For example, students are expected to listen carefully to the teacher and relationships are good. Teachers choose activities that are motivating and fun. Students enjoyed, for example, playing a game where they had to guess which card another student was holding. Teachers explain clearly what students have to do and are skilled at supporting the students who have special needs and those who are the highest attainers. The students with special needs get personal attention; teachers are very well aware of their needs and plan their lessons to take this into account. The higher attaining students can sit their GCSE early, or have extra help to improve their grades. Through the links with other local schools this offer is available for a wide range of languages, not just those taught in school. The foreign language assistant is very well used to support all students, especially those with special needs to catch up with work they have missed. Homework is regularly set and is well linked to work that has happened in the lesson, allowing students to follow up what they have learnt in class. Work is well marked and students are very clear what they have to do to reach the next level or grade. Students are well prepared for the demands of the examination and are given some good advice about what they need to do to improve. Teachers use praise well to encourage students to participate in class.
67. ICT is currently not well used by students because access to computers is difficult and so, for example, there is infrequent use of authentic texts from the Internet. Despite this, students develop some good reading skills; they are encouraged to use a range of strategies including working out meaning by looking at context and using the help sheets that teachers have produced for them. Many teachers use English to explain what students have to do and while this means that instructions are clear, there are several missed opportunities for students to hear French being used. Some lessons were also very teacher-dominated; students did not always participate as much as they might, for example practising speaking in pairs or groups. Students also do not record their notes on grammar so that they can revise from them later and there were a few occasions when students could have completed more work if they had been pressed to do so.

Leadership and management

68. The quality of education has improved since the previous inspection. Results have risen and remained above average for the past three years with many students achieving high grades. Assessment is now good: marking is good, results are analysed and targets are challenging. The department uses its links well with other schools to widen the choice of languages and to share expertise. In the current Year 10 there are no students who have opted for French. This problem has been identified as one based on option choices rather than one of students' motivation and there are plans to change the options for next year.

Urdu

Provision for Urdu is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching demonstrates very good subject knowledge which provides an excellent role model for students.
- Students' attitudes to the subject are very good because they are highly motivated to learn.
- The quality of leadership is good, providing a clear vision.
- Students' levels of literacy in Urdu are low, which reduce the level of attainment.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.

Commentary

Examination results

69. Examination results for Urdu were well below national averages in 2003. The small minority of girls taking Urdu performed better than boys overall.

Standards and achievement

70. By the end of Year 9, students' levels of literacy in Urdu are very low. Students do not start studying the subject until the start of Year 9 and most do not bring literacy skills to the subject. Students have highly developed listening skills, understanding most of what is said in Urdu. Most students have growing confidence in speaking and reading aloud in class.
71. By the end of Year 11 students' skills, especially in reading and writing, are still well below average although their listening and understanding are good. Students respond well to role-plays. Low levels of literacy impede attainment although students have developed greater confidence in listening to authentic speech.

Teaching and learning

72. Teaching demonstrates very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the language. Use of authentic language throughout lessons provides an excellent role model for students. Lessons are planned well and learning objectives are shared. A limited range of activities is presented to students. Resources used are limited and dated. Students have no opportunity to use ICT. Learning objectives are not specific enough. Insufficient provision is made for students at a very low level of literacy and also for advanced learners. Assessment does not give sufficient indication of how well students are doing or what their next steps should be. Attitudes to learning are very good, especially among lower attaining students, who are highly motivated and keen to learn. Students collaborate well together and are able to sustain interest over long periods.

Leadership and management

73. Clear vision and direction is provided for the subject. There is good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the language. Lessons are closely monitored and significant support and

professional development opportunities are provided. There are insufficient resources, including no provision for the use of ICT. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory; standards and teaching are of a similar standard to those noted in the previous report.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers aid students' achievement by planning their lessons well and having a good understanding of mathematics.
- Higher attaining students, in some lessons, are insufficiently challenged to reach their potential.
- Monitoring of teaching and students' work effectively supports the raising of standards of teaching and achievement.
- The disruptive behaviour of a minority of students coupled with erratic attendance hinders learning in some classes.
- ICT is not sufficiently used as a teaching resource to support learning.
- The head of department provides good leadership with a clear vision to improvement.

Commentary

Examination results

74. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well below average but continued the upward trend in these results, broadly following the national trend. The GCSE results in 2003 were well below average and were lower than those in 2002.

Standards and achievement

75. By the end of Year 9, students' numerical skills are well below average. Higher attaining students can draw scatter graphs with lines of best fit and describe correctly the type of correlation. Lower attaining students have an insecure understanding of how to create scatter diagrams. The lower attainers calculate the areas of rectangles, as well as the perimeters of regular and irregular shapes. In Year 11, higher attaining students construct stem and leaf diagrams accurately to display data. The lower attaining students collect and show data in both tally charts and bar charts. The higher attaining students build on their previous understanding of solving quadratic equations and simultaneous linear equations. Repeated poor attendance and the disruptive behaviour of a minority of students result in gaps in their learning.

Teaching and learning

76. Teachers aid student achievement by planning lessons well and having a good understanding of mathematics. The use of the 'three-part' lesson gives students a variety of activities that assist their learning. However, the summaries are not as effective as they could be to engage interest

and recap learning. In Year 11, the gifted and talented are well provided for; however, in other classes the higher attaining students are insufficiently challenged. Students usually know how well they are doing, but they are unclear as to how to achieve their target. Working together is not a feature of most lessons; however, in one Year 7 investigation on polygons, this was effectively used. Homework is set regularly, though the presentation of work by students is not always clear enough to assist with their later revision. The students' low levels of literacy hinder their achievement in mathematics. In the better lessons this is developed by reference to key words and insisting on mathematical vocabulary. Helpful, constructive comments are evident in some teachers' marking and this supports students' learning.

Leadership and management

77. The head of department is a good role model, providing good leadership with a clear vision for improvement. Since his recent arrival he has begun to implement many new developments. Teachers work hard to raise standards and there is good teamwork with effectively delegated roles. However, ICT is not used sufficiently as a teaching resource to assist the raising of achievement or develop independent learning. Performance data is used to identify and monitor students' progress. However, this does not fully embrace the use of value added data to further substantiate targets.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. Standards of mathematics are well below average. The teaching of mathematics as a basic skill in all subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory. The mathematics department has consulted with other subjects to establish where and how numeracy is used. Key objectives consequently have been drawn up to advise other departments what, numerically, can be expected of students in each year group. However, in some subjects, numeracy has not become sufficiently embedded. In science for example, calculations are often not well set out and graphs are untidy, often drawn in ink.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher attainers did well in the 2003 GCSE double award science examinations.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully and make good use of the 'three-part' lesson structure.
- The department has good arrangements for testing students, recording test results and checking their achievement in relation to their target grades or levels.
- Some students underachieve in science, mostly because they do not attend lessons regularly.
- Students' notebooks are often disorganised and untidy so that they are not as useful as they should be for revision.

- Teachers' marking of students' written work is unsatisfactory overall so that students often do not get clear information about how they can improve their work.

Commentary

Examination results

79. In 2003, test results at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average but continued the upward trend, broadly following the national trend. GCSE results for science were below the national average in 2003 and boys did better than girls.

Standards and achievement

80. Standards in the current Year 11 are not as good as those indicated by last year's GCSE results. The department has had many changes in staffing; some students have found this difficult and even some higher attainers have become rather lazy and do not always complete their written work. Nevertheless, the highest attaining students do reach standards that are better than expected for their age. For example, in Year 9, students have good understanding of the relationship between frequency and pitch and between amplitude and loudness for a sound wave.
81. Most students have at least a basic level of understanding of the topics they are currently studying. However, students, particularly middle and lower attainers, often find it difficult to express their understanding clearly in spoken or written answers. Often they know the specialist scientific words but use 'everyday' words incorrectly. Students' practical skills are generally better than their standards in other aspects of science.
82. At the end of Year 11, students reach the standards that might be expected, given their test results when they entered the school. Hence their overall achievement by the age of 16 is satisfactory. However, within that overall judgement, there are variations: higher attainers did well in last year's GCSE examinations; girls do not achieve as well as boys because, in some groups, they are in a very small minority and remain quiet and detached while boys answer most of the teacher's questions; some Year 11 students who have recently been taught by temporary teachers do not know as much as they should; a significant minority of students underachieve because they do not attend lessons regularly.

Teaching and learning

83. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully. Teachers make good use of the 'three-part' lesson with some imaginative 'starters' to get students thinking early in the lesson and, at the end of the lesson, brisk and effective question-and-answer sessions to emphasise what students need to remember. In the good, and occasionally very good, lessons, teaching was lively and varied so that students concentrated well and achieved well. In the occasional unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher spent too much time managing students' behaviour so that the class did not learn enough during the lesson.
84. Students' exercise books reveal weaknesses in the teaching that they receive over time. The notes in students' books are usually adequate in terms of content but not always as clear and well organised as they should be, making them less useful for revision. Students often fail to complete their class work and homework, leaving gaps in their learning. Teachers' marking is unsatisfactory overall; some marking is helpful but much is cursory and fails to correct important mistakes.
85. The department has good arrangements for testing students in all year groups. Tests are of good quality; levels are recorded and compared with students' target levels so that extra help can be provided where necessary.

Leadership and management

86. The head of department took up her post only last September and most of her team are also fairly new to the school. She has clear ideas on how she wants to move the department forward and there is already a good team spirit among teachers, support assistants and the technician. However, several teachers are relatively inexperienced and some still need further support and guidance. There are good arrangements for monitoring and supporting the work of the department but they have not yet been in place long enough to ensure consistently good teaching across all teaching groups.

87. GCSE results in 2003 were better than those at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers now provide more opportunities for students to learn for themselves. Hence the department has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Very low	Very low
Achievement	Very poor	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Not applicable	Satisfactory

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since previous inspection	Poor

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students receive little in the way of an education in ICT in Years 7 to 9, so achievement is very poor.
- Students in Years 10 and 11 underachieve because of their poor attendance.
- Little has been done to deal with the problems identified in the previous report.

Commentary

Examination results

88. There are no examination results at present. Students in Year 11 will be the first to sit GCSE examinations this year.

Standards and achievement

89. Students receive little in the way of an education in ICT in Years 7 to 9. Some work is carried out in geography, but this is far too little to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The result is that students do not build on the knowledge, skills and understanding that they have learnt in their primary schools. There is hardly any work in their folders and most are unable to carry out any but the most basic tasks without direct supervision.
90. By the end of Year 11 standards are very low, because students start Year 10 with very low standards and have to spend much of their time learning skills that should have been taught in Year 7. Students are competent in the use of generic skills, such as maximising a window, and are good at using the Internet because they use it outside of school. In other respects, their skills remain at a very low level, with students, for example, struggling to design a party invitation without significant help from their teacher. The poor level of attendance and exceptionally poor punctuality lead to unsatisfactory achievement in Years 10 and 11, despite the satisfactory teaching. Students have great difficulty in remembering what they have done in the past and are further hampered by poor literacy skills and very poor speaking skills.
91. One group of students does better than others in Years 10 and 11: those students with special educational needs. The achievement of these students is satisfactory because teachers are careful about meeting the students' needs as identified on their individual education plans. However, where these students are frequently absent, they have the same large gaps in their work as others.

Teaching and learning

92. There is not enough teaching in Years 7 to 9 on which to reach a judgement.
93. In Years 10 and 11, teachers plan their lessons in great detail, which is particularly helpful to students with special educational needs because the teacher matches the activities to their particular requirements. Other lower attaining students, however, become bored if activities go on for too long, or if the teacher spends too much time talking to the class. There are often very good starter activities used to get the students straight into their work, but these are usually ruined by the poor punctuality of students who wander in up to 30 minutes late, forcing the teacher to stop what they are doing and explain the work to them. Teachers have to work very hard to get any response from students, who have little confidence in their speaking skills. Students also rely very heavily on their teachers, as their independent learning skills are so poor. However, there are also some areas that are unsatisfactory in the teaching. The marking is far too variable from teacher to teacher, so some students get good help, while others do not get enough. The tasks that teachers use are also boring, so there is little for the students to get enthusiastic about.

Leadership and management

94. ICT was a major weakness in the school's provision at the time of the last inspection. The school has made some improvements since that time, but nowhere near enough to provide a satisfactory education in the subject. There has been little in the way of leadership or management until very recently and much has relied upon the goodwill of the head of geography and his team. Nobody is yet ensuring that an acceptable level of education is being provided in the first three years or that the work done by different classes is of a consistently acceptable quality.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. The use of computers in other areas of the curriculum is very poor. Few subjects meet their statutory requirements to use ICT, although music is a shining example of what can be done. As a result, students are not getting the opportunity either to develop new skills, or to make use of those that they already possess.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have good understanding of world development issues because teachers stress them in lessons.
- Learning is enhanced through improved provision of resources.

- Staffing changes have reduced students' continuity of learning and students' achievement.
- Students' work is not monitored enough and as a result students do not always know how to improve.
- The use of ICT is very good and is used well to support teaching.

Commentary

Examination results

96. Results in the 2003 GCSE examination were well below average, but students did as well in geography as they did in their other subjects. The results are below those attained in 2002.

Standards and achievement

97. In Year 9, students develop skills in reading and describing map features but knowledge of places is weak and hindered by poor use of the atlas. They acquire knowledge of terms such as 'condensation' in studies of the water cycle, but are weak in compiling graphs about river flow. Students understand about world issues of development and are aware of the benefits of international trade. Written work is below average because of grammatical weakness and poor expression.
98. In Year 11, students made gains in knowledge of terms such as 'depressions' but are insecure in understanding about weather processes. They improve examination-answering skills with the help of ICT. Students are knowledgeable about the function of settlements. Higher attaining students write well-developed accounts but many others write too briefly without sufficient explanation. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls or of students from different minority ethnic backgrounds.

Teaching and learning

99. In Years 7 to 9, the objectives of the lesson are shared with students, and lessons are well prepared. Learning is effective where teachers make good use of books, reprographic materials and ICT. In a Year 7 class, students made appreciable gains in knowledge about river valleys because computer images and photographs enabled them to understand features and processes better. The monitoring of achievement is weak. Marking is inconsistent with little evaluation of the content or of how to improve. The standard expected in books is not high enough so that achievement does not improve rapidly enough. This is partly due to staffing issues. In Years 10 and 11, students benefit from specialist teaching. Explanations are clear and lead to improved confidence in students' learning. Lessons are orderly and time is well managed. In some lessons, however, not enough is expected of students in discussion and lesson summaries are not effectively used.

Leadership and management

100. Staff changes have presented problems with continuity of learning, and management has worked hard to mitigate the adverse effects on learning, but the monitoring of students work is not rigorous enough. The long-term needs of the subject are understood but priorities and success criteria have not been formalised. The subject makes a good contribution to the ICT programme within the school.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 10 and 11, students' achievement is improving because of the care and guidance they receive.
- Students' understanding of cultural and moral issues is enhanced because teachers emphasise them in lessons.
- Weakness in literacy reduces standards and achievement.
- Students' achievements are not monitored closely enough and as a result students do not always know how to improve.

Commentary

Examination results

101. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well below average and lower than in 2002. This was mainly due to staffing issues.

Standards and achievement

102. In Year 9, students have a basic level of understanding of time-lines and order events sequentially. They describe sources of historical evidence but find interpretation difficult. They gain knowledge of Roman culture and of Islamic beliefs. The written work of many students is weak however, because of poor grammatical skills, and answers are insufficiently explained.

103. In Year 11, achievement is satisfactory, particularly in students' skills of understanding and answering examination questions. They describe evidence in order to make observations about past events. Students achieve well in gains of knowledge about local history, but find difficulty in reading maps of the area to describe and explain agricultural change. Many find difficulty in self-expression and written work is underdeveloped so that standards are below average.

Teaching and learning

104. Students' achievement has been badly affected by a series of staff changes that has slowed continuity of learning. This is being resolved. Lessons have clear aims and are well planned. Students learned particularly well in a Year 9 lesson on World War 1 because the methods generated much interest and led to rapid gains in understanding about 'trench warfare'. Although work is marked, it is inconsistent in quality across the subject so that students are not always aware of how to improve. In Years 10 and 11, students benefit by being taught by experienced specialists. Teachers encourage and praise good effort, and give additional time to support learning. This raises self-confidence, improves motivation and leads to them achieving satisfactorily. Lessons are well structured with variety of activity, but not enough is expected in discussion and the use of lesson summaries is weak.

Leadership and management

105. The subject has identified developmental needs, such as the raising of standards. Arrangements for the use of assessment are clear but students' National Curriculum levels are insecure. Subject monitoring is weak. Since the previous inspection, progress has been satisfactory but has been hampered by significant changes in staff.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Challenging teaching encourages intellectual effort.
- Leadership has a clear vision and commitment to improvement.
- Effective assessment, especially marking, shows students how to improve.
- The large number of non-specialist teachers hinders a consistent approach to learning.
- Missed opportunities for small group discussion mean independent learning and evaluation skills are not positively developed.

Commentary

Examination results

106. Results in the full course GCSE in 2003 were below the national average. The short course results were well below average.

Standards and achievement

107. In Year 9, students are able to distinguish the beliefs of the main religions and their customs, and understand the connection between belief and behaviour. Higher attainers write reflectively and are challenged to think deeper by very helpful marking. Lower attaining students have difficulty writing at length, and unfinished assignments indicate that not all tasks are tailored to their learning needs. However, students with special educational needs achieve as well as the others because they receive extra help in lessons and more suitable material is becoming available.

108. By the end of Year 11, students write thoughtfully on a variety of moral issues, such as abortion and euthanasia, and extended writing improves in quality because of the helpful advice in marking, but it is still weak, particularly in evaluation exercises. The use of supportive writing guidance is beginning to raise the standard of written expression.

Teaching and learning

109. Lessons are well prepared and students respond to challenging assignments, for example, tracking down quotations in the Bible. The marking of students' work is very good, because it really shows them how to improve. This improvement over time can be traced in their subsequent work. Students generally work purposefully in lessons, but there are a significant proportion of disaffected older students whose attitude to the subject is negative, and this can slow down the pace of some lessons and spoil the rapport between teacher and students. Independent learning skills are underdeveloped, not helped in those lessons where there is little

discussion in small groups to encourage evaluation and argument. Assessment procedures are effective. Students know what level they are aiming for, and very helpful comments on their work indicate what they must do to improve.

Leadership and management

110. There is a new vision and commitment to improve standards and achievement. The subject makes a good contribution to the students' personal development, especially spiritual and moral aspects. ICT is supporting learning in the classroom in the form of an interactive whiteboard, and extra-curricular links with churches and visiting speakers are in place and developing. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 because of good teaching.
- Standards in resistant materials and food technology at the end of Year 11 are above average and students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- The leadership and management are unsatisfactory and result in a lack of direction for the subject, and weaknesses in the monitoring of the department's work.
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because students are not being taught systems and control and Computer aided design/ computer aided manufacturing.

Commentary

Examination results

111. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were above average. Girls performed much better than boys overall.

Standards and achievement

112. By the end of Year 9, students are much better at making than they are designing. They use a variety of tools and equipment accurately and with confidence in all material areas. Students' designing skills are weak because an over-concentration upon the acquisition of skills limits their opportunities for creativity and decision making. In addition, the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is organised into separate units each taught by a different teacher. The result of this is that as students move from unit to unit they do not build upon the knowledge and skills learnt earlier and therefore do not develop the higher order skills of analysis, design and evaluation.

113. By the end of Year 11, standards of designing and making are below average; however, standards vary considerably across the department. Standards are above average in food and resistant materials; making skills are very well developed and in food technology good levels of design and analysis are evident. In contrast, standards in graphics and textiles are well below average. Students do not have the opportunity to incorporate CAD/CAM and ICT into their coursework and this is reflected in the standards attained.

Teaching and learning

114. In Years 7 to 9, students benefit from knowledgeable and committed teachers. Lessons are usually well paced and have clear learning objectives; however, in general, lessons are too teacher-dominated with few opportunities given to students to contribute to their own learning or show initiative. The teachers assess carefully students' work and record students' achievement as they move through the year; however, the results of these assessments are not being used to set targets for students or to plan more challenging lessons.

115. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is consistently good in food technology. Teachers have high expectations, lessons have a brisk pace and all students are engaged in interesting practical activities. All teachers carefully monitor coursework and the assessments they make to help students' learning improve. Students' attitudes to the subject are satisfactory overall but vary according to the quality of teaching they receive. When challenged and engaged as in food technology, students' attitudes are very positive, they work hard, are interested and take pride in their work. In contrast, attitudes to graphics are unsatisfactory and students show little interest or pride in their work.

Leadership and management

116. All the teachers are committed and work hard; however, at present the department lacks clear focus and direction. The previous head of department has recently retired and has yet to be replaced. The curriculum is unsatisfactory and too little emphasis has been given to developing systems for the close monitoring of teaching and learning. Furthermore, there is no common expectation for the teaching of design skills and too little emphasis is given to challenging and extending higher attaining students. Results have improved steadily and teaching has improved in Years 7 to 9; however, weaknesses, identified in the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, in knowledge of systems and control and in students' application of knowledge when solving design problems, still remain.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership is good and provides a clear vision for improvement.
- Students' skills and knowledge are well below average.
- Students have underachieved because the curriculum lacks breadth and balance.
- Accommodation is poor and has a negative effect on achievement.

Commentary

Examination results

117. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well below average.

Standards and achievement

118. By the end of Year 9, students' skills are well below average. Work in folders and sketchbooks lacks development and variety, most being two-dimensional in a limited range of media. Students' recall of previous learning is poor with the result that few are able to identify the work of artists that they have studied and there are few references in their work. Although the achievement of most students was satisfactory in work seen during the inspection, it is clear from collected work that they have been underachieving until recently.

119. By the end of Year 11, standards are well below average, reflecting the low level of students' skills at the start of the course, and achievement is unsatisfactory. The work of the majority of students shows little evidence of research, evaluation or exploration of the possibilities of different media. Until recently students have done no large-scale work. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls or of students from different ethnic minority backgrounds.

Teaching and learning

120. Teaching is satisfactory overall and promotes satisfactory learning. The two temporary teachers work hard to broaden students' experience. They know their subjects well and bring enthusiasm to their work. Work is well planned. Effective demonstrations help students to understand what is expected of them and to capture their interest. Occasionally, the introduction to new work goes on too long with the result that students become restive. The consequent difficulties of classroom management lead to time being wasted and progress is slowed. Students benefit from the variety of activities introduced by the artist in residence and the support provided for teachers. However, teaching has not ensured that students have a wide knowledge and understanding of techniques such as large-scale production work and, as a result, students have underachieved.

Leadership and management

121. The difficulties of a department that has no permanent full-time teachers are managed well. New leadership now provides a clear vision for improvement. Nevertheless, improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory because many of the issues identified have not been tackled effectively. The new art room is unsuitable for its purpose and offers poor accommodation for the subject because it is too small for the classes that use it, restricting the size and type of work that can be undertaken. In addition, the layout of the room makes it unnecessarily difficult for teachers to supervise their classes.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management are focusing effectively on improving achievement.
- Challenging teaching encourages real intellectual and creative effort from students.
- The department has fully embraced the positive learning advantages of ICT.
- Basic skills, while being tackled, are still underdeveloped.
- A significant number of students are not well matched to the demands of the GCSE course.

Commentary

Examination results

122. The results at GCSE in 2003 were well below average.

Standards and achievement

123. At the end of Year 9, standards are below average but improving rapidly, thanks to present good teaching and a focus on developing the key skills of rhythm and reading musical notation. Students with special educational needs make equally good progress because they are given extra help and find the practical work well tailored to their abilities.

124. By the end of Year 11, students' ability to sight-read and to find their way around the keyboard is limited, in large part because of previous inconsistent teaching due to staffing problems. A significant number find the demands of the course difficult to meet, particularly the theoretical aspects, and rely heavily on their teachers. The more competent students produce compositions which are original and show a good grasp of structure and shape, as well as being played with confidence and attention to dynamics of sound.

125. Given the well below average prior attainment of students, this represents satisfactory achievement across all years. Achievement is not better because of the disruption to learning due to past staffing problems and students' erratic attendance. Students are now beginning to achieve well.

Teaching and learning

126. Students are absorbed in their lessons, and rise to the challenge and high expectations of their teachers by making good intellectual and creative efforts. Students look forward to the variety of activities, which helps them learn. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, a clapping and stamping rhythm game reinforced a sense of pulse and developed listening skills, as well as sight reading note values. Teachers expect a good level of performance and students respond, giving of their best both in ensemble and individually. Less competent students tend to be more passive and lack confidence, and these receive more help and encouragement thanks to the use of two or three extra support staff in lessons. This makes a big difference to their learning and

achievement. ICT is having a significant effect on learning and students are familiar with the *Cubasis* and *Sibelius* programs, which introduce notation and allow them to compose quite sophisticated pieces. Students are assessed frequently and a careful record of each individual's progress is kept. This means that students know exactly where they are and what they must do to move forward.

Leadership and management

127. The department is now stable and standards are rising, thanks to clear vision and planning, infectious enthusiasm and a total commitment to improvement and excellence. Teachers work together as a very effective team, including the dedicated group of peripatetic instrument tutors. The number of students taking instrumental tuition is growing. The students enjoy a wide variety of extra-curricular enriching activities, which develop their musical and social skills, an exciting samba group, a gospel choir, woodwind and string ensembles, and school productions together with the other performing arts. There are strong links and partnerships with outside bodies, such as the Birmingham Music Services, and involvement in competitions such as the National Festival of Rock and other band festivals.
128. Teaching and learning are now good, the effective use of ICT is a strength, and although present standards are still below average, due to technical and theoretical weakness, rapid improvement is evident across all years.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outside consultants are helping the subject to move forward rapidly by improving the quality of leadership and management.
- Accommodation and facilities are poor and restrict curriculum breadth; they have a negative effect upon students' achievement.
- There is insufficient time allocated in core physical education lessons which constrains students' achievement.
- Students have positive attitudes to the practical nature of the physical education programme, which helps learning.
- The wet weather programme is insufficiently developed to ensure the development of skills.

Commentary

Examination results

129. Only a small group of students took the GCSE examination in 2003 and therefore statistical comparison is not valid.

Standards and achievement

130. All students achieve satisfactorily over the first three years at school. Poor facilities, restricted time allocation for core physical education lessons and staff changes constrain student achievement. Students start to show competence in cricket, rounders, athletics and football and they successfully learn the basic skills required for playing these activities. In cricket and rounders, most students know the basic rules and the basic fundamentals of hitting and catching. Many Year 9 students successfully apply their techniques skilfully within a mini game. Limited time, new staff and poor facilities similarly inhibit Year 10 and 11 students who continue to achieve satisfactorily in the core physical education programme. This was well exemplified in a Year 11 cricket lesson where students adapted their bowling and batting skills between inside and outdoor lessons. Students following a GCSE course are well motivated in the practical aspects of the subject and build successfully on their core physical education programme. However, their standards are constrained by the written part of the GCSE course, as seen in students' files. Standards of the small group of Year 11 students taking GCSE are below average although they are achieving satisfactorily. Achievement is restricted because of the poor facilities; during wet weather, activities have to be curtailed because of a lack of suitable space and the curriculum lacks breadth.

Teaching and learning

131. Students benefit from knowledgeable teachers, who help students to develop a depth of understanding in the subject. For instance, Year 11 students show a good understanding of the footwork needed both in fielding and batting, a consequence of the teacher's good knowledge of cricket. During wet weather, there are often insufficient teaching strategies and methods to involve students actively in physical education. Good use is made of technical words by both the teacher and students. For example, Year 7 students use and understand physiological words related to body warm-up techniques. Teachers are aware of students with special needs and adapt methods to ensure that they achieve as their peers. Good attitudes, behaviour and teacher/student relationships help to underpin students' learning and achievement.

Leadership and management

132. The leadership and management of the subject are very well supported by links with a partner specialist sports college and this is having a positive effect on improving teaching, achievement and leadership. However, the facilities for physical education are poor and when linked with a small time allocation they combine to have a negative effect upon achievement.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The school is a designated specialist performing arts college. This recognition has created new opportunities in drama, music and dance, with new studio and rehearsal facilities. Much of the school's work is **vocationally** based, with the school being a pilot school for the new applied 'performing arts' GCSE. Exciting performance projects in partnership with outside arts professionals have culminated in musicals, drama and animated film, with music performances ranging from rock to Bhangra and steel drums. Students regularly work with Birmingham Royal Ballet, with film animators and studio technicians.

Performing arts

Provision in the performing arts is **very good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good

Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good
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Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to students achieving very well.
- Very good provision for extra-curricular performing arts enables all students, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel in school and beyond.
- At present, the benefits of specialist school status are not evident in all departments.

Commentary

Examination results

133. The 2003 GCSE examination results were below average. Results dipped in 2003 as a result of significant staff changes.

Standards and achievement

134. By Year 9, most students create and perform dances using a range of complex movement patterns and techniques. During a lesson on 'physical theatre', the very highest attaining students combined a sequence of movements such as roll, slide and pivot to very good effect. In drama, students use a variety of dramatic techniques to explore ideas and issues. Students improve vocalisation skills and develop good understanding of character, though lower attaining students do not always vary tone and pace.
135. By Year 11, through various aspects of the performing arts, students learn the value of close collaboration when preparing devised pieces. Relationships are very good, so that students are very supportive of one another in performance. Students use space well and show good awareness of audience, though they are sometimes reluctant to use dramatic pause. The majority reach a high standard in practical work, portraying a character convincingly and engaging an audience's interest. Presentation is very good, showing students' commitment to their work.

Teaching and learning

136. Teachers have very good specialist knowledge, prepare well and plan lessons carefully, as seen in a Year 9 dance class where students were well motivated and achieved very well, through well-designed tasks. There were discernible gains in students' knowledge, skills and understanding, where clear objectives were shared with students, and a brisk pace of learning moved them forward step by step to produce some creditable performances. Developmental work within the department has focused on encouraging students to think, well illustrated in productions such as *Trolley* where students produced and performed their own dance routines.
137. Students are enthusiastic and quickly engage with their work in the performing arts, as was seen in a Year 8 drama class. The teaching was punchy and enthused students, with students learning a great deal about characterisation and relating this to their own knowledge of other characters. Through this type of activity, students are encouraged to become more confident, to co-operate closely together and to realise that the contribution of each individual is vital. A notable feature of the work is that it looks outwards, placing the context of what is happening beyond the classroom into the live theatre or workshop.

Leadership and management

138. Very good leadership and management have moved this area of the curriculum significantly forward since the previous inspection. A strong team approach has been established; the co-ordinator's clear vision has successfully focused on raising standards of attainment. This leadership extends to making teachers in other subjects aware of how practical and performing skills can be used across the curriculum. For example, a most lively and entertaining in-service training session was seen on how learning could be made more active through the use of drama. Even so, it still remains the case that the benefits and ramifications of being a specialist college are not fully understood in all subjects.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Citizenship and the personal, social and health education programmes are integrated fully with a contribution from the performing arts and the humanities.

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of enrichment activities enables students to become involved in the local community.
- Students achieve well through the performing arts and the humanities curriculum.
- There is no effective monitoring or evaluation of the citizenship programme.
- Assessment procedures do not sufficiently inform the achievement that students make.

COMMENTARY

Examination results

139. In 2003, students were not entered for the citizenship GCSE.

Standards and achievement

140. Students join the school with a very wide range of experiences in citizenship. By the end of Years 9 and 11, students have below average skills of enquiry and knowledge about becoming informed citizens. By the end of Year 9, a minority of students have an understanding of the debating process. However, there are limited opportunities for discussion. This was observed in a Year 8 lesson on smoking and the effects of cigarette advertising where students were very passive. However, in contrast, Year 7 students very actively debated water safety. A minority of students experience the actual work of the school council; however, all students are successfully involved in the whole election process.

141. By the end of Year 11, students have investigated such topics as social justice, world politics, racism, prejudice and discrimination. The small group of Year 11 students, following a GCSE course, extend their knowledge of citizenship, considering issues like asylum seekers. Members of Year 10 and 11 are becoming better-informed citizens, however, the skills of enquiry, communication, participation and responsible action are below average.

Teaching and learning

142. Some elements of citizenship are taught well through subjects like the performing arts and humanities. Tutors' lack of knowledge and understanding of the citizenship programme, at

times, constrains students' learning. In the best lessons, teachers have thought about the ways of teaching citizenship; for example, Year 7 students use group work to discuss dangers and responsibilities related to waterways. The large team of tutors teaching the subject leads to inconsistencies in teaching and learning. However, the wide range of enrichment activities enables students to become involved in the local community. Insufficient assessment procedures and inconsistent marking mean that students are not aware of the progress they make in the three different strands of citizenship.

Leadership and management

143. Careful analysis of the citizenship programme has brought about successful integration of citizenship with personal, social and health education although there is no effective monitoring of the impact of the programme across the school. Citizenship was not a curriculum subject at the time of the previous inspection.

Personal, social and health education

Personal, social and health education is delivered through separate lessons, with elements also delivered through other subjects such as science.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work experience is well structured and organised to build students' personal experience of the world of work.
- Careers advice is good and helps students to make informed choices about post-16 education.

Commentary

144. Work seen for students in Years 7 to 11, together with the limited number of lessons seen, indicates satisfactory teaching, below average standards and satisfactory achievement. The Year 7 programme makes a good contribution to students' welfare by helping them settle in when they join the school. Students make satisfactory gains in understanding concepts of anti-social behaviour and in recognising the impact on themselves and others of alcohol or other drugs. In Year 9, a formal start is made to careers' education with preparation for options choices. The school's sex education programme is satisfactory.

145. In Years 10 and 11, satisfactory attention continues to be given to health and drugs education. Well-organised work experience makes a good contribution to careers' education. All students have one week's work experience in Year 10. While efforts are made to match placements to students' career aspirations, there is also a good emphasis on adding breadth to their experience. Good liaison with the Connexions advisor contributes to the good success rate in helping students identify their post-16 routes.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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