

# INSPECTION REPORT

## REDDEN COURT SCHOOL

Romford

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102338

Headteacher: Peter Townrow

Lead inspector: Clare Gillies

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 March 2004

Inspection number: 258739

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 11-16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll; 622

School address: Cotswold Road  
Harold Wood  
Romford  
Essex  
Postcode: RM3 0TS

Telephone number: 01708 342293  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr V Bensilum

Date of previous inspection: 2 February 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Redden Court is a smaller than average, comprehensive, mixed school with over 600 pupils. Its popularity is increasing, with several applicants for each place. Thus pupils come from a catchment area which is increasingly closer to the school - including a mix of housing and socio-economic areas. Overall the socio-economic background pupils come from is less favourable than average; their attainment on entry is below average. The school has an above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The percentage with statements is well above average. The range of special educational needs is wide and includes moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, behavioural difficulties and difficulties associated with reading, spelling and number. The school has specialist provision for up to 12 pupils with speech and language difficulties. A very small percentage of pupils speak English as an additional language, of whom two are at an early stage of learning English. Almost nine out of ten pupils are white with very small percentages of pupils from several different ethnic minority groups. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is above average. Pupil movement in and out of the school between Years 7 and 11 is higher than that seen in most schools although it is decreasing. The school is part of an Excellence in Cities project and involved with Project Trident. In 2002 it achieved a Schools Achievement Award and the following year attained Sportsmark status. It has been awarded Investors in People three times. The local community uses the school's facilities for evening and weekend activities.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20597	Clare Gillies	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
8992	Julian Vischer	Lay inspector	
23413	Robert Allen	Team inspector	English
30553	Rick Fuller	Team inspector	Mathematics
5241	Cyndi Millband	Team inspector	Science
10053	Janet Simms	Team inspector	Art Health and social care
10288	John Richards	Team inspector	Design and technology
32211	Brendan Geoghegan	Team inspector	ICT
14573	Hugh Wareing	Team inspector	Geography
20877	David Pink	Team inspector	History
12110	Roger Bailless	Team inspector	French
15472	Paul Andrews	Team inspector	Music
33131	Glen Hayes	Team inspector	Physical education
32185	Margaret Turnbull	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship Personal social and health education
23411	John Baker	Team inspector	Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Redden Court is an increasingly effective school** where the quality of education is at least satisfactory and pupils achieve well overall. Standards are below average but improving. Pupils receive very good support and guidance. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In 2003, Year 9 pupils achieved very well in national tests compared to their standards of work when they entered the school. Although below average, GCSE results improved significantly in 2003.
- The support and care pupils receive are very good and their wide range of educational needs are met by thoughtful consideration of their individual abilities. Pupils with speech and language difficulties or other special educational needs are taught well and achieve very well.
- The headteacher provides good leadership. The senior management team manages pastoral care well but lacks expertise to monitor and direct the inconsistent practice between and within departments.
- The number of Year 11 pupils continuing into further education is rising. The school successfully raises pupils' self-esteem, confidence and aspirations. Careers advice is very good.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved considerably – it is now good. Pupils get on very well together. The school promotes clear moral and social values to which pupils respond well.
- Pupils' weak skills in reading and writing prevent them from achieving higher standards. Provision for mathematics and religious education is unsatisfactory and that for music is poor.
- During the inspection teaching was good in three out of five lessons. Teachers' marking, the homework they set and their understanding and use of assessment are unsatisfactory. The percentage of very good teaching is relatively low.
- Physical education is a strength of the school with many pupils achieving high standards in a range of sports.
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory because statutory requirements are not met for a daily act of collective worship, information and communication technology (ICT) within subjects, citizenship, and religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- The accommodation in art and drama is poor. The art department has significant accommodation problems. Resources are unsatisfactory overall, particularly in art, mathematics and music.

The school's effectiveness has improved well since its last inspection in February 1998. Standards have gone up and teachers and pupils are aiming higher. The number of computers, the quality of teaching in ICT and consideration of pupils' spiritual and cultural development are better. Weaknesses, highlighted in the last report, remain in pupils' writing, the quality of homework, statutory requirements and monitoring by the senior management team.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Overall achievement is good. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.** In all years, overall standards are below average but better than a few years ago. The steady rise in Year 9 and GCSE results since the last inspection was not maintained in 2002 but results were the best ever in 2003. Pupils achieved very well in the 2003 Year 9 tests; girls performed better than boys but less so than seen nationally, particularly in English. The lack of high grades, especially in mathematics and science, lowered the overall GCSE average points score. The average points score for girls was well below average and that for boys was below. The school has realistic targets for Years 9 and 11 pupils in 2004. The few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieved as well as others. Pupils with special

educational needs make very good progress in reading, mathematics and science and in their personal and social development. They do well in the accredited courses they take in Year 11.

**Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** They get on very well together so that bullying is rare (and dealt with promptly) and racial harmony is evident. Pupils' attitudes are good, especially in lessons. Many participate in extra-curricular sporting activities enthusiastically. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are polite and considerate. Attendance is average and punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

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

**The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory.** Both have improved since the last inspection, especially in Year 7 and in ICT, where there were significant weaknesses. The percentage of very good teaching is not significant enough, however, to push standards higher. Teaching is particularly effective in the lower sets and in groups for special educational needs pupils. Factors that let down the overall standard of teaching are teachers' unsatisfactory use of information derived from assessment data, and the variable quality of marking, ranging from very good to poor.

Despite some good courses for lower attaining and special educational needs pupils, the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall because too few subjects use ICT, too little religious education is taught in Years 10 and 11 and too little time is allocated to citizenship. The art department is housed in old wooden rooms which have been infested with mice, resulting in art work being destroyed. The drama department uses the same rooms. Facilities for physical education are good.

Care, guidance and support are good, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. Pupils receive very good guidance about their future education and careers. The school's partnership with parents is good. The school's partnership with the community is good, especially through the work of the physical education department.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management overall are satisfactory.** Leadership is satisfactory. The headteacher, who leads well, has significantly improved the reputation of the school. Despite strong pastoral care, management is unsatisfactory because members of the senior management team lack expertise to monitor and develop departments' work; they teach too few lessons. Leadership of all departments, apart from music and citizenship, is at least satisfactory. Apart from not meeting all statutory requirements, the work of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are beginning to ask probing questions about standards and provision in different subjects.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school. Pupils are satisfied with the school and responded positively to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Tackle the weaknesses in the monitoring and development work of senior managers and increase the number of lessons they teach.
- Drive up pupils' standards of writing and reading, improve the provision for music and rectify the weaknesses in the provision for mathematics.
- Increase the percentage of very good teaching by sharing good practice, developing teachers' awareness of how pupils learn and introducing greater variety and stimulation into lessons.
- Improve the quality of marking and push forward with the introduction of meaningful and useful assessment and analysis of data.
- Immediately resolve the art accommodation problems and persevere with a long term solution for the art and drama departments.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Introduce a daily act of collective worship, more time for citizenship in all years and religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- Ensure that all subject departments use ICT in lessons.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Standards in all years are below average but they are improving, especially in English, mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9 and in English in Years 10 and 11

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In 2003, Year 9 pupils achieved very well in national tests compared to their standards of work when they entered the school.
- Standards remain below average in Years 7 to 9 in English, mathematics and science.
- Although below average, GCSE results improved significantly in 2003.
- In 2003 GCSE results were at least above average in English literature, art, ICT, physical education and religious education.

#### Commentary

1. The steady, but slow rise in standards since the last inspection was not maintained in 2002 but, despite being below average, results were the best ever in 2003. Predicted results for Year 9 national test results and Year 11 GCSEs were exceeded. The school describes these pupils as having had a better work ethic than in previous years. Present Year 9 pupils are achieving well although standards remain below average in English, mathematics and science. The school has set realistic targets, based on prior attainment, for 2004. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below 20 per cent in this year and in Year 8. As the school's popularity has gone up, more higher attaining pupils enter in Year 7, but they are still in the minority and pupils' standards on entry are below average, particularly in reading and writing. In the 2003 Year 9 tests girls performed better than boys but less so than seen nationally, particularly in English.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.0 (30.3)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	33.3 (30.5)	35.4 (34.7)
science	32.3 (29.5)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 120 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The table on the next page shows the large rise in the percentage of pupils attaining five GCSE grades A\*-C in 2003. Relative to their Year 9 test results, these pupils' achievement was satisfactory. The lack of high grades, especially in mathematics and science, lowered the overall average points score. The average points score for girls was well below average and that for boys was below. The few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieved as well as others. Compared to last year's Year 11 pupils, present Year 11 pupils started their GCSE courses with slightly lower Year 9 results. Inspection evidence and the school's target grades suggest that 2004 GCSE results will be lower than those attained in 2003.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	45 (26)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	79 (73)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	88 (87)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	29.6 (23.5)	34.7 (34.7)

*There were 95 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ*



3. Two factors need to be taken into account when evaluating the school's GCSE results. The first is how many pupils entered the school after Year 7. Last year's Year 11 had a significant number of pupils who came to the school in Years 8 to 11; they did not perform as well as those who had attended the school for five years. In 2003 ten per cent of pupils, some of whom had not succeeded in other schools, were not entered for any GCSE examination.
4. Secondly, every year a number of pupils with special educational needs do not have the capability to take more than a few GCSEs, which lowers the school's results compared to national figures. Nevertheless, these pupils do well in the accredited courses they take. In 2003 over half of the pupils with statements took English GCSE and most took art and foundation level science. Two pupils with statements gained 5 GCSE A\*-G passes, one with a grade A in art. The few pupils who did not take a GCSE due to their learning difficulties all took entry level English, mathematics, food technology and health and social care GNVQ. One pupil took entry level in French. All pupils gained passes in the courses they took.
5. Pupils with speech and language difficulties make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening because they receive very good support from the teacher with responsibility for pupils with speech and language difficulties, from the learning support assistants and from the speech and language therapist. Other pupils with special educational needs also make at least good progress in reading, mathematics and science and in their personal and social development. Year 7 pupils make very good progress in reading due, partly, to additional support they get from Year 9 pupils, who each week help younger pupils. The achievements of pupils with special educational needs across the school are almost always consistently very good.
6. GCSE results in all subjects went up in 2003 and in several of them were above average, as shown in the table below. The percentage of high grades in English literature, art and physical education was encouraging and pupils who sat these subjects performed particularly well relative to the other subjects they took. The results for the GCSE examination in statistics relate to the examination pupils took in Year 10. With such disappointing outcomes, present Year 10 top set pupils will take GCSE statistics in Year 11. The school is fully aware of the weak French and history results in 2003 and has taken steps to improve future performance. The combined design and technology results were lowered by the poor performance in graphics.

**GCSE RESULTS 2002 and 2003 (percentage with grades A\*-C)**

**Bold shows where performance was above average**

	2002	2003	<i>National 2003</i>	Comments
English language	32	54	58	
English literature	29	<b>72</b>	63	10% A*/A grades
Mathematics	26	39	48	No A*/A grades
Science (double)	27	40	51	No A* grades
Art and design	<b>81</b>	<b>83</b>	65	24% A*/A grades
ICT		<b>72</b>	55	
French		21	45	
Geography	46	57	58	
History		0	60	
Drama	35	65	65	
Music		60	68	
Food	24	52	53 all DT	45% all DT
Graphics	all	16		
Resistant materials	DT	50		
Physical education	65	<b>78</b>	55	36% A*/A grades
Religious education		<b>82</b>	59	
Statistics		4.2	66	Only one C grade

7. Present standards and achievement, as seen during the inspection, are summarised in the table below

	STANDARDS		ACHIEVEMENT	
	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 & 11	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 & 11
<b>English</b>	Below expectations	Below expectations	Good	Satisfactory
<b>French</b>	Below expectations	Below average	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
<b>Mathematics</b>	Below expectations	Below average	Good	Satisfactory
<b>Science</b>	Below expectations	Below average	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
<b>ICT</b>	In line with expectations	In line with expectations	Good	Good
<b>Religious education</b>	Below expectations	Below expectations *	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory*
<b>Geography</b>	Below expectations	In line with expectations	Good	Good
<b>History</b>	Below expectations	In line with expectations	Satisfactory	Good
<b>Art and design</b>	In line with expectations	Above expectations	Good	Good
<b>Music</b>	Low	Very low	Poor	Poor
<b>Design and technology</b>	Below expectations	Below expectations	Good	Good
<b>Physical education</b>	In line with expectations	Above expectations	Good	Good
<b>Citizenship</b>	Below expectations	Below expectations	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

\* for those pupils who are not taking the subject for GCSE

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

Pupils' attitudes are good. Their behaviour is good and the exclusion rate is low. Attendance is average and punctuality is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very good relationships which the school promotes very well.
- The school has high expectations of pupils' conduct and works well to achieve them.
- Pupils are free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment.
- The rare cases of disruptive behaviour are very well managed.

### **Commentary**

8. Pupils are cheerful around the school and enjoy participating in what the school has to offer. Although many of them are not overtly enthusiastic or articulate about school life, they work together with a general ease. In physical education pupils are often very keen and well-prepared. In most lessons they are compliant, and sometimes passive, and they are also tolerant. This tolerance reflects the strong spirit, that the school generates so well, of respecting and including every individual. Girls and boys are confident to behave in ways that are natural to them, without fear of ridicule beyond good-natured teasing. Many staff, and especially the headteacher, are very good role models in promoting good relationships and high expectations of behaviour and conduct. For example, they carry the litter-bags around the playground when on duty for the benefit of all. The headteacher's and senior management team's daily presence around the school embody the inclusive and friendly atmosphere.
9. The role of prefects is also very effective in generating an atmosphere where pupils and staff are equally involved. The impact in this case reflects the school's effective promotion of high standards of behaviour. The prefects' principal task is to enforce the uniform code, which they do very well. They also act as behaviour monitors and control the corridors. Pupils generally respond to their admonishments. There is an efficient reporting system to back up any non-responsiveness.

10. Most pupils behave well. The level of exclusions is low and pupils are relatively free from bullying. Name-calling and verbal abuse do occur but the school deals very well with such incidents, through careful monitoring and regular sharing of information by all staff. This means that potentially serious incidents are nipped in the bud before they develop. Communication with parents is immediate and the school has a good reputation for being fair in the more serious cases. Racist incidents are very rare. The headteacher's friendly presence also serves the practical function of low key observation of potential problems.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African

No of pupils on roll
530
6
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
22	1
1	0
1	0

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

11. The school has a tried-and-tested, consistently applied approach to managing disruptive behaviour which individual staff can rely on. The culture of behaviour management in the school fosters a spirit of encouragement and support. The unit for internal exclusions is very well-established having been set up almost five years ago and has a very good impact on discouraging more serious disruptive behaviour.
12. Both authorised and unauthorised absences are broadly in line with the national average. Punctuality is good both at the start of day and in lessons with very few regular latecomers. The school day starts promptly.

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

Authorised absence	
School data:	7.0
National data:	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.9
National data:	1.1

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

13. Pupils on the special educational needs register, with or without statements, who have behavioural difficulties have detailed Individual Education Plans drawn up by an experienced advisory teacher from the local authority's behaviour service in collaboration with the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. These plans, which are regularly reviewed, are of high quality and ensure that the needs of these pupils are very effectively met in mainstream classes for most lessons.
14. The overall quality of the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school provides acts of collective worship in the form of weekly assemblies for each year group, where members of a local church regularly make a positive contribution, and form registration periods in which pupils are given opportunities to consider weekly or other themes. The latter, however, are not mainly Christian in character and times of reflection are not consistently provided. The school's provision, therefore, does not meet statutory requirements. This was a key issue at the last two inspections. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, and in some lessons it is promoted well. In geography, for example, pupils empathised with the problems people face living in hazardous environments where earthquakes occur. In art pupils were encouraged to close their eyes and reflect on a particular piece of artwork and in an English lesson a pupil with special educational needs produced, with support, a impressive four-line poem and read it out. It was a very moving moment and the staff and some of the pupils clapped their appreciation.

15. Pupils' moral development is very good, and this, together with the good provision for pupils' social development, is strongly promoted throughout the school day and in other aspects of provision. Pupils have a very clear sense of justice and of what is right and wrong. They are encouraged to be responsible for their own actions, and the prefect system and the school council strongly support this aspect of provision. There is a clear code of conduct which pupils are aware of. Pupils work well together in class and their relationships with staff are good. The school received an achievement award from Global Action for its involvement in environmental issues concerned with recycling textiles. Pupils' moral and social development is also promoted through the school's involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, in fundraising for a variety of charities and through the school's strongly inclusive policy towards pupils with special educational needs.
16. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school prepares pupils very well for life in a multi-cultural society. School residential trips abroad and in England and day trips to France open up to pupils different cultures and traditions. Aboriginal art and art from other cultures have been a focus of art lessons over the past year, and school productions and drama contribute significantly in raising pupils' cultural awareness. Provision to develop pupils' cultural development in music is poor overall.
17. There have been satisfactory improvements in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the last inspection. The contribution which drama makes is very good, and English, art, geography, ICT, personal, social and health education and physical education all provide well for pupils' personal development. The contribution of religious education is satisfactory. Although some departments - for example, physical education - have identified opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in their departmental policies, this is not done by all departments, and provision across the subjects is, therefore, variable.

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

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but the quality of assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- During the inspection teaching was good or better in over three out of five lessons seen.
- Some very good teaching was seen. Nevertheless, the percentage of very good teaching is not significant enough to push standards higher.
- Teaching is particularly effective in the lower sets and in groups for special educational needs pupils.
- The effectiveness of teachers' marking and their analysis and use of assessment data, to modify teaching and learning is variable within and between departments.

### **Commentary**

18. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, especially in Year 7 and in ICT, where there were significant weaknesses. The percentage of unsatisfactory teaching has dropped considerably and the percentage of good or better teaching has gone up. The best teaching was observed in Year 8, where it was very good in one quarter of lessons. The school has determined to increase the number of very good lessons and has appointed an assistant headteacher to introduce more variety and imaginative activities and to improve teachers' understanding of how pupils learn. This is the correct way forward as, to raise standards further, teaching and learning do need to move into a higher gear.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 122 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 ( 1.5%)	18 (15%)	58 (47.5%)	40 (33.5%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.5%)	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

19. One significant factor that lets down the overall standard of teaching is that teachers' marking continues to be varied, ranging from very good, with helpful comments about how pupils could improve their work, to poor, where numerous pages of pupils' work have not been checked. Marking is unsatisfactory in mathematics and English overall, but in both subjects there are individual teachers who do it well. Homework in several subjects is regularly based on worksheets as teachers are reluctant to let pupils take books home. Evidence suggests that homework is not set regularly and too often consists of finishing off work done in lessons.
20. A few teachers set pupils imaginative and realistic targets for improvement. When teachers write targets in reports, some are not sensible. A Year 9 pupil's report, for example, contained five elaborate and generalised targets for music and none for mathematics or English. Either by questioning pupils in class or marking their work, some teachers are skilled at assessing the levels of pupils' understanding and learning. They then adapt their lesson plans accordingly. This good practice is not shared widely enough.
21. The head of the science department generates assessment data which has the potential to raise standards but, so far, too few teachers use it effectively. Though there are pockets of developing good practice - for example, in geography - the school has not established a consistent approach to assessment. The variation in how teachers use data, within and between departments, has not been tackled by the senior management team.
22. Monitoring the performance of pupils with special educational needs through National Curriculum tests, reading and other diagnostic tests is very good. Pupils' progress is also monitored very effectively each term using their IEPs; assessment information from form tutors and others working with the pupil is fed into this process. All pupils with statements of special educational needs have their statements reviewed at annual review meetings. These meetings are thoroughly prepared and are a very important part of the school's monitoring arrangements.
23. Almost all teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well so that lessons proceed smoothly and without interruption. Their planning is secure but lacks originality. In only a few lessons were the beginnings lively and fun. Apart from when time runs out at the end of lessons, teachers generally manage to review what has been covered. Some have not yet appreciated the subtle difference between what has been taught and what has been learned. Many English lessons include variety and are enjoyable, so pupils want to work hard. Pupils learn less in French lessons, which include too much copying and writing but little speaking, than when they experience a PowerPoint presentation and real French foods.
24. Pupils are generally receptive and attentive and they respond enthusiastically to interesting work. They always contribute well to debates, especially in geography, religious education and personal and social education. They relish role play in drama and citizenship. In all lessons they are interested when topics are related to their own experiences - for example, using dice to understand probability in mathematics, examining different concentrations of blackcurrant juice to understand the arrangements of particles in science or comparing tinned and fresh fruit salad in food technology. Year 8 lower ability pupils were thrilled when they had constructed their own, real, live websites.
25. Some of the most effective teaching was seen in the lower sets and in the groups for pupils with special educational needs. The two excellent lessons, in English and science, were with such groups. When pupils are withdrawn for specific support in English and mathematics or in Years 10 and 11 for entry level English or the ASDAN Youth Award, the teaching and learning are consistently

good. Pupils with special educational needs also do well in science, ICT, physical education and religious education and very well in art and geography. Signing, where appropriate, is used to reinforce communication and, for a few pupils with speech and language difficulties, laptops and electronic communicators are being introduced.

26. In a small number of lessons, teachers do not structure work carefully enough for each individual pupil with special educational needs, and other pupils with low attainment, and this at times makes it more difficult for them to learn effectively. Furthermore, Individual Education Plans are not always used to assess progress on pupils' priority learning or behaviour targets. Whether in withdrawn groups or in mainstream lessons the support provided by the learning support assistants is always good and at times very good. The speech and language therapist provides very good therapeutic support to the pupils who have difficulties. This ensures that their communication needs are met very effectively.
27. Weaknesses observed in teaching during the week of the inspection included not giving high ability pupils work that really stretched them, missing opportunities to get pupils to read aloud, and accepting very short answers, either verbally or in writing, when longer responses were possible. There is much good practice but also much that is just satisfactory. The former is not shared enough, either within departments or between them, and the senior management team has not yet rigorously observed lessons to see what works well and what could be improved.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities, are good. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Statutory requirements for ICT in subjects, citizenship and religious education in Years 10 and 11 are not met. The school does not conduct a daily act of worship.
- The curriculum for physical education and provision for pupils with special educational needs are strengths of the school.
- The breadth of extra-curricular activities is good, and very good in sports.
- The curriculum for music and citizenship is too narrow and elements of the design and technology curriculum are not fully in place.
- The accommodation in art and drama is poor. The art department has significant accommodation problems. Resources are unsatisfactory overall, particularly in art, mathematics and music.

### **Commentary**

28. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because the statutory requirements for music, citizenship, ICT in subjects and religious education in Years 10 and 11 are not met. The school does not meet requirements for a daily collective act of worship for all pupils. The opportunities for physical education and sport, however, are very good. The personal, social and health education course covers the required sex and relationships and drug education. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language, have good access to the curriculum. There are good arrangements for gifted and talented pupils. The enrichment of the curriculum through a wide range of extra activities including clubs, productions, visits and visitors is good.
29. In Years 7 to 9 there are weaknesses in some subjects. There are too few opportunities for developing reading and writing in all subjects, although in history pupils are helped to develop their writing. ICT, whilst good when taught as a discrete subject, is not used enough by other subjects, which is a statutory requirement. The lack of access to ICT, particularly computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture (CAD/CAM) software, hinders achievement in design and technology. One class in Year 7 does not have food technology lessons, which again has an impact on standards in that subject; there are also too few sessions spent working on graphics. In Years 10 and 11 the provision for religious education is unsatisfactory, because it does not meet

the statutory requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In French, lower achieving pupils are on a course for which there is no obvious progression route.

30. There are many, varied opportunities for pupils to extend their learning in the arts. Year 9 pupils visit a local French language centre, Year 10 history pupils visit the Imperial War Museum and drama pupils go to local productions. Visitors to the school support art, drama and mathematics. Drama productions are staged annually. Pupils are supported in their homework in a computer club. An Easter School includes a good range of activities for gifted and talented pupils. School visits overseas are available. There are very limited activities to support music. However, competitive team sports in soccer, volleyball, rugby and athletics are well supported. Visits from sports coaches enhance the provision in cricket, rugby and athletics. Jazz dance is available during the spring term.
31. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all pupils through its complex setting arrangements and this it generally does. Curriculum innovation is good. In Years 10 and 11 effective work-related courses are available. In mathematics pupils sit GCSE examinations from Year 9. However, the monitoring and evaluation of these innovations are not rigorous enough to be sure that they are cost-effective and contribute to improving standards.
32. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and pupils achieve well or very well. These pupils are encouraged and supported to take part in extra-curricular activities and some follow effective college placements and work experience programmes. Most, for most of the time, attend normal classes and follow the same curriculum as other pupils in their sets. All pupils with statements of special educational needs have detailed Individual Education Plans (IEPs) drawn up by the special educational needs co-ordinator or, in the case of pupils with communication difficulties, by the teacher with responsibility for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Pupils with behavioural difficulties or pupils who are looked after also have detailed plans drawn up for them. These plans are of high quality and enable pupils' priority needs to be put in place, monitored and assessed effectively. At present, not all non-statemented pupils who should have IEPs do but this is being addressed.
33. The accommodation has some significant weaknesses and a few positive strengths. Art is taught in large rooms, where there is concern over the wooden structure, but an even bigger concern over the issue of mice. This is described in detail in paragraphs 107 to 110. Music classrooms are in an old, unsoundproofed, Portacabin, with one large room and one very small room, and no practice rooms. Drama has no specialist room and either shares an art room or takes place in the dining hall. In contrast, ICT is taught in larger than normal rooms with space to work at computers or separate desks. French shares the third, smaller computer room, and other rooms that have good acoustics because of carpeting.
34. The learning support classroom and resources are good, and the department uses the library and conference room at times. The school has a special 'stairmate' climber for small wheelchairs, which enables pupils with physical disabilities to get to the first floor of the building. One physically disabled teacher has never visited the staff room as it is on the first floor, so the lack of a lift is significant. The premises have been reviewed in light of the Disability Discrimination Act and a realistic plan has been lodged with the local authority for new buildings that will house a lift connected to the older building, plus new rooms for music, drama, art and physical education.
35. There is a very good number of experienced support staff. Resources are unsatisfactory. Although the number of computers for discrete ICT lessons is much better than at the time of the last inspection, some of the machines spread around subject areas are not networked and do not have Internet connection. Subject departments do use the ICT suites, but cannot do so often enough. In history there are not enough books with text suitable for the different abilities of pupils. In mathematics and science particularly, the policy of not letting pupils take textbooks home impacts on their learning because the quality and organisation of worksheets means they are not useful for pupils' revision. Resources to support pupils with special educational needs are good, with the exception of class-based computers that do not have Internet access.

## Care, guidance and support

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The school ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety well. The school provides good support, advice and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school seeks to involve pupils well in its work and development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very good trusting relationship with at least one adult.
- The quality of support and guidance pupils receive for pastoral concerns is very good.
- The advice and support through academic monitoring is not as good, except for those pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils receive very good impartial guidance on careers.

## Commentary

36. Pupils interviewed were confident that there is more than one adult to whom they can turn and in whom they can trust. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the views they expressed about feeling cared for were very positive. This reflects the caring and inclusive nature of the school. The good relationships have a significant impact on how secure pupils feel and add to their sense of confidence and well-being. These in turn underpin pupils' positive attitudes toward school life. The headteacher's friendly and continual presence in and around the school at the beginning and the end of the day and at break times, and his status as a special constable, undoubtedly help pupils to feel safe. Members of the senior management team also spend much time supporting pupils outside lessons.
37. The frequent monitoring of pupils' effort and attitudes via the class-based electronic system and the tracking of any behaviour concerns is very good. The well-established behaviour management programme means that pupils are well-known and consequently advice can be well-targeted. Outside agencies also play a significant part in pupils' welfare. For example, the school nurse regularly contributes to the personal, social and health education lessons and also offers counselling drop-in sessions.
38. The learning mentor programme for younger pupils has developed quickly and is very effective at providing advice and support for pupils who are not learning as well as they could, usually because of problems linked with pastoral concerns. Different learning techniques are tailored to individual needs. The mentoring programme for older pupils is organised in conjunction with the local Business Education Partnership. Pupils benefit well from the input of business specialists who actively mentor a few of them and monitor their work. Careers education and support for pupils' learning are very good and an increasing number of pupils continue into further education. The quality of support advice and guidance based on academic monitoring is not always secure because the academic information the school does collect is not used effectively by all teachers.
39. Procedures for child protection are sound. First aid and medical provision are well-organised and effective. Supervision at breaks is good and supports pupils' welfare well. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory in that all statutory records and checks are made. With the appointment of a new site manager, pupils' welfare is being further supported by a clearer structure of duties and responsibilities for monitoring the buildings' many potential risks.
40. The focused attention on the needs and rights of every child mean that pupils' views and concerns are listened to on a regular and informal basis. Their views are sought, respected and sometimes lead to changes. The school council is well established and makes a satisfactory impact on how the school develops. Pupils are enthusiastic and discuss a wide range of topics - for example, buildings, behaviour and uniform. Drawbacks are that the headteacher, not a pupil, chairs the council. The school council regularly organise fund-raising events and raised about £1000 last year.



41. There are very good links with external agencies in support of pupils with special educational needs. These links include the behaviour support counsellor, the hearing impaired service and the advisory teacher for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. In addition, the school has the services of a very experienced speech and language therapist. Most pupils with speech and language difficulties also have additional needs, which include learning difficulties, social and communication difficulties and medical conditions. The occupational therapist works with individual pupils according to their needs.
42. Arrangements for all pupils to settle in well at the school are good. Before pupils join the school, the special educational needs co-ordinator attends their Year 6 annual review meetings in local primary schools and the teacher with responsibility for pupils with speech and language difficulties attends the special unit attached to one primary school. The induction arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The school also works closely with social services in relation to pupils in public care who attend the school. These pupils receive sensitive and thoughtful care. In the school's special educational needs register a few pupils are incorrectly categorised (though not in terms of the support they receive). All pupils contribute to their annual review meetings.
43. Both pupils who are at an early stage of learning English receive good support from a local education authority team. The advisory teacher visits regularly and carries out observations and assessments. Targets are set for the pupils and learning support identified. One pupil has an electronic translator and the other pupil uses a bilingual dictionary. The advisory teacher also advises class teachers and learning support staff on what strategies to use.

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

The school's partnership with parents and the community is good. The school's links with other schools and colleges are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are happy to approach the school and know that their concerns and complaints are dealt with seriously.
- The school seeks parents' views regularly and parents are very positive about the school and how it has improved in recent years.
- There are numerous, good links with outside agencies and business.
- The school has very good sports links.

### **Commentary**

44. The visible presence of the headteacher at the beginning and end of the school day, is an indication of how open the school is to pupils' concerns and their views, and this is not lost on parents. Many have telephoned the headteacher out-of-hours and appreciated his help. This embodies the ethos of working with parents and local residents. It gives parents many opportunities to raise concerns and has established a constructive and open relationship. When parents have more serious concerns these are given immediate consideration. If bullying or bad behaviour has been going on parents are contacted very swiftly and made aware of the situation. Parents' views have been formally canvassed on issues such as the sports family work or the Excellence in Cities involvement. This pro-active approach to parents reflects the school's focus on the whole child.
45. Parents receive a good amount of information. They are kept in touch through termly, informative newsletters covering many aspects of school life - for example, trips and visits as well as reminders about issues such as attendance. The headteacher sends information to parents monthly. Annual reports give them good descriptions of work covered during the year. These are supplemented by good termly target-setting and monitoring sessions for pupils, to which parents are invited; however, turn-out is low. Reports are barely satisfactory because they are inconsistent in how much information different subjects provide. Very useful information can be followed by

some which is unhelpful, thus preventing parents from being more involved in helping their children's learning.

46. In addition to the well-established local links such as with a local church or through the local history books written by school staff, there are good links with outside agencies and local businesses. The mentoring programme for older pupils through the Educational Business Partnership is a fine example involving several businesses providing outside mentors. The school nurse also plays an active role in the school, offering counselling drop-in sessions over and above her normal educational duties. The area educational welfare officer is based in the school and so is very aware of any problems and is regularly used for advice. These links have a very good impact on the quality of support and guidance pupils receive.
47. The school's links with other schools and colleges are good principally because of its sporting connections. The school plays many other local schools in netball, volleyball, hockey, rugby league and football. Some Year 10 boys and girls are involved in coaching young pupils in local primary schools through the School Sports Co-ordinators Scheme. The school also has valuable links with ten other local schools, both primary and secondary, Havering College and the local Higher College of Education through the Excellence in Cities initiative. This provides an umbrella group through which common concerns can be raised and tackled collectively.
48. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very closely involved in the admissions arrangements to the school. They receive details of the work of the learning support department and of the provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties. They are encouraged to visit and to see the work of the school. They are fully involved in annual reviews, transition reviews, reviews of IEPs and parents' evenings.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management overall are satisfactory. Leadership is satisfactory. Management is unsatisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. A barrier to raising achievement is the difficulty of recruiting staff.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher, who leads well, has significantly improved the reputation of the school.
- The senior management team teach too few lessons and lack expertise monitoring the work of departments.
- The governors are very supportive and hard working and they are beginning to probe the difference in standards in subjects in detail.

### **Commentary**

49. The headteacher has been the driving force behind the improvement in behaviour since the last inspection. He is well respected by the local and school community and provides good, clear leadership. He has made a few significant staff changes in recent years and has changed the culture of low aspirations and acceptance of low standards held by some staff. Standards went up in 2003 and, over the last six years, attendance has improved, and the school has become popular and oversubscribed; the number of pupils entering the school after Year 7 has dropped, creating more stability. Statistics show that pupils who attend the school for the whole five years achieve better than those who enter later.
50. Members of the senior management team have contributed significantly to the improved attendance and recruitment of pupils. They have supported the headteacher's initiatives to improve pupils' attitudes, behaviour and wearing of school uniform. They take a keen interest in both pupils' and teachers' welfare by fostering a positive and harmonious working atmosphere around the school. Thus their strengths lie in overseeing pupils' personal, rather than their academic, development. The effectiveness of management is unsatisfactory overall because the senior management team lacks expertise in overseeing the work of departments, so that inconsistencies within and between departments have not been addressed.

51. In mathematics for example, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement varies significantly between classes and there is limited sharing of good practice or adherence to a marking policy. Some pupils' books are scrappy and reveal limited progress over time, whilst others contain detail and are marked well. The declining, and now poor provision in music had not been picked up and the newly appointed religious education teacher received no support to help her be aware of, for example, the importance of the locally agreed syllabus.
52. The quality of teaching by the senior management team ranges from satisfactory to very good. Members of the senior management team teach very few lessons. With their relatively high salaries, this does not represent good value for money. Leadership and management are at least satisfactory in all subjects apart from music and citizenship, but management of mathematics is unsatisfactory for the reasons described above. Although much data is now available, not all departments use it well to predict pupils' future grades and give them targets to help them to improve their work.
53. The special educational needs co-ordinator's leadership and management, in collaboration with the teacher responsible for pupils with speech and language difficulties, is very good. From documentation it is unclear whether the school's draft policy for special educational needs has been approved by the governors and whether the speech and language policy has been submitted to them. The current departmental development plan, which is now at the end of its life, is satisfactory but it does not include success criteria, funding implications and specific dates for meeting the targets. The specialised provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties is very good and the overall quality of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The quality of the school's arrangements for including pupils with special educational needs in every aspect of school life is very good and a strength of the school's care and support for all pupils.
54. The school has been proactive in recruiting suitable teachers and has recruited from overseas to fill gaps. Staffing changes have had an impact on consistency, and hence standards, in mathematics. Beyond the satisfactory arrangements for performance management, senior managers have undertaken interviews and observations regularly in some departments, such as art, science and history, but not in others, such as mathematics. Therefore, the school does not have a complete understanding of its teaching strengths and weaknesses and cannot channel and direct professional development where needed most. Where new teachers are part of a large department, they usually benefit from peer support from colleagues. Where they are part of a small department, this support is not available and they, especially those trained overseas, are not helped enough to develop thorough knowledge of the National Curriculum or the Key Stage 3 strategy.
55. The governing body is conscientious and very supportive. They are aware of the main strengths and weaknesses and where statutory requirements are not met. They are beginning to ask challenging questions to understand what needs to be done to raise standards in different subjects. It is not a good arrangement to have the assistant headteacher in charge of the curriculum, chairing that committee. The chair of governors has given many years of diligent service to the school and he and many governors attend meetings regularly. The governors and headteacher have not tightened up the school and department development plans. At present these do not include specific subject targets generated by assessment data.
56. The school's finances are managed well on a day-to-day basis. Regular local education authority audits show this is a consistent feature. Formulae for calculating spending in different departments to achieve educational priorities are transparent and sound. Year-on-year changes are readily comparable. Outside funding opportunities are eagerly pursued and efficiently used. For example the two differently funded learning mentor schemes providing support and guidance for different ages of pupils.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2716150
Total expenditure	2562361
Expenditure per pupil	4106

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	144194
Balance carried forward to the next	147326

57. Expenditure per pupil is well above the London-weighted median. However, as the school is smaller than average, fixed costs are relatively higher. Senior management staffing costs are high relative to the number of hours they teach. This is an area where the overall satisfactory approach to 'best value' principles has not been achieved. Given pupils' good achievement and the high levels of effective support and guidance for all of them, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **good**

<i>Standards of work are below average</i>	<i>Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11</i>
<i>Teaching is good</i>	<i>Learning is good</i>
<i>Leadership is good</i>	<i>Management is good</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been good</i>	

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average English literature results in 2003.
- Very good teaching in about one quarter of the lessons seen during the inspection.
- Overall standards are below average, particularly in reading and writing.
- Teachers do not mark work and set targets clearly enough to improve learning.
- The opportunities provided by the National Literacy Strategy have not been exploited fully.

#### Commentary

58. The average points score in the 2003 Year 9 tests was below average but these pupils achieved very well in relation to their starting points. The percentage of GCSE A\*-C grades was below average, but in English literature it was above, with one in ten pupils attaining A\*/A grades. These results were significantly better than those in 2002 and were part of a general upward trend - above that seen nationally. In all years, present standards are below average because pupils enter the school with low levels of literacy.
59. Most pupils listen carefully and a few express themselves accurately and fluently. Many are hesitant speakers, using colloquial words and phrases too much and failing to turn their thoughts into words as effectively as might be expected for their age. Few read for pleasure, although a significant minority does. Pupils in Years 9 and 11 top sets gave sensitive, well-argued responses to questions about *Macbeth* and to *Lord of the Flies*. In both these groups, pupils showed they had read reasonably widely but this was rarely the case for middle and lower attainers. The same picture is seen in pupils' writing. A minority in all year groups writes accurately and engages the readers' interest, but many pupils find it difficult to express themselves on paper. Their vocabulary is generally narrower than might be expected for their years, their choice of words is often obvious, and their sentence structures are very simple. Presentation is no more than satisfactory overall, although good use of word processing sorts this problem in some cases.
60. Pupils' good motivation and the effective teaching they receive contribute to their achievement. The majority of pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language, or those who are gifted or talented makes at least good progress as they move up the school. The reason that achievement is not so strong in Years 10 and 11 is that pupils come further in language development by Year 9 and that some disaffection, particularly in Year 11, gets in the way of their learning. Pupils' progress has, nevertheless, improved since the last inspection, when it was judged as unsatisfactory overall.

61. In one excellent lesson the teacher had a clear framework, shared the objectives with the pupils and, with contagious enthusiasm, managed to hold the attention of low ability pupils in Year 7 and sustain their motivation for the full hour. Most lessons have pace, variety, structure and enjoyment, so that pupils have neither the time nor the inclination to stop concentrating. In the one satisfactory lesson, the speed, content and direction were all very limited, so pupils achieved no more than the minimum. Teachers have incorporated some aspects of the National Literacy Strategy but its full potential, in terms of lessons with a greater sense of purpose and challenge, has not been realised. The setting system means that work is at the right level for most pupils, especially those in the top and lowest sets. High attainers are presented with more advanced challenges and special educational needs teachers and teaching assistants teach and support those with lower levels of attainment well.
62. Although procedures for regularly and formally assessing progress are good, day-to-day marking is inconsistent and often unsatisfactory. Some is analytical, evaluative and developmental, but some is no more than ticks and a bland or unhelpful comment. Even where good advice is given, teachers rarely check that pupils have noted the comments. Occasionally, but not routinely, teachers write specific objectives for improvement, Only rarely do they give pupils individual short term targets which they can build on systematically to accelerate their progress themselves. Teachers do try to involve pupils in improving their work, by encouraging them to draft and redraft, first in exercise books (which are occasionally not marked at all) and then in best work folders. This is not working well, because pupils cannot see the process of improvement against clear objectives.
63. The head of department was on extended sick leave during the inspection, but the documentation in place shows good understanding of the school's needs, and a well-informed vision for the future. This documentation is a useful management tool as it gives helpful guidance to newly qualified, new to the school, or well-established teachers. Her good leadership is shared by the acting head of department, who has taken over after a very brief period in the school, and in this country. She has an extremely sensitive grasp of the department's strengths and weaknesses.

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

64. Most teachers, especially in ICT, science, physical education and geography, expect to emphasise key words and to make sure that pupils know and use subject specific vocabulary well. Often teachers do not correct inaccuracies in written work and there is no consistency in marking. Some class and small group discussions take place, but pupils do not make presentations often enough to improve their speaking. Too few subjects, especially those where worksheets dominate, encourage pupils to write at length. In a school where weaknesses in reading and writing continue to be a major handicap for too many pupils in their work across subjects, powerful action is necessary to raise literacy – such as a strong initiative to foster reading for pleasure, and greater application of the National Literacy Strategy.
65. The library, housed in a temporary building at one end of the school, is not well placed as a centre for independent learning, and in lesson times it is rarely used as such. Whole classes are brought by subject teachers, and Year 7 pupils follow a very good library skills induction course for half a term. At breaks and lunch times pupils come into the library to read, to do homework, to use the computers, to change books or simply to chat – but their attendance is dependent on the weather. The library has no displays on themes or authors, and a low loan rate. The book collection is satisfactory and it is well ordered and maintained.

### **Drama**

66. Drama was sampled in each of the three year groups in which it is taught as a separate subject. In Years 7 and 8 drama is included in English lessons. In Year 9 pupils receive one lesson a week, and in Years 10 and 11 they can choose to take it for GCSE. The single Year 9 lesson seen was satisfactory – pupils took a long time to overcome laughter as they attempted to portray a range of emotions. In Years 10 and 11, pupils learn well because they are very enthusiastic and the

teachers plan lessons well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, and the outcomes are good and improving, from a well below average percentage of A\*-C GCSE grades in 2002 to average in 2003. The subject is well led and organised, shared informally between two physical education teachers who have put together a well structured and comprehensive scheme of work. From a whole school point of view, the inclusion of drama in the curriculum is highly effective in reinforcing pupils' language skills, and giving them the confidence in speaking formally, which many of them do not do. The accommodation for drama is poor, cold and dirty, although it has the advantage of providing enough space for several different activities at once.

## French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**

<i>Standards of work are below average</i>	<i>Pupils achieve satisfactorily</i>
<i>Teaching is satisfactory</i>	<i>Learning is satisfactory</i>
<i>Leadership is good</i>	<i>Management is good</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory</i>	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The small numbers entered and well below average GCSE results in the last two years
- Good relationships, attitudes and behaviour in most classes
- Use of ICT that motivates pupils to learn well
- Over-emphasis on writing, copying and translation in several lessons
- Good planning and support for individual pupils in lower attaining groups

## Commentary

67. In 2002 and 2003 too few pupils took GCSE French to allow a valid comparison to be made with national results. In 2003, for example, 14 pupils took GCSE of whom only 3 attained A\*-C grades. This was the result of an earlier decision to enter pupils for non-GCSE courses and the low amount of time for lessons, so they could not achieve their full potential. This unsatisfactory curriculum planning has now been rectified.
68. Although the standards of work seen during the inspection are below average, they are improving significantly. By Year 9 most pupils have learned a good range of vocabulary as a result of frequent practice, focusing on key words and topics. Higher attainers write about future events quite accurately. Most pupils, however, need to learn how to extend the length of their oral and written work by being challenged to give more than the short responses required by worksheets and workbooks.
69. By Year 11 higher attaining pupils write accurately and at length on familiar topics, such as school life. Their learning benefits from their teachers' carefully prepared resources and materials. In Year 10 lower attaining pupils learn a satisfactory amount of vocabulary, for example about the weather in different countries, as a result of regular practice with maps, cards and carefully organised and planned group work. As in Years 7 to 9, however, most pupils do not speak French as well as they read it. In several lessons there is too much emphasis on copying, writing and translation which means that pupils are not encouraged to use their French in a more active way.
70. The majority of pupils make reasonable progress in lessons. Relationships are generally good and the teachers' support for individual pupils results in co-operative behaviour and sustained concentration. Pupils achieve particularly well in classes where ICT and PowerPoint presentations are used, for example teaching topics such as food and drink. In these lessons they quickly learn names for a wide range of different things to eat and are also motivated when their teacher brings in real French food. In a minority of lessons pupils achieve less well. Activities such as labelling pictures do not challenge and motivate them enough. Teachers occasionally have difficulty in

managing the behaviour of some lower sets but this is also a result of the large numbers in these groups, and timetabling that sometimes does not spread the lessons across the week.

71. The teaching of French is well led and managed. There are clear priorities and a good understanding of where improvements are required. New initiatives to raise attainment such as setting pupils targets and helping them to assess their own progress are being developed. There is a need to share good practice, support and monitor teaching, and develop the role of departmental line management. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. There are still some weaknesses in teaching but the overall trend is towards improvement.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**

<i>Standards of work are below average</i>	<i>Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11</i>
<i>Teaching is satisfactory</i>	<i>Learning is satisfactory</i>
<i>Leadership is satisfactory</i>	<i>Management is unsatisfactory</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory</i>	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9.
- Teachers have inconsistent expectations; pupils respond well if high standards are expected.
- Marking and assessment are inadequate to help pupils improve their understanding.
- The department provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Too few resources, such as ICT, are used to help pupils to learn.

### Commentary

72. Although Year 9 test results were below average in 2003, they were the best results the school has attained, following improvement in line with national trends. Standards are currently similar to those last year but, for the first time, gifted pupils are preparing for GCSE mathematics in Year 9. Although there are gaps in their knowledge, they have mastered topics required for grade C. In 2003 the percentage of pupils attaining GCSE grades C and above was nearly 40 per cent compared with 25 per cent in previous years. Nevertheless pupils, in particular boys, attained lower standards in mathematics than in English, science and several other subjects. No pupils reached grades A or A\*. Pupils in the highest set took GCSE statistics in Year 10 but only one gained a grade C and half were ungraded; such poor results suggest that teaching was not good enough.
73. This ambitious curriculum development is being repeated. Present standards are better in the highest Year 11 set; virtually all pupils have already gained GCSE grades B or C in Year 10 and half of them are working in anticipation of further grade improvement. In addition, their mock results for GCSE statistics are in line with grade C and above. They have benefited from well-structured teaching and demonstrate maturity in their approach to independent study. With the exception of this class, Year 11 standards are lower than in the previous year; achievement is therefore only satisfactory overall. The present Year 10 pupils took GCSE in Year 9 but their work on statistics is not as secure as that in Year 11. Pupils who have taken GCSE early do not always continue to be motivated – either to re-enter for a higher grade or to take statistics. The rationale for early entry requires careful consideration.
74. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, there are striking differences in pupils' achievement from one class to another. Most classes of lower ability pupils, including those with special educational needs, learn well because teachers and learning support assistants know how to plan their mathematical development and place priority on basic skills. Generally there is a significant proportion of good teaching of Years 7 to 9; consequently achievement is better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' books in about one third of Years 10 and 11 classes often reflect unsatisfactory teaching because work is poorly presented, to the extent that graphs and statistical



diagrams are meaningless. Frequently there are shallowly developed and unfinished topics with inadequate in-depth study. There is little evidence that some teachers monitor pupils' progress through constructive marking; this, and pupils' lack of pride in their work, remain as deficiencies and were highlighted in the last inspection.

75. Learning is good when topics develop from a starting point with which pupils are familiar. Year 10 pupils enjoyed experiments with dice, which helped them understand differences between theoretical probability calculations and practical results. In contrast some Year 9 pupils had little in-depth understanding of the interpretation of equations of straight lines as the work had no contextual setting. Although basic number work is of a satisfactory standard and effectively emphasised through regular mental tests, answers are not always explained in enough depth to strengthen learning. Overhead projectors and individual whiteboards are not used even when using them would significantly help pupils' learning. Pupils do not use computers to further mathematical understanding in lessons. Opportunities to use mathematics to extend pupils' interest in aspects of social and cultural awareness and citizenship are not planned.
76. Leadership by the acting head of department is satisfactory; however, management is, as yet, unsatisfactory. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining mathematics teachers have had an adverse effect on standards. Nevertheless, pupil-teacher relationships are good so that when expectations are demanding, pupils respond accordingly. The department's documentation and meetings are not carefully designed to support teachers in developing better teaching techniques. Too little monitoring and interpretation of assessment data have taken place to ensure that teachers are effective and conversant with pupils' capability. One class of lower attaining pupils, belatedly embarking on GCSE coursework, was given complex information and poor guidance. Pupils' work is insufficiently coherent to provide support for their examination revision. They do not take textbooks home and the stock of GCSE examples books has dwindled so that pupils have no substantial support for home study; only some classes are provided with structured worksheets for homework. Provision for more capable and enthusiastic pupils is enhanced by support available out of lessons, including the head of department's weekly breakfast club.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

77. The school has inadequately addressed the promotion of mathematics by structuring its development and providing guidance on how it should be used in other subjects. The numeracy policy is not well written and, with the recent changes in staffing in the mathematics department, the role of numeracy co-ordinator has been neglected. However, pupils have sufficient skills to support geography study well - for example, interpreting and representing data. Numeracy is generally incorporated well in science although skills used in design and technology are weaker than normal. In art, concepts of perspective and proportionality are developed well. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to work with spreadsheets, formulae and statistical representation in ICT.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

<i>Standards of work are below average</i>	<i>Pupils achieve satisfactorily</i>
<i>Teaching is satisfactory</i>	<i>Learning is satisfactory</i>
<i>Leadership is good</i>	<i>Management is satisfactory</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory</i>	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving because of strong teamwork. Pupils, especially those with special educational needs, benefit from this.
- Teachers analyse test and examination results thoroughly and track individual pupils' progress well to identify where extra support is necessary. Analysis of data at department level is not so detailed.

- Some teachers question pupils skilfully, encouraging them to explore ideas for themselves; others use narrow teaching styles and numerous worksheets which stunt learning.
- Expectations of high ability pupils and of girls are too low.

### Commentary

78. Year 9 test results were below average in 2003 - an improvement on the previous three years, when they were consistently well below. These pupils had achieved very well. Boys performed better than girls. GCSE A\*-C grades were below average. This represents good achievement for several pupils compared with their Year 9 test results although none achieved the highest grade. Again, boys' results were better than girls'.
79. Standards in Year 9 are below average and achievement is satisfactory. Low attainers achieve well. In Year 9 they made good progress in understanding why their measurements of current in series and parallel circuits were different, because their teacher constantly linked what was happening to everyday events. In a lower Year 8 set, pupils consolidated their learning about shadows because the teacher's perceptive questions helped them to talk through what they knew about light rays. All pupils know the stages through investigations but do not always present their records well. Their planning skills develop quickly when they are not held back by the teachers telling them what to write down about a procedure they have just covered. Pupils lack confidence in making predictions and do not practise this enough.
80. Standards in Year 11 are generally below average. Currently, the majority is making satisfactory progress although there are pockets of underachievement. The highest attainers use technical language very well in justifying predictions and explaining reliability of results. Generally, the skill of evaluating observations is gradually improving. Too long is spent, however, continuing to collect results that already show a pattern, and so time for deep analysis is lost. Standards in top sets are broadly average; pupils calculate the speed of chemical reactions, and analyse changes in predator-prey populations in Year 11, and trace reflex actions in Year 10. The actual rate of progress is strongly linked to how deeply teachers expect pupils to understand ideas. Work of high attaining pupils does not always match their capability. Exercise books show that when topics are treated superficially pupils' level of understanding is lower than might be expected.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It ranges from excellent to satisfactory. Progress made is strongly linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' drive to learn. The best teaching has high expectations of pupils' capability and causes them to reach goals by themselves, through tactics that steer them in the right direction. Standards are also raised because of the strong teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants, who are well prepared for lessons and highly skilled in their support. Clever questions and interesting examples led Year 11 pupils with special educational needs to significantly deepen their understanding about particle theory of matter. Drawing out their suggestions, the teacher encouraged them to think through the link between the arrangement of particles in different concentrations of blackcurrant juice and the effect colliding particles have upon the rates of different chemical reactions. They keenly wanted to be involved in this lesson because their teacher reassured them they were capable of understanding.
82. Although not sharply focused, marking is now more effective in helping pupils in their learning. Routine checks that pupils have acted upon comments are not happening, so that good learning opportunities are lost. Pupils' good attitudes play a major part in their achievements in dull sessions limited by numerous worksheets that stunt exploration of ideas, and uninteresting endings that do not imaginatively involve them in reflecting about new work. Expectations are too low, especially for pupils who learn more quickly than others.
83. The head of department has a clear vision for future developments. Teamwork is strong in thrusting towards improving standards, resulting in new courses, schemes and more effective marking of pupils' work. Classroom observations and analyses of pupils' work are not routinely used to monitor teaching and learning. Teachers analyse test and examination results thoroughly and track individual pupils' progress well to identify where extra support is necessary. Analysis of data at department level is not so detailed. Girls' standards still need to be raised.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**

<i>Standards of work are average</i>	<i>Pupils achieve well</i>
<i>Teaching is good</i>	<i>Learning is good</i>
<i>Leadership is good</i>	<i>Management is good</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been good</i>	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management have supported good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Good teaching is raising standards.
- Computers are not used enough in other subjects to extend what pupils learn in the discrete ICT lessons.

### Commentary

84. Teachers assessed Year 9 standards in 2003 as well below average. This may well have been unrealistic as standards are now average in Year 9. The introduction of ICT resources from the national Key Stage 3 Strategy is improving the accuracy of teachers' assessment. Years 10 and 11 courses have changed since the last inspection but 2003 GCSE results were above average and nearly half of Year 11 pupils took the examination. Pupils are now following a new vocational ICT course to be examined for the first time in 2004; standards of work are at least average. Those not taking the examination follow a core programme of ICT and achieve satisfactorily. Pupils no longer share computers in lessons so they organise and retrieve their work independently.
85. In Years 7 to 9, pupils learn how to download and sort data, handle information using databases and analyse results well. In a Year 9 lesson the teacher used the interactive whiteboard most effectively to help pupils to understand how to construct a hypothesis. In Years 10 and 11, pupils learn how to use spreadsheets - for example, when studying a computer supplies shop - and learn to use web design, presentation and word-processing software. They carry out these activities confidently and competently but do not yet reflect and write enough when they evaluate their work. Teachers show them how to use the Internet efficiently to find information. Year 7 pupils successfully researched weather information on the BBC website.
86. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers make it very clear to pupils what they have to do and regularly ask them good questions to check their understanding. Year 11 pupils, not taking GCSE, have mastered how to integrate text, photographs and Internet images to create interesting leaflets. Their teacher set them high standards by showing them examples of quality leaflets which they should try to match. Pupils learn well because teachers know them and insist on high standards of behaviour. Teachers move efficiently around the very spacious classrooms and are aware of which pupils need help. They make it clear to pupils what they must do to improve. Teachers give pupils much extra support and guidance when they supervise them, using the school's ICT resources for homework and coursework during lunchtime.
87. Most issues raised during the last inspection have been addressed, especially the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. The head of department, who leads and manages well, has successfully focused on raising standards. A whole school computer network is being developed and the number of computers available for pupils is just above that normally seen in a school of this size. Pupils' experiences are well planned and monitored in the discrete ICT lessons but these are not well supported by use in other subjects.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

88. As several subjects hardly use computers at all in lessons, the statutory requirement to extend pupils' understanding of ICT is not met. Computers are used effectively in French and physical education but not enough in English, mathematics, art, design and technology, geography, history and religious education lessons. The special educational needs department is alert to the benefits of computer work, the science department uses data logging equipment and the music teacher encourages pupils to create music with composition software. When they have access to computers, pupils use the Internet sensibly for research. The ICT department uses interactive whiteboards very well and soon eleven more of these will be set up for use by other subjects. A working party has recently been established to review and monitor the use of ICT across the curriculum. The management of whole school ICT is outside the scope of the head of the ICT department's responsibilities.

## HUMANITIES

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**

<i>Standards of work are below expectations except for those who study GCSE</i>	<i>Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 except for those who study GCSE</i>
<i>Teaching is satisfactory</i>	<i>Learning is satisfactory</i>
<i>Leadership is good</i>	<i>Management is good</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory</i>	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectations in all years (except for those who study GCSE) and statutory requirements are not met.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and are interested in the subject. They get on well together and have good relationships with the teachers.
- Teachers' expectations of what higher ability pupils could achieve are generally too low.
- Marking and assessment are not used helpfully to tell Years 7 to 9 pupils what steps they must take to improve their work.

### Commentary

89. Pupils enter the school with below average knowledge of religious education. By the end of Year 9 standards, in relation to the local agreed syllabus, are below those expected; pupils do not learn about and learn from different religions in enough depth. For example, when Year 9 pupils looked at three world religions' interpretations of hell, they did not debate their different viewpoints but focused on the facts. Year 8 pupils have a reasonable factual knowledge of the three main Hindu gods but have not related this to Hindu lives and beliefs. Teachers prepare different work for the ability levels of the lower sets but do not give high ability pupils more challenging tasks.
90. In 2003, when 11 pupils took GCSE, results were above average. Currently, 12 Year 10 pupils are preparing for GCSE, but there is no Year 11 group. Discussion with some Year 10 pupils and an examination of their work indicate that they are achieving reasonably well. The limited course followed by all other pupils in Years 10 and 11 is delivered through the personal, social and health education programme. Standards are below those expected because pupils do not study the subject for long enough to cover the locally agreed syllabus – a breach of statutory requirements. In lessons pupils make reasonable progress but their overall achievement is unsatisfactory.
91. A third of teaching seen during the inspection was good. The teacher prepares lessons well and pupils are clear about what they are meant to do. In a number of lessons, however, the teacher did

not include enough time for pupils to consider and discuss their ideas and arguments. The pupils' very good behaviour and interest in the subject help lessons to go at a good pace – pupils are willing to contribute to discussions. The teacher marks homework regularly and gives pupils an idea of the levels they are achieving, according to content and effort, but in Years 7 to 9 they are not told what they need to do to improve. The subject makes a worthwhile contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as opportunities to explore individuals' personal beliefs are examined sensitively. An example of this was seen when a Year 11 class discussed abortion thoughtfully. .

92. One teacher delivers all the religious education lessons except one, so her time to co-ordinate and manage the development of the subject is limited. In the short time she has been at the school she has commendably established an extremely positive atmosphere in lessons, as well as preparing materials and buying resources. Real progress has been made because the department had lacked focus in recent years, despite a favourable situation at the time of the last inspection.

## Geography

Provision in geography is **good**

<i>Standards of work are below average in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10 and 11</i>	<i>Pupils achieve well</i>
<i>Teaching is good</i>	<i>Learning is good</i>
<i>Leadership is good</i>	<i>Management is satisfactory</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been good</i>	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' lively presentations stimulate pupils' interest in the topics
- Teachers' clear explanation of their expectations means that pupils become involved in the lessons and work well.
- Teachers do not use computers enough in lessons.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported

## Commentary

93. GCSE results in 2003 were average for A\* to C grades. This represents good improvement over the previous year and since the last inspection. The percentage of A\*/A grades was, however, well below average. Many GCSE students are now exceeding their target grades, based on their prior attainment, because they are achieving well. The subject is becoming more popular and the number of pupils who opt to study it for GCSE has risen - there are now two Year 10 groups.
94. Teaching is consistently good and was very good in a quarter of the lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers have a good understanding of the examination requirements and explain these well to pupils, who respond by working hard and being interested. Where teaching is very good, pupils become engrossed in their work because the teachers present topics in a stimulating way and then pupils acquire knowledge and skills quickly. Year 9 pupils learned very well when the teacher led a stimulating discussion about the factors explaining the distribution of population. Pupils understood the interaction of human and physical factors well.
95. Pupils learn to work independently and collaboratively. Teachers state clearly the desired outcomes of lessons and explain how work will meet the requirements of different levels or grades so that pupils know how to improve their work and move up a level or grade. If pupils have written answers that are more descriptive than evaluative, the teacher will encourage them to give reasons for their ideas. This extends their understanding and was effective in a Year 8 lesson considering different indicators of development. Pupils who have special educational needs learn well and make similarly good progress in lessons. They are well supported by teaching assistants, who plan thoroughly with the class teacher. In a Year 8 lesson all pupils, including those with special

educational needs, extracted information from a textbook to identify development indicators and presented it clearly in a table.

96. Resources, particularly textbooks, have improved since the last inspection, but computers are still not used enough. Teachers have made use of ICT rooms, but their availability is limited. The department has a clear vision of what can be accomplished and what needs attention. At present there is little field work in Years 7 to 9. The head of department monitors teaching regularly, and helpful exemplars of National Curriculum levels and GCSE portfolios are available. These are particularly useful for overseas-trained teachers. Teachers set realistic targets for pupils and progress is monitored carefully. This has helped to raise standards. Since the last inspection, standards have gone up and teaching has improved.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**

<i>Standards of work are below average in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10 and 11</i>	<i>Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 and well in Years 10 and 11</i>
<i>Teaching is satisfactory</i>	<i>Learning is satisfactory</i>
<i>Leadership is good</i>	<i>Management is satisfactory</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been good</i>	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department's good leadership is helping to improve standards.
- Teachers have good relationships with the pupils, and these contribute to a purposeful atmosphere in lessons.
- Teaching does not build enough on what pupils already know in Year 7.
- There are too few books for pupils to read to widen their understanding.

## Commentary

97. Appointed two years ago, the head of department's good leadership is raising standards and contributing to better teaching and learning. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average but very few and poorly motivated pupils took this subject due to staffing problems in the past. The larger option groups in Years 10 and 11 reflect this subject's increasing popularity. Year 9 standards are below average. These pupils use evidence to make judgements about the significance of historical events and can explain cause and effect simply - for example, why the British success in the Battle of Britain in 1940 changed the course of the Second World War. Low attaining pupils in Year 7 use laptop computers effectively to present their ideas - for example, on the changing design of castles in the medieval period. However, pupils' weak writing limits their achievement and progress.
98. Year 11 standards are close to average. These pupils have a good understanding of how one country's political changes impact on other countries. Studying the downfall of communism in the Soviet Union, pupils could see how the Solidarity movement in Poland affected the Soviet Union from the 1970s and contributed to the changes Gorbachev introduced. Pupils learn to assess their written answers against given standards, which is good practice. Teachers select activities which help pupils prepare their written answers and increase their language skills. The good relationships and behaviour reflect pupils' motivation and interest in this subject.
99. When teaching is good, as it was in several lessons during the inspection, teachers clearly identify what they intend pupils to learn and conduct the lessons at a pace which matches pupils' abilities. They mark and assess work helpfully so that pupils to understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. The learning needs of pupils with special educational needs are well met. Higher ability pupils are set extra research projects, which they willingly carry out at home. However, sometimes work for average ability pupils does not match their needs and if they

cannot complete a task they lose confidence. The work pupils have studied in primary school is not always considered carefully and so pupils' prior knowledge is underestimated.

100. The teachers' effective focus and support for pupils' writing is improving learning, but there are too few books and other materials for pupils to read in class. Pupils do not use computers in school to carry out research and analyse evidence. The head of department leads teaching by example and has given effective support to an overseas teacher. So far, there is too little analysis of assessment data and standards, or evaluation of teaching. Teaching has improved since the last inspection but the number of books remains low.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**

<i>Standards of work are below average</i>	<i>Pupils achieve well</i>
<i>Teaching is good</i>	<i>Learning is good</i>
<i>Leadership is satisfactory</i>	<i>Management is satisfactory</i>
<i>There has been too little improvement since the last inspection</i>	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Low standards of graphical presentation reduce the quality of design work.
- Most pupils are working according to their capabilities and enjoy this subject.
- Teaching and learning are largely good. Teachers plan well and present their subject with enthusiasm.
- The National Curriculum is not fully covered as provision for ICT, computer-aided design, and computer-aided manufacture, (CAD and CAM) is inadequate.
- The department makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development through practical, creative activities.
- Teachers do not consistently mark work using National Curriculum levels and do not clearly guide pupils about how they can improve their work.

### Commentary

101. Most pupils are working to their individual capabilities and Year 9 standards are improving. Pupils make things better than they design them, especially in resistant materials, as there is too little emphasis on design principles. In recent years GCSE results have been well below average. They improved significantly in 2003 when the percentage of A\*-C grades was close to average in resistant materials and food technology but well below in graphics. This subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through practical, creative activities. However, there are too few links with designers and design movements, and past and present technologies, to stimulate pupils' interest and increase their knowledge.
102. In Years 7 to 9 pupils undertake focused practical tasks. Comparing fresh and tinned fruit salad, Year 7 pupils clearly understood how to evaluate foods and present their findings accurately and neatly. When making a hand game, Year 8 pupils assembled electronic components carefully, showing a reasonable knowledge of electronic circuitry. Year 9 pupils designed and made trophies for a sport or game and correctly and safely used a range of materials, hand and power tools (including brazing steel rods), and joining methods. Their design ideas are original, and they followed the design process well to produce well-made products.
103. Pop-up cards made by Year 10 pupils show they have a reasonable understanding of how to cut and fold card to successfully engineer novelty mechanisms. However, poor knowledge of graphic design principles reduces the overall quality of their designs. There is wide variation in the quality of Year 11 pupils' finished examination 'storage unit' products. The best demonstrate well-thought-out

ideas for CD holders, with carefully measured, cut, and assembled joints, whereas others lack care, are poorly finished, and often incomplete.

104. The department offers a range of aspects of the subject in all years, except in Year 7 where one lower attaining group does not do food technology, due to the lack of teaching staff. Not all pupils have the opportunity to do work in compliant and resistant materials in Years 7 to 9 . For this reason and because of the poor provision for ICT and CAD/CAM, National Curriculum requirements are not fully met. The amount of ICT work in the GCSE classes is also less than expected, with only a few higher ability pupils having access to CAD/CAM. The department computers are not linked to the Internet. Therefore, unless they go to the learning resource centre, pupils cannot access the vast area of Internet research opportunities during lessons.
105. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is mostly good in Years 7 to 9, and there is a balance of good and satisfactory teaching in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan schemes of work and lessons carefully and manage classes well so that pupils are interested and learn effectively. In the best lessons teachers communicate the aims and objectives of projects extremely well through lively introductions and demonstrations. Teachers of food technology and resistant materials show great enthusiasm and have good command of their subject specialisms. This promotes high standards in these areas of the subject. However, the teaching of design principles, such as layout and visual composition, is not so good in all areas of the subject, which has resulted in lower standards in graphic design in design sheets in all years, and more specifically in the GCSE graphics option. In a minority of lessons, there is scope for raising expectations and increasing challenges, especially for higher ability pupils, as several worksheets do not generate enough individual thinking or creativity. Day-to-day assessment is not fully linked to National Curriculum levels and level descriptors.
106. The department’s development plan addresses some staff training and resource issues, but these are not prioritised or detailed, with too little focus on raising attainment and developing twenty-first century technology. Good, well understood safety procedures are in place in the workshops and kitchens, though maintenance of yellow demarcation lines and dust extraction is not arranged well. Technician and learning support are good. Although teaching has shown some improvement since the last inspection, the department still lacks facilities to keep pace with educational changes in the subject.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art

*Accommodation for art is in a very poor condition. As a result, a long-running, unresolved infestation of mice has had severe adverse effects on the work of the whole department. Much of pupils’ two-dimensional work was contaminated and has had to be destroyed because of the risk to pupils’ and staff’s health. Although younger pupils and Year 10 can make up this deficit, much of Year 11’s GCSE work is lost and there was significantly less than usual of their, and other pupils’ work to look at during the inspection. The inspection team was assured by the appropriate authority that the existing risk to pupils’ health is low.*

Provision in art is **good**

<i>Standards of work are average in Year 9 and rising towards being above average in Year 11</i>	<i>Pupils achieve well</i>
<i>Teaching is good</i>	<i>Learning is good</i>
<i>Leadership is good</i>	<i>Management is good</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been good</i>	

### Main strengths and weaknesses



- The consequences of the infestation by mice (see above) has, and continues to have, a profound negative impact on all aspects of the department.
- 2002 and 2003 GCSE results were well above average.
- Teaching is good, and so pupils achieve well; the gap between boys' and girls' attainment is less than that seen nationally; very good teaching of pupils with special educational needs means that they achieve particularly well.
- The spiritual and cultural aspects of pupils' development are well promoted.
- The department makes good use of external artists and craftspeople to enrich pupils' achievement in and enjoyment of the subject.
- Pupils are not enabled to appreciate how computers can be used as a creative tool.
- School assessment data is not used to set targets for individuals' achievement.

## Commentary

107. More pupils than usual took GCSE in 2003 and they did better than in their other subjects. The percentage of pupils attaining A\*-C grades in 2002 and 2003 was well above average. Pupils' standards on entry are below average. Their literacy, speaking skills and spatial awareness are also weak, creating added problems for learning. By the end of Year 9, standards are average overall, with very little very high or very low attainment, and less difference between boys' and girls' attainment than seen nationally. All pupils achieve well and those with special educational needs often achieve very well. Significant strengths in the teaching of lower attaining pupils also help their progress.
108. Far fewer pupils than usual are taking GCSE in the present Year 11. Art was not so popular when these pupils made option choices because the head of department was absent. Take-up has returned to normal in Year 10. Year 11 standards are currently average. Much good quality contaminated work has been destroyed, so pupils have a far smaller volume of work than usual. Arrangements have been made with the examination board to allow photographs as evidence for pupils' ultimate grades. The potential for Year 11 to reach above average standards by the end of the year is clear. Factors which influence this judgement lie in the standards achieved in useful craft-based workshops led by external artists. This, together with pupils' positive attitudes and staff's determination not to allow current problems to disadvantage pupils' grades, augurs well for the success of a late surge of achievement in Year 11. Despite current inconveniences, pupils continue to achieve well in Years 10 and 11.
109. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a strength. Helpful one-to-one support is also strong. Although some lessons would be more effective with a greater variety of activities, in many teachers break up the lesson into different sections very well. This is particularly useful when they plan time for pupils to reflect and visualise images in their imagination, which they later use in artwork. This reinforces the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives well. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to talk at length about their own work and that of others, to help them articulate their ideas more confidently. The quality and number of computers are unsatisfactory so pupils do not appreciate how computers can be used as a creative tool. Teachers need better understanding of school assessment data in order to set clear targets and mark work so that it is geared towards them.
110. Standards have risen since the last inspection. The department's management of the effects of the current, unresolved mice infestation has been good. Accommodation is in a very poor condition and the problems generated have had a severe adverse impact on all aspects of the department's work. Many everyday items have also had to be destroyed, leaving the department with unsatisfactory resources and the need to re-create most documentation. Whilst acknowledging that the problem is not a serious health risk, such depressing working conditions are totally unacceptable for staff and pupils. The local authority and school management have followed all the correct formal procedures but the problem has continued for eleven weeks, and has occurred before. A rigorous and determined effort to improve things fast is essential.

## Music

Provision in music is **poor**

<i>Standards of work are low</i>	<i>Pupils achieve poorly</i>
<i>Teaching is very good</i>	<i>Learning is very good</i>
<i>Leadership is poor</i>	<i>Management is poor</i>
<i>The department has declined since the last inspection.</i>	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A temporary teacher is enthusing pupils with her very good teaching.
- Pupils are significantly under-achieving in this subject.
- There is no evidence that extra-curricular activities have taken place in the past, except for contributions to school productions.
- Very few pupils learn instruments and they make limited progress.

### Commentary

111. The very low standards seen in lessons and the complete lack of extra-curricular activities indicate that the musical life of the school has declined in recent years. The head of department, the only music teacher at the school, has been absent since last year. Since the beginning of the inspection term, a highly skilled overseas, but non-specialist, primary school teacher has been doing her best to provide pupils in Years 7 to 9 with the basics of a musical education. Her teaching is very good and pupils generally respond well to her warm, intelligent and fierce determination to make them learn, and to her confident and clear teaching of the rudiments of music, basic keyboard playing and singing. However, it has been hard for this teacher to take on her temporary role because the department was in a poor condition when she arrived and because the line management of the department is ineffective.
112. During the inspection week there was no evidence that pupils have been making progress through a planned programme of study; enthusiastic Year 7 pupils now know as much about music, after a few lessons with the present teacher, as Year 11 GCSE pupils. Very few pupils take instrumental lessons, and hardly any have progressed beyond beginner level. Although many pupils love music and are musically talented (one Year 7 pupil was observed, for example, to have perfect pitch), during the inspection there was no evidence of any established tradition of high musical standards. The targets written for Year 9 pupils in last year's music reports were unrealistically challenging
113. Few pupils take GCSE music. In 2003, five pupils took the examination – one attained grade B and two grade C. The standards of the present Year 11 pupils range from below average to very low. In a listening exercise none could identify with any confidence a simple time signature, the difference between a major and a minor key, or the number of bars in the piece. One recognised a perfect cadence. These pupils' currently low levels of performance and composition, their lack of confidence as learners, and the absence of well-kept folders and/or recordings of previous musical work indicate significant under-achievement and suggest that teaching before this term was poor. Some pupils have learnt little or nothing about music during their time at the school. Another, specialist, teacher is doing his best to prepare pupils for the GCSE examination, but it is an uphill struggle. No Year 10 pupils have chosen to study this subject for GCSE.
114. The temporary teacher's very good teaching is providing many pupils with a taste of what they could achieve in music. Not surprisingly, many are responding with delight, turning up at lunchtimes to engage in musical activities and to enjoy the teacher's lively company and encouragement. They begin to sense that there could be so much more to music-making and they are eager to find out what they could do. Urgent action is required if these pupils are to have the provision to which they are entitled and which they deserve.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**

<i>Standards of work are average (well above average for GCSE pupils)</i>	<i>Pupils achieve well</i>
<i>Teaching is good</i>	<i>Learning is good</i>
<i>Leadership is very good</i>	<i>Management is very good</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been very good</i>	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very wide range of extra-curricular activities, open to all and well attended.
- A very strong team spirit among staff, with shared vision for the future.
- Regular and supportive monitoring has developed consistently good teaching and learning.
- Well-planned and relevant teaching has led to good achievement.
- Lesson summaries are too teacher-led.
- No formal planning to improve pupils' spiritual and cultural development or their literacy and numeracy in lessons.

### Commentary

115. Pupils arrive with below average standards in Year 7, as the majority lack co-ordination and tactical awareness, but by the end of Year 9 they have mastered basic skills and use them reasonably well in games. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils have developed a range of skills, so that they perform effectively, lead warm-ups, and evaluate their own and others' performances. GCSE results have steadily improved for the last five years and were well above average in 2002 and 2003. Estimated grades for 2004 indicate that this level of success will be maintained. Pupils generally do better in physical education than in their other subjects. Many pupils studying GCSE are performing well above average in both theory and practical aspects, but several personal exercise programmes lack quality in literacy and computer skills and have no evaluation section.
116. In one Year 9 netball lesson, after a sequence of graduated drills, girls demonstrated defensive skills so well that the teacher had to develop passing in attack to counter this defence. This knowledgeable breaking down of skills develops understanding and confidence, which contributes to the good achievement by the end of Year 9. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 also achieve well because teachers use their knowledge of the pupils' levels of expertise to plan tasks that develop their individual needs. Pupils with special educational needs progress well in small setted groups, through individual attention, use of modified worksheets and equipment, and full involvement of learning support assistants.
117. Consistently good teaching, brought about by regular monitoring and sharing of good practice, has led to good learning. Pupils' very positive attitudes and teachers' high expectations of standards of behaviour mean that time is used effectively. Achievement is good because teachers constantly make relevant references to clear learning objectives, examination questions and full game situations. Teachers' summaries are developing, but they do not involve the pupils enough. The department makes effective use of ICT.
118. The department runs a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended and open to all. The school teams do well in local and national competitions, and several pupils have representative honours. The department has very good links with local sports clubs and primary schools, and standards are rising through the committed involvement in the School Sports Co-ordinators scheme. The department has recently gained the Sportsmark award. Accommodation is satisfactory, but the netball courts are used as car parks and the weights' room is unsafe to use.

119. There is a clear, shared vision of what the department will look like in the future, and inspired leadership has developed a strong team spirit. Workable policies and procedures are in place, although opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness and to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in lessons are not highlighted. Since the last inspection the department has made very good progress as it has raised achievement and standards by the end of Year 11. Teaching is now consistently good and teachers make good use of ICT, learning support assistants and the good resources available to them.

## VOCATIONAL COURSES

### Health and social care

120. In 2003, almost all pupils gained the GNVQ Part 1 qualification, which represented good achievement overall. Many pupils achieved very well, given their very low prior attainment. The current Year 11 is the first to study the double-award vocational GCSE health and social care course. This course was sampled, with a lesson observed in each year. Most pupils on the course are girls, as is common nationwide, but there are some boys. Most are relatively lower attaining pupils. Standards expected in the current course are the same as those for non-vocational GCSEs, so this level is challenging for pupils.
121. Attainment in Year 11 is in line with that expected nationally, which again demonstrates good, often very good, achievement. The inspection confirmed the school's assessments of this achievement, as did examination of pupils' finished assignments. Year 11 are on track to achieve broadly C/D grades, provided their performance in the external examination is as good as their assignments and coursework. Year 10 pupils' first assignments are strong and these pupils are likely to attain higher grades.
122. Teaching and learning are good, with very good teaching seen in Year 11. Pupils are very positive about the course and share very positive relationships with the teacher. The careers library, where lessons take place, provides a very good vocational learning environment, with networked computers, Internet access and reference materials to hand. An atmosphere of high expectations, combined with the teacher's understanding of how pupils learn, mean that pupils learn successfully. They respond very maturely and all enjoy joining in - for example, in lively question and answer sessions to remind them about what they have learned before.
123. The teacher's selection of a very good range and variety of activities keeps the pace of lessons brisk and thus pupils are interested. A "can-do" atmosphere, where pupils are confident of success, pervades lessons. Pupils also work hard on their assignments, responding well to the teacher's very helpful marking about how they can improve. The teacher skilfully steers pupils to explore issues related to health, living conditions and personal development, which adds very significantly to their social, moral and cultural awareness and preparation for further education. The leadership and management of this course are very good.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**

<i>Standards of work are below expectations</i>	<i>Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory over time but good in lessons</i>
<i>Teaching is good</i>	<i>Learning is good</i>
<i>Leadership is unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Management is unsatisfactory</i>

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are several ways in which pupils experience citizenship in school life.
- The statutory requirement to assess, record and report to parents on pupils' achievement in citizenship has not yet been met.
- There is no monitoring of how well aspects of citizenship taught in other subjects are linked to the core programme.

### Commentary

124. The school is at an early stage of delivering citizenship. The key topics, including rights and responsibilities, local and national government and the global community, are taught through the personal, social and health education programme. The school has completed an audit of where aspects of citizenship are covered in other subjects but only a few departments have considered how to emphasise these topics through their teaching. Present provision is therefore patchy with no evaluation of how effective it is, no assessment of achievement and no systems of reporting to parents.
125. It was only possible to observe a few citizenship lessons during the inspection and pupils have not completed much written work. In a very good Year 7 lesson on living in a multicultural society, the teacher used a controversial article to stimulate pupils' thinking, and then related it to pupils' own experiences and topical issues in the news. Pupils were guided to see both sides of the arguments raised. The lesson moved fast and pupils read aloud, considered definitions of words such as 'ethnic' and 'culture', debated, made presentations and wrote a short summary at the end. An equally successful lesson on the rights of individuals involved Year 11 pupils watching a thought-provoking video. They appreciated the importance of understanding the composition of society in the UK.
126. Pupils can join activities in school, including the Global Action Plan, a range of fundraising and charity events and the school council, all of which are successful. But, from discussion with pupils, it is clear that they do not recognise these as aspects of citizenship. To raise this subject's profile, citizenship merits have been introduced - awarded to pupils who are good citizens within the school. Leadership and management of citizenship are unsatisfactory, mainly because the recently appointed co-ordinator, who is also a head of department, has not had the time to ensure that all assessment procedures are in place. The number of discrete lessons available for citizenship is too few to cover the topics in the required depth.

## Personal, social and health education

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

<i>Standards of work are below expectations</i>	<i>Pupils achieve satisfactorily</i>
<i>Teaching is good</i>	<i>Learning is good</i>
<i>Leadership is very good</i>	<i>Management is very good</i>
<i>Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory</i>	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- A well-established course which covers the statutory topics of sex and relationships, drugs and health education well.
- A detailed scheme of work and lesson plans provided for staff.
- The large number of staff teaching the course leads to inconsistency in the quality of lessons.

## Commentary

127. In Years 7 to 11 pupils are taught on a rotational basis to allow staff to specialise in teaching specific topics. Citizenship topics are included plus some elements of religious education in Years 10 and 11. The co-ordinator is constantly reviewing the course to improve the content. With many teachers delivering the course, some of who are more willing than others, teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. The school plans to have only a small group of teachers next year, which is a sensible way forward. In a few classes pupils showed that they are capable of mature thought; in others their responses and understanding were below the standard expected for their age.
128. In all years the successful lessons are those where teachers prepare thoroughly and add to the material provided. They involve all pupils in discussions and group work, and ask questions which challenge them to explore their ideas and consider the views of others. Good behaviour and respectful relationships give pupils the confidence to express their views, even on sensitive issues.
129. Year 8 pupils enjoyed designing and planning a town and discussing issues which emerged, such as different types of work or historical factors. However, if teachers are not receptive to pupils' contributions then learning is not so good. In one unsuccessful lesson the teacher cut short an emerging discussion about archaeology and did not develop pupils' understanding of the term 'community'. Year 7 pupils relished acting out a scenario of conflict resolution but the teacher did not summarise the key messages that emerged. In contrast, a Year 11 lesson on abortion was skilfully directed as the teacher successfully made pupils consider facts linked to emotions.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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