

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **REDDISH VALE TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE**

Reddish

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106134

Headteacher: Mr John Thompson

Lead inspector: Mark Woodward

Dates of inspection: 12 - 15 January 2004

Inspection number: 258740

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 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1542
School address:	Reddish Vale Road Reddish Stockport Cheshire
Postcode:	SK5 7HD
Telephone number:	0161 4773544
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Owen
Date of previous inspection:	27/04/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Just over one quarter of the pupils are on the register for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) which is above average, and over two per cent of pupils have statements of SEN, which is average. The school provides for a wide range of needs.

Reddish Vale Technology College has had technology status since 1995. It received Investor in People status in 1999, the Healthy Schools Award in 1998, Sportsmark in 2003 and has a wide ranging involvement in national and local initiatives such as Excellence Cluster and Aim Higher. The school serves a disadvantaged area. Twenty three per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average, and a slightly lower than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. Over recent years it has been difficult for the school to recruit appropriately qualified teachers. A slightly below average proportion of pupils continue in further or higher education when they leave the school. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds but 21 are at an early stage of learning English; most of these pupils are recently arrived refugees from Angola. Around 27 per cent of the pupils are on the register for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) which is above average, and 2.7 per cent of pupils have statements of SEN, which is broadly average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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20729	James Berry	Team inspector	Science
22695	Raymond Cardinal	Team inspector	Special educational needs Workplace learning
17709	Alan Giles	Team inspector	Physical education
14851	Graham Laws	Team inspector	German French
22685	Natalie Moss	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
10340	John Lockett	Team inspector	Design and technology
14704	Jeffery Cooling	Team inspector	Geography
22723	Bob Hartman	Team inspector	Mathematics
19452	Anthony Pearson	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Reddish Vale Technology College is a **good school**. Pupils are given very good learning opportunities as a result of good teaching and the innovative and diverse curriculum. Technology college status has been very beneficial in improving the school's work particularly in providing pupils with very good opportunities to develop their computing skills. Standards are below average (as they are when pupils enter the school) but pupils achieve well, particularly in Years 7 to 9 and the school works hard to promote the achievement of all pupils. The school is well led and managed and provides good value for money.

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

- Links with other schools and colleges and with the community are excellent and very well managed; they broaden pupils' learning opportunities and help to raise achievement
- Subjects most effective at promoting pupils' learning are mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, art, music and drama. Provision for extra-curricular sport and performing arts is also very good. The least effective subjects are French and religious education
- The curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11, is innovative and gives all pupils very good opportunities to achieve well
- The negative attitudes to learning shown by a small minority of pupils and parents are a major barrier to pupils' achievement
- Extensive ICT resources support pupils' learning in almost all subjects very well
- Not enough support is given to those at the first stage of the register for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Pupils continue to achieve well as a result of good teaching particularly in Years 7 to 9 and the school still offers good value for money. The curriculum has been developed very well, particularly as a result of effective links that have been forged with other institutions and business. Good progress has been made in tackling the key issues identified by the inspection although further work needs to be done to raise standards in French.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	D	D	E	D

*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.*

#### The achievement of pupils is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

Achievement is less good in Years 10 and 11 because a significant minority of pupils leave the school without qualifications. **Standards seen during the inspection were below average.** Pupils have performed consistently well in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 and the trend in results is in line with the national trend. In 2003, compared with similar schools, the results were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Compared with all schools the results were below average in all three subjects. GCSE results for higher grades in these three core subjects in 2003 were below average in English and average in mathematics and science compared with pupils in all schools. This represents good achievement in mathematics and science. The trend in GCSE results over the past five years is below the national trend. This performance is not fully representative of pupils' achievements because more pupils than normal take courses which exclude them from making a positive contribution to the statistics.

Compared with the results of girls and boys nationally, girls have performed less well than boys over the past two years at GCSE; the performance of girls and boys in the National Curriculum tests is similar. There are too few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds for reliable conclusions to be drawn from analyses of examination and test performance by ethnicity; the school is only at an early stage of making such comparisons. Pupils with SEN who receive support achieve well. Some pupils at the first stage of the SEN register do not receive enough support and therefore do not achieve well enough. Targets for tests and examinations have largely been met in recent years but in 2003 most were not met.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their moral and social understanding, are developed well.** Attendance is below average but rising as a result of very good action by the school and supporting agencies. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are satisfactory; the great majority of pupils show respect for others and have a desire to succeed; a small minority of pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes as shown by poor attendance and behaviour. The school works hard to tackle these issues and achieves notable successes but the rate of exclusion is well above national averages. More support for pupils with behavioural difficulties is necessary, particularly in the classroom.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school, including the quality of teaching and learning, is good. Teaching and learning are good in most subjects.** Some very good and excellent teaching was seen, particularly in mathematics, science, ICT, geography, music, drama and physical education. The weakest area is French where the quality of teaching by both individual teachers and the team is not secure and this results in underachievement. Good provision is made for pupils' personal development and they are expected to behave well. The school works hard to try and prevent pupils from becoming disaffected by continually revising the curriculum to offer relevant and interesting courses for all. However, a small minority of pupils still leave without qualifications. The very good curriculum is enhanced by the wide range of links with other schools and colleges. The links have improved pupils' opportunities to make progress; for example in ICT and in work-related courses. Pupils are given very good opportunities for learning outside of lessons particularly in sport and the performing arts. In other subjects, for example mathematics, teachers give considerable time for study support after school, at weekends and in the holidays. Curriculum provision for religious education is unsatisfactory because the school does not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils are cared for well particularly through the effective pastoral provision. They are given excellent support when they join the school and very good careers guidance.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and the management of the school are good.** Underpinning the headteacher's work are strong principles which drive his vision of a school offering diverse educational opportunities to all pupils. He has the support of an effective senior management team, some of whom have led and now manage substantial curriculum development. Following very good work by the headteacher, senior staff and governors, the school participates in a wide range of national and local initiatives that have brought many benefits to the pupils. Governors help to shape the direction of the school but they have not ensured that all statutory requirements are met and this is unsatisfactory. Governance is satisfactory overall. Most subjects are very well led and well managed. The improvement plan's targets reflect the school's aims but there are too many targets and the criteria for judging whether they have been achieved are too vague.

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

Parents have a positive view of the school; around a quarter of parents returned the inspection questionnaire and their responses reflected a high level of satisfaction. A similar level of support for the school was given at the pre-inspection meeting for parents. Pupils are also very supportive of the school as shown in the results of a school survey.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Make the quality of teaching in French more effective in raising achievement
- Build on existing strategies to give further support to the significant minority of pupils who have negative attitudes to learning
- Give more in-class support to pupils at the first stage of the SEN register

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that all pupils are taught religious education in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus
- Ensure that all required information is in the annual report from governors to parents
- Provide a daily act of collective worship



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils enter the school with standards that are below average. Standards seen during the inspection were also below average in all years but in a number of subjects, pupils reach higher levels. Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. The achievement of pupils is good, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Girls and boys perform similarly in Years 7 to 9 but girls do not do as well as boys in GCSE examinations. There is no significant evidence of variations in performance by pupils of different ethnicity.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the great majority of subjects; they do not achieve well enough in French
- A small minority of pupils leave school with no qualifications because they lose interest in learning and fail to attend despite the considerable efforts made by the school to support them
- National Curriculum test results are well above average for similar schools
- Pupils achieve well on vocational courses taught at local colleges and on the Nexus project (for pupils on extended work placement)
- Technology College status has raised standards particularly in ICT, design and technology, mathematics and science
- GCSE results, particularly girls' results, were below average compared with similar schools in 2003
- Most of the 2003 examination and test targets were missed
- Standards in sport and in extra-curricular performing arts are high

#### Commentary

1. **In recent years pupils have performed very well in the National Curriculum tests** taken at the end of Year 9. The high point was in 2002 when the results were broadly average compared with all schools in English and science and slightly below average in mathematics and well above average compared with similar schools in all three subjects. In 2003 the results were lower but still well above average compared with similar schools in mathematics and science and above average in English. However the fall in results meant that targets were missed in English and science (targets in previous years have largely been met). The trend in results is similar to the national trend since the last inspection.
2. Over the past three years, girls and boys have achieved similar results compared with the results of girls and boys nationally. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and so comparisons of performance by ethnicity are unreliable. The school has just appointed a manager to oversee the provision and performance of these pupils but work is at early stage.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.3 (33.6)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	33.5 (33.4)	35.4 (34.7)
science	31.7 (32.6)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 294 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. **Over the past two years, GCSE results have been below average** compared with the same pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9. The proportion of pupils gaining higher GCSE grades (A\*-C) was average in both years using this measure.

The difference between the statistics is explained by three factors. Firstly, the school, in partnership with colleges and the local education authority, offers a range of high quality vocational courses and extended work placements which reduce the proportion of pupils entered for examinations counting positively towards the statistics (in 2002/3, 15 pupils on the extended work placement scheme were entered for no GCSE examinations). Secondly, a small minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 (both girls and boys), become disaffected with learning and fail to attend despite considerable efforts made by the school both in terms of pastoral support and the diversity of the curriculum. Thirdly, a number of pupils are not entered for examinations for other reasons. In 2002/3, for example, four girls became pregnant (one of whom was entered for two GCSEs); two pupils were held in youth custody; and three pupils had long-term illnesses. A similarly diverse range of issues will have an impact on pupils' results in the 2004 examinations.

4. **Compared with the performance of girls and boys nationally, girls achieve relatively less well at GCSE than boys.** The reasons for this were not clear from the work seen during the inspection. However, disaffection with schooling is a factor as shown by the relatively high exclusion rates among girls compared with boys (relative to national statistics) as is the impact of other factors such as teenage pregnancy and poor attendance. In some subjects, such as English and design and technology, underachievement among small minorities of boys owing to disaffection is more evident than among girls.
5. **There was a sharp rise in the proportion of pupils gaining A\* or A grades at GCSE in 2003.** Subjects that performed well by this measure were art, food technology, graphics, music, physical education and geography. More able pupils make similar progress to other pupils indicating that they are given suitably challenging work. However, too few pupils successfully converted Level 7 grades (achieved in the National Curriculum tests taken in Year 9) into A\* or A grades in English, mathematics and science. The conversion rate was higher among the pupils taking GCSE in 2002.
6. None of the GCSE targets were met in 2003. The explanation for this is not clear as the school would have taken into consideration the curriculum programmes being followed when setting the targets. Targets in 2001 and 2002 were met. Targets for 2004 are suitably challenging.
7. Pupils achieve relatively better GCSE results in mathematics, geography, art and drama than in their other subjects. They achieve relatively worse results in English, textiles and French.
8. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have risen but not as fast as the national trend. However this is again affected by the increase in pupils taking courses which do not count towards the statistics.

#### **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	38 (40)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	80 (85)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	87 (91)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	28.4 (34.7)	30.0 (34.7)

*There were 277 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

9. **Standards seen during the inspection were higher than those suggested by GCSE results but were still below average in all years.** Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science and above average in ICT. The standards shown by pupils in ICT

are a direct consequence of the benefits of technology college status and of good quality teaching.

10. **The achievement of pupils is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.** Most pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11 but overall achievement is brought down by the small minority of both girls and boys who do not achieve well enough.
11. **More able pupils and those gifted and talented achieve similarly to other pupils.** A programme for gifted and talented pupils has been running for some time and this is having a positive impact on their progress, for example, in English. Gifted and talented pupils in sport and the performing arts are given very good opportunities to develop their potential through extensive extra-curricular opportunities.
12. Achievement is enhanced through the high level of commitment shown by teachers in supporting pupils in preparing for examinations. The mathematics department is particularly strong in this area. It regularly offers out of hours classes including revision classes at weekends and during holidays. Pupils and parents are very appreciative of this provision.
13. Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics, science, ICT, geography, art, music and drama. This is largely because of good, and often very good, teaching. In geography, for example, new methods designed to improve learning have been successfully introduced into teaching schemes. Pupils respond well and show greater commitment during lessons. As a result, senior managers have taken the decision to train many more teachers in the programme.
14. Pupils do not achieve well enough in French because the quality of teaching and learning is not secure. Many lessons are well taught but others are unsatisfactory. Achievement in religious education was not assessed during the inspection because no lessons were seen owing to the organisation of the timetable and no work was available. Provision is unsatisfactory as the courses on offer do not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
15. Just over one third of pupils with SEN receive additional classroom support and their achievement is good. These pupils (those with statements and those at the second stage of the school's SEN register) have the most significant needs. Around two thirds of pupils have less significant needs and these are on the first stage the SEN register, with no additional classroom support allocated. Many of these pupils have behavioural difficulties which emerge during lessons thus limiting their progress and the progress of fellow pupils. More support for these pupils is needed.
16. A striking feature of the nature of SEN pupils' achievement is its diversity. In 2003, statemented pupils gained very high GCSE results in comparison with their National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9. Currently there are compelling examples of individual pupils with complex needs achieving very well in a learning environment that is fully inclusive, with both staff and pupils providing necessary support. Similarly there are equally compelling examples of individual pupils' achievement in terms of very good gains in skills, self esteem and confidence because of the wide range of additional opportunities the curriculum provides.
17. The school has just started to conduct analyses of the progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The numbers of pupils concerned are too small for reliable statistical conclusions to be drawn. Pupils in the school who are at the early stages of English acquisition are achieving satisfactorily through lessons in which they are supported in mainstream classes by specialist teachers from the local authority and the attention paid to them by their classroom teachers. There is, however, insufficient specialist support for all with a high level of need and many more, for whom English is a second language, receive little support to ensure that their language use matures as they move through the school. Special

needs teachers and support assistants, as well as teachers, do their best to provide for all their needs.

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

Attendance is unsatisfactory but improving. Punctuality is satisfactory and is also improving. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are satisfactory. Personal development, including moral and social development, is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Thorough procedures involving the use of new technology and intensive follow up of absence have helped to improve attendance rates
- The school sets and achieves good standards in classroom behaviour through consistent application of assertive discipline policies
- The vocational curriculum helps to extend the personal development of some of the more reluctant pupils very well
- A minority of pupils show little zest for learning and attitudes are further hampered by high levels of holiday taking and the indifference of some older pupils, notably girls to attending school

### **Commentary**

18. Attendance for almost a quarter of pupils is poor and this seriously hinders their learning and the results they attain. Despite the school's best efforts including several prosecutions, a small number refuse to attend school and are not entered for GCSE. Punctuality on arrival at school has improved but a small minority are regularly late. Most pupils get to lessons on time. Truancy occurs but at a low frequency and the automated first day home telephone calls have helped to reduce it.
19. **Pupils in their school questionnaire were very positive about most aspects of the school.** Most said that they found their work interesting and had positive relationships with their fellow pupils and teachers. They also enjoy the opportunities to use ICT. Issues that they raised were about limited praise given by teachers and teachers' inconsistent use of planners. Both of these concerns are reflected by entries in the school improvement plan.
20. **Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory.** Most are attentive in lessons and complete classwork and homework appropriately. However, teachers have to work hard to promote positive attitudes among a significant minority of pupils and this is a major barrier to learning and achievement. This issue becomes increasingly evident as pupils move through the school.
21. **Behaviour in the classroom is good.** The "on-call" system works very well and pupils are pleased that disruption to lessons has been reduced. Pupils praised the assertive discipline programme as a great success and this was confirmed by inspection evidence. Behaviour outside the classroom was good in supervised areas and occasionally unsatisfactory in less visible places where pupils were loud and sometimes unruly. Behaviour between lessons is sometimes unsatisfactory particularly in the narrower corridors where some younger pupils feel intimidated. Bullying and racism occur at a low frequency but are dealt with very well.
22. **The rate of fixed term and permanent exclusion is very high.** Some of the latter are caused by pupils permanently excluded from other schools who persist with extreme and dangerous behaviour; their exclusions are fully justified. Girls, in contrast with national trends, account for a large number of the longer fixed term exclusions. Black boys are also responsible for a disproportionately high number of exclusions but the numbers of pupils involved are too small for reliable conclusions to be drawn.
23. **Pupils' personal development is fostered well and the ethos of the school is positive.** High participation in extra-curricular activities, especially sport and the performing arts

enhances social development very well. Moral development is strong and some effective moral messages are taught in lessons, through assemblies and in the way that pupils are treated in school. The farm provides pupils with experiences that enhance their understanding of animals and of the world of work.

24. The school does not comply with the statutory collective worship requirements nor are the requirements for religious education complied with. This reduces opportunities to learn about the main world faiths and other aspects of life in a multi-cultural society. In citizenship however pupils are given a good understanding of the issues facing others, for example, the plight of asylum seekers and refugees.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.6	School data	1.3
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

## Exclusions

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1476	138	9
White – any other White background	10	1	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	3	0
Mixed – White and Black African	8	1	0
Black or Black British – African	6	2	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good procedures are in place for promoting good behaviour and attendance. The curriculum is very good as a result of the linked provision with colleges, primary schools and the local education authority which enhances learning opportunities.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good in the great majority of subjects
- Teaching and learning are not of a consistently satisfactory standard in French
- Pupils on courses at college are well taught
- Pupils on extended work placements are given good opportunities to develop vocational skills
- Good teaching enables pupils with who have support for SEN to achieve well

- Pupils with SEN and those at an early stage of learning English who do not receive support do not learn as well as other pupils
- The use of ICT in most subjects has a positive impact on learning
- Strategies to improve the quality of learning have been successful, for example, in geography

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 152 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (2%)	29 (19%)	72 (47%)	38 (25%)	7 (5%)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)

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

25. **Teaching and learning are good in all years, including in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.** More lessons were judged good, very good or excellent in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9 but this is more the impact of unsatisfactory behaviour by younger pupils rather than the overall quality of teaching. The good quality of teaching and learning has been maintained since the last inspection.
26. **The teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy are good.** All subjects build the teaching of literacy and numeracy into schemes of work and this is evident in the way that lessons are presented and in the development of pupils' skills.
27. Teaching and learning are good in almost all subjects. Some very good and excellent lessons were seen, particularly in mathematics, science, ICT, geography, music, drama and physical education. Learning was enhanced through lessons that were very well planned, interesting and challenging. In geography, for example, starter activities successfully settle the pupils down to work. Many of the lessons then proceed at a fast but appropriate pace through a range of stimulating activities supported by well-chosen resources. Short sharp question and answer sessions are used to reinforce pupils' learning very effectively.
28. The weakest teaching is in French where individual teachers sometimes teach good lessons and sometimes unsatisfactory lessons. The weaker lessons are not organised well enough and teachers use too much English. Sometimes teachers' explanations are confusing and this results in inefficient learning and underachievement.
29. **The negative attitudes to learning of a small minority of pupils prevent them from achieving as well as they should.** Teachers' classroom management skills are good and this helps to establish positive working conditions but they are sometimes stretched by pupils with behavioural difficulties who need more support in order to maintain concentration. When negative attitudes were seen during the inspection it was mostly from boys but pupils' work and statistical indicators show that a small proportion of girls also cause concern. No significant evidence was seen to suggest any differences in attitudes by ethnicity.
30. The attitudes to learning of some pupils, including those at risk of disaffection, are improved by the breadth of the curriculum and in particular by the vocational courses and extended work placements.
31. Most pupils concentrate well in lessons. They apply themselves best when teachers use a range of strategies in each lesson. This retains motivation and ensures that lessons flow at a good pace.

32. Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subjects. Many also show a very high level of commitment to the pupils, for example, through the provision of a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and study support. Learning in the performing arts and physical education is strongly enhanced by the opportunities that pupils have to take their skills to higher levels through performance and competition.
33. The school has recently become interested in a programme designed to improve pupils' learning. The strategies have been successfully trialled, for example, in geography and as a result are to be introduced more widely. This is a good example of how the leadership of the school are having an impact in raising the quality of provision.
34. **ICT is used very well to enhance learning.** Most subjects have very good access to up-to-date resources and use them efficiently and effectively. Standards of work in ICT are above average as a result. The intranet features very valuable information from subjects such as schemes of work and homework details. Material has been created within subjects and then put into a learning-friendly format by the web designer employed by the school; for example, video demonstrations of how to make products can be found in the design and technology section.
35. The senior management team have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teachers. Action has been taken to raise quality and this has been successful in some cases such as in design and technology. The impact has not been as strong in other areas such as French. Good provision is made for staff development, for example, in the use of ICT and this helps to ensure that resources are used efficiently.
36. Support staff for pupils with SEN are used well. They have detailed knowledge of pupils to whom they are assigned and they record and monitor progress effectively. Pupils allocated high levels of support are given well-judged opportunities in individual lessons to develop independence; support staff display good initiative in giving additional support to other pupils in such situations. Teachers also display good awareness of pupils' special needs although there is not enough use made of suitably modified resources to support individuals. Teachers and support staff work well together; they make good use of the pairing and grouping of pupils to enhance learning opportunities for individuals with particular needs. Individual Education Plans are appropriately informative and well used. The absence of classroom support for pupils at the first stage of the SEN register is a barrier to pupils' learning, especially in teaching groups where there is a high proportion of pupils with special needs.
37. Some pupils at an early stage of learning English are not given enough support and this means that their learning is held back. Twenty one pupils fall into this category with twelve receiving regular support.

## **Assessment**

38. **The procedures for assessing standards and progress are good.** The strengths noted in the previous report have been well developed. The provision and analysis of assessment information for individual pupils are very good. However, as the school fully recognises, it is less well placed to monitor and evaluate the performance of different groups, such as pupils with SEN, the gifted and talented or those of different ethnicity. Steps are actively being taken to tackle this weakness. Very good use is made of the good quality analysis of data by the local education authority as well as nationally analyses. The school recently bought into a useful information manipulation system. It allows staff easy access to assessment data, including target and progress grades, and the facility to manipulate it. These are used by subject teachers, heads of subject and year heads to identify any trends in standards and achievement.

39. Individual pupil and subject targets are appropriately set using national data. All pupils know their minimum targets grades or levels. Staff make it clear that these are minimum targets which can and should be improved upon. Heads of subject are held accountable for standards and achievement in their subjects. Formal meetings are held termly to review progress towards meeting subject targets.
40. The school's target monitoring grades provide an effective means to show any trends in pupils' progress, so that problems are tackled before they become serious. Year 10 and 11 pupils who are identified as underachieving are assigned a senior member of staff to act as mentor. Pupils who exceed their expected progress are acknowledged and rewarded; this is good practice and a positive response to criticisms raised by pupils in a questionnaire.
41. Annual reports provide satisfactory information about standards reached and progress towards targets, but they sometimes lack enough information about how pupils might improve. All pupils attend the target setting day (in September) and the corresponding target review day (in July). These occasions are valued by parents; the attendance rate is around 90%. In addition there are subject consultation evenings. These three opportunities for parents/carers to meet teachers face-to-face are complemented by the annual report, a progress report and an end of year exam monitoring report. A carefully constructed assessment timetable ensures that pupils' progress in all subjects is formally monitored and reported to parents at least once a term.
42. The thoroughness and constructiveness of assessment in subjects are good overall. They are at least satisfactory in all subjects and very good in ICT; they are also very good in art and music in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' understanding of how they can improve is satisfactory. Although marking is regular and supportive it does not always give pupils clear direction as to what might be done to improve. It is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9.
43. **The procedures for assessing the progress of pupils with SEN are very good.** Testing procedures on entry are prompt and thorough. Individuals are regularly tested and re-tested to meet the requirements of local authority funding arrangements. The school takes every opportunity to obtain additional local authority funding for SEN through testing pupils not eligible for such funding when concerns arise. The twice-yearly reviews of progress for all pupils on the SEN register are very thorough with the full involvement of subject staff, pupils and parents.
44. Teaching for the pupils at an early stage of English acquisition is satisfactory. They receive a planned programme of support in lessons with a specialist teacher, which helps them to acquire the structure and vocabulary they need for the rest of their studies. Assessment, however, for those for whom English is a second language, assists classroom teachers to recognise weaknesses and helps pupils to overcome them.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good; it is a major strength in the overall quality of education provided by the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum offers pupils a very wide range of learning opportunities and is well matched to their needs and interests
- Curriculum links with colleges, primary schools and the community are excellent
- The enrichment programme for sport and the arts is very good
- The National Key Stage 3 Strategy is used well to strengthen teaching and learning
- The design of the curriculum reflects the distinctive and successful features of the school's technology status
- The curriculum for religious education is poor
- Careers guidance and guidance about further and higher education are very good



## Commentary

45. **The school has made very good progress since the last inspection to create worthwhile and coherent curriculum programmes.** It has been very successful in designing a curriculum that:
- reflects its distinctive character, ethos, aims and values, especially the innovative use of ICT across the curriculum
  - uses national strategies and links with the local community and other institutions to strengthen its provision
46. **Technology college status has very successfully enhanced the curriculum and pupils' learning.** High quality ICT resources, and the use made of them, have improved pupils' ICT skills and broadened learning opportunities in all subjects. The school has also used technology college status to strengthen its curriculum links with other schools thereby benefiting many more children and adults. Standards in design and technology have risen in recent years and provision is very substantial with six different course options. Mathematics and science, the other two core technology college subjects, offer very good provision.
47. **The school has used the National Key Stage 3 Strategy effectively** to support a range of curricular activities. As a result, teaching and learning are improving and this is raising standards; for example of literacy and numeracy. Funding is used well to provide booster classes in the core subjects, summer schools, bridging courses, excellent liaison with primary schools and links with the business community. Most recently the school has trained subject leaders in aspects of the strategy to increase their effectiveness. This has been successful; heads of department now have a clearer understanding of how to maximise the effectiveness of the curriculum.
48. Over the last two academic years the school has been involved in an initiative called Excellence Cluster. This is a programme designed to raise achievement in schools facing challenging circumstances. It has four key strands which are targeted at different groups of pupils; for example, substantial resources have been allocated to the development of distinctive programmes for more able pupils while another strand provides more support for those at risk of disaffection.
49. **The programme for more able pupils, particularly those identified as gifted and talented, is good** and developing well. The programme includes experiences such as visits to universities and joint enterprises with other schools, for example participation in an archaeological "dig" at Hadrian's Wall. These are well supported by a wide range of activities provided by most curriculum areas within the school. One group of pupils has achieved success in a regional competition in website design. Good procedures are in place to monitor the progress of the pupils and judge the effectiveness of the provision.
50. **The curriculum offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good.** Courses are aimed at meeting the needs and interests of all pupils. For example, those with strengths in the sciences can take the three separate sciences instead of the more general double science course, while a wide range of performing and creative arts courses is available.
51. **The school also provides a wide range of additional courses and work experience that significantly enhances the vocational aspects of the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11.** In addition to the introduction of vocational GCSEs in manufacturing, health and social care and ICT, the school has established a very wide range of other provision through its partnerships with colleges and with the local authority. The quality of this provision in terms of real vocational experience is very good because pupils are either in work placements doing real jobs or in a college environment where the workplace is accurately reproduced. Opportunities for progression are very good. For example, of the 19 Year 11 pupils attending Stockport College last year, nine progressed to higher level college courses, four gained full-time employment and two are actively seeking further training opportunities.

52. Provision at other colleges is an expanding aspect of the school's provision. Courses at Stockport College are well established with courses at North Area College introduced this year. Currently there are seven courses on offer in total at the two colleges, all leading to nationally recognised qualifications and all offering very good opportunities for further progression. Identification and monitoring procedures are very thorough. Reddish Vale makes every effort to ensure that individual pupils are appropriately placed with heads of year closely involved in referrals for placement and with parents kept fully informed. Taster courses are provided well in advance for Year 9 pupils, and these were seen during the inspection in January prior to courses starting in the following September. Timetabling arrangements work well overall although they work better where pupils attend off-site courses in place of school options than where pupils miss lessons and have to catch up on work. In addition to the provision on offer for groups of pupils at two colleges, individuals are placed on specific courses throughout the area (currently there are six other courses provided for individual pupils).
53. The local education authority's Nexus programme provides a very wide range of opportunities for individual pupils to participate in extended work placements for most of the school week. This, again, is an expanding aspect of the school's provision with nine pupils placed last year and sixteen this year. Pupils typically undertake four days' work placement each week plus some in-school provision that provides them with opportunities to gain qualifications in core subjects such as English and mathematics. Selection procedures are very thorough with the full involvement of pupils, parents and heads of year. The local education authority is extremely effective and proactive in making a very wide range of opportunities available to local schools. Support from the local community is excellent. Placements on offer provide very good opportunities to pupils with very significant individual needs who have not flourished within the conventional school environment.
54. **The school makes very good provision for a wide range of services and support programmes.** This is achieved by the enterprising use of funds from income generated by lettings, specific elements of funding as a Technology College and resources acquired as part of the excellence cluster. The school has a well established record of working with its local community and as a result it has a good understanding of the needs of the range of community groups. There is a strong commitment to creating goodwill and partnerships that enrich the work and life of the school at the hub of the community.
55. The services and support programmes are well designed to match identified needs. For example the extensive development of ICT facilities has allowed the school to provide adult and family learning programmes that develop both adult skills and for those who are parents build a better understanding of the curriculum followed by pupils. Income earned from ICT activities has assisted the maintenance of facilities and equipment in a cost effective way. The successful development of the day care centre and the parent and toddler services not only responds to community needs but provides valuable practical experience for pupils following vocational and work related courses. The facilities for physical education and sport provide an accessible and affordable venue for a wide range of interests and age groups. A proportion of income from community use of sports facilities helps with the cost of travel for school teams.
56. Pupils gain significant benefits from the extended services and programmes provided by the school. In the short term a large number of pupils have access to curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that are made possible by the community programme. In the longer term these opportunities are intended to contribute to the preparation of pupils for adult life as future parents and responsible members of the community. The school does not yet systematically evaluate the impact of the full range of extended services on the achievement of pupils. This makes it more difficult to clearly demonstrate how the very good provision links to educational priorities and is mapped through the school improvement plan.

57. **The wide range of enrichment programmes and out of hours provision makes a significant impact on pupils' achievement.** The excellent sports programmes give large number of pupils opportunities to participate in clubs and inter-school competitions. It is through these activities that the school is deservedly gaining a local and national reputation for high standards in a range of games. Music, drama and dance skills are extended through regular after-school performances and clubs. After-school support, clubs and an extensive range of educational visits also enrich performances in the majority of subject areas.
58. **The school in partnership with Connexions (the national careers and guidance agency), makes very good provision indeed for careers experience, preparation and advice.** Careers forms an integral part of tutor time, personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons covering such topics as interviews and curriculum vitae (CVs). Pupils build records of achievement, monitored by tutors, containing such things as CVs, letters, college applications etc. All have evaluated mock interviews conducted by outside agencies. Connexions is particularly involved with advising and monitoring pupils with SEN. The department has a presence at the Year 9 options evening, where there is contact with parents and interviews are available. There is an annual careers evening attended by colleges, training providers and organisations like the army. Local colleges, police and army all come in to talk to classes and groups. Year 10 can go out for a day to sample courses at three local colleges. Work experience for one week in October of Year 11 is carefully chosen, monitored and evaluated. There is an extensive careers library offering books, pamphlets and prospectuses together with suggested Internet sites and computer careers programs such as "Kudos". Trainee careers advisors from Manchester Metropolitan University interview all pupils with the results feeding back to tutors and the department for action. Individual's progress is carefully tracked by the department, tutors and Connexions with interviews always available on request.
59. **The curriculum provision for religious education is poor.** Restricted timetabling arrangements mean there is insufficient time to cover the Locally Agreed Syllabus and this prevents pupils achieving standards expected at the ages of 14 and 16. This is a breach of statutory curriculum requirements.
60. In modern foreign languages there is unsatisfactory continuity and progression in some learning because some pupils do not have an even balance of lessons across the two-week timetable. Some older pupils cannot sustain physical education sessions that last for two hours. These arrangements restrict the breadth of the overall programme offered and results in increasing numbers of pupils choosing not to participate.
61. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The programme, which has been implemented since the beginning of the current academic year, contains a typical range of topics appropriate to the age and stages of development of pupils. For example, these include for pupils in Year 7, issues of personal hygiene, drugs education and how to act in emergencies. In Year 9 they include family problems and changing relationships. Some topics are taught by specialists as part of the citizenship course but the majority of the programme is taught by form tutors during the morning registration and tutor period. Whilst some of this is well done, the quality overall is inconsistent because some tutors do not put in as much commitment as others.
62. Provision for pupils with SEN who do not have additional classroom support is satisfactory but provision for those with additional support is good. Additional staffing resources available, including support assistants, support teachers and local authority support teachers purchased by the school, offer in total a very good range of expertise and experience for the benefit of pupils.
63. **The school is fully committed to inclusion and the deployment of additional staffing for pupils with SEN reflects this commitment.** The emphasis of the school's provision is on pupils with special needs having full access to lessons in mainstream classes. The school makes considerable efforts to access local authority SEN funding and to deploy its additional

staffing resources to maximum effect by concentrating on the core areas of the curriculum. These resources are deployed to ensure full compliance with the requirements of statements and additional hours specified under the local authority's criteria for both statemented pupils and those at the second stage of the SEN register.

64. Other features enhance the overall provision for pupils with SEN. There is a strong emphasis on maximising the use of outside agencies so that provision overall is characterised by a multi-agency approach when required. A striking feature of the school's provision in Years 10 and 11 is the effort made to provide a wide range of additional experiences to address individual needs, including off-site college courses and extended work experience. Although not specifically planned to meet special educational needs these opportunities do in fact provide very well for some SEN pupils with provision matched very closely to particular needs.
65. The learning support unit provides carefully targeted support for pupils with behavioural needs including very well managed procedures for re-integration into mainstream classes. SEN staff are available throughout the day to provide high quality professional informal support for individual pupils although a lack of ICT facilities limits opportunities for pupils visiting the SEN base. Support staff provide a homework club after school on four days each week. A newly appointed learning mentor is developing a wide range of support strategies that benefit pupils including some with special needs.
66. The curriculum is satisfactory for the pupils at an early stage of English acquisition. It is less satisfactory for those for whom English is a second language because their progress is not monitored to ensure that their language skills mature as they move further up the school.
67. The match of teaching staff to the curriculum is good. The school has been particularly successful in implementing the citizenship course with the appointment of specialists. All staff receive continuous training in ICT to ensure that they are able to make best use of the resources that are provided through Technology status.
68. Support staff in technical and vocational areas of the school are well qualified and enhance departmental provision. The quality of support provided by classroom assistants is very good. However, there are not enough of them to match the significant level of need. For example, in English lessons only those pupils with the most severe difficulties receive extra help. The school has not prioritised the allocation of funds for this purpose. This unsatisfactory provision has a negative impact on the progress of these pupils.
69. Accommodation is good overall. The school works hard to accommodate far more pupils than the site was designed for. Good management and maintenance create a clean and safe environment. The installation of security fencing has led to much reduced levels of vandalism and unauthorised access. Teaching rooms are well used to create suited accommodation for all areas of the curriculum; that provided for science, music and, in part, physical education is very good. The number of pupils on site creates congestion on corridors and there are too few communal areas for them to use at break and lunchtime. The extent of external hard-surface play areas is insufficient, particularly as one such area is currently used for car parking, though the situation will be eased by the building of an all-weather playing surface. The provision of toilets does not meet recommendations, though the presence of a toilet attendant ensures that they are kept in good condition. The central reception and office area is currently not fit for purpose, particularly for that of welcoming visitors. Good financial planning is addressing problems caused by the age of the buildings, particularly that of leaking roofs.
70. The overall provision of learning resources in subject areas is good. There is very good provision in science, ICT, physical education and music. However classroom resources, including the provision of course books, are unsatisfactory in English. In citizenship and modern foreign languages resources are satisfactory. Overall resources for art are satisfactory but the department is unable to provide sketchbooks for pupils in Years 7 to 9. The school library provides a very good, well used central resource with a full-time librarian who works in close liaison with subjects to ensure appropriate resources are provided. It

provides a range of lunchtime and out of hours learning opportunities for pupils. There is also a good network of computers with high speed Internet access.

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

The care of pupils is good and the arrangements for welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The school provides good support, advice and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. Pupils' views are valued and widely canvassed as part of school improvement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pastoral system is very well managed and the care, support and guidance provided for pupils are good
- The induction of new pupils is outstanding
- The school actively seeks, listens and acts upon pupils' views and gives them a real "voice" in the school
- Health and safety checks and the administration of medicines are not recorded well enough

### **Commentary**

71. Pupils confirmed strongly how much they value the close relationships they develop with staff. They are confident that they would always have someone to turn to if they were worried or troubled. They feel very reassured by all the professional support opportunities the school offers for a range of personal difficulties and these are usefully listed in the pupils' planners. The arrangements for child protection and for pupils in public care are good and all the requirements are met.
72. Resources made available to the school through the Excellence Cluster initiative provide valuable additions to the school's guidance provision. The learning mentor gives one to one support to a range of pupils both inside and outside the classroom while the learning support unit is effective in helping to re-establish appropriate attitudes to learning.
73. The three progress reports and three consultation opportunities enable plenty of good advice and guidance for academic improvement. Inconsistent marking however hampers day-to-day opportunities to guide pupils effectively. Tutor time is used inconsistently and some valuable teaching time is lost, but overall, pupils are given satisfactory opportunities for reflection during this time as it forms part of the personal, social and health education programme. The "tutor group" report system in Year 7 to 9 tracks pupils' personal development thoroughly; any issues raised are quickly addressed. Younger pupils with complex educational needs are supported by a learning mentor and are making very good progress. This proactive approach is helping to halt disaffection and rescue some pupils.
74. Pupils with SEN are fully involved in review procedures including the setting and reviewing of their own targets. Around a third of pupils with special needs have additional hours of classroom support allocated to them, some with very high levels of support. These arrangements result in the development of secure relationships for the benefit of individual pupils. In addition SEN staff are available throughout the day and evidence from the inspection is that pupils feel comfortable and secure in their relationships with staff with, for example, visits made at break time to the SEN base.
75. The new ethnic minority monitoring manager is beginning to monitor whether pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully included by the school's provision. Personal development is monitored well, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

76. **Some health and safety issues require attention.** When pupils are ill or injured they receive good attention but often in the room between the main toilets that offers little comfort or privacy. Pupils with a range of serious medical conditions are catered for well, underpinned with advice from the school nurse. The record keeping of medicine administration arrangements is unsatisfactory because records are not kept appropriately. Similarly, the recording of fire checks and risk assessments is not rigorous enough. Although there are sufficient first aiders in school these are not listed and widely known. Security systems are good including those for Internet use.
77. **The arrangements for induction are excellent.** Year 7 pupils were very pleased at how quickly they settled and mastered the daily routines and complex campus. Careers education and guidance is very good and the quality of impartial advice given for post-16 opportunities in employment and further education is also very good.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### Outstanding induction procedures.

Year 6 pupils visit Reddish Vale in the Autumn term for a taster day and get an initial early flavour of the school's ethos, routines and expectations. This is further enhanced during the summer three-day induction programme. During this period, pupils are divided into their intended tutor groups and have the chance to get to know their new classmates. A whole year group assembly starts the first day after which tutor group sessions include ice-breaking games and some team building challenges. During the three days, lessons are given in most subject and the expectations of behaviour are made very clear right from the start. Year 10 "Seniors" are assigned to groups of pupils to help and support them especially in finding their way around school. As a result, pupils feel motivated and secure when they join the school. The Year 7 pastoral team is highly efficient and monitors all lessons and issues are identified and addressed early in a most impressive way.

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

The links with parents are good and the school is held in high regard by parents and the wider community. Links with the local community are outstanding and the school's links with other schools and colleges are excellent.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The arrangements for transferring pupils from primary schools to Reddish Vale Technology College and onto further education colleges are outstanding
- Links with the community are superb
- A significant minority of parents do not support the school well enough
- The school works hard to build partnerships with parents in its efforts to improve standards
- School reports, although satisfactory, do not always contain enough advice about how pupils could improve their work

### Commentary

78. **The school welcomes and works effectively with parents to support pupils' learning.** There is a good quality information exchange during the three formal consultation opportunities each year. Interim reports are useful indicators of progress but annual school reports do not always give enough guidance on how standards could be raised.
79. **Parents are provided with the excellent termly "Reddish News" newspaper** and the regular newsletter will shortly be relaunched to keep parents fully in touch with school news. Parents also find the school website an invaluable information source.
80. The prospectus gives parents useful information about the school's policies and practices. The governors' annual report to parents is also a useful document but it omits some required information about the school's provision for giving access and support to disabled pupils.

81. There is a great deal of regular contact between parents and pastoral staff whenever issues arise. Joint approaches to support pupils work well when parents co-operate as most do; however, a significant minority do not support the school's work well enough, for example, by condoning their children's absence. The taking of holidays during school time accounts for around one percentage point of the absence statistics and has a detrimental impact on learning. Parents welcome the automated telephone service that follows up absences.
82. All "on-call" incidents are automatically reported to parents. Parents' views are regularly gauged both formally and informally and show high satisfaction levels across all aspects. Parents' appreciate the opportunities to give feedback to the school through questionnaires and the opportunities to help shape future plans.
83. **Community relations are excellent and facilities are well used and appreciated.** The school is the hub for many local user groups and caters for all ages including a day care centre for the elderly and a parent and toddler group which provides placements for Year 9 work experience and is a valuable resource for pupils on the health and social care course. The school works closely with local community groups co-operating on issues such as crime and transport and becoming involved in local events including the Manchester Festival of Arts. The basketball centre serves the whole of the North West and has some tremendous spin offs for basketball excellence in school.
84. **Links with local schools, pupil referral units and colleges are outstanding.** Many high quality learning opportunities are provided by Reddish Vale for pupils in primary schools with notable strengths in ICT and modern foreign languages. The links support the excellent transition arrangements from primary schools.
85. **The transfer arrangements to further education colleges are also excellent.** Links with colleges for the 14-19 Pathway support the vocational curriculum very effectively. There are major benefits for learning from the Excellence Cluster work and the Aim Higher project. Many excellent links with colleges and universities enable some exciting and challenging learning for many of the most able pupils.
86. **Links between SEN staff and feeder schools are very good.** SEN staff are fully involved in the school's transition arrangements for pupils entering Year 7. Transition review meetings for Year 6 pupils who have statements or are at the second stage of the SEN register are attended by the school's SEN staff.. SEN support staff are fully involved in the school's three-day induction programme for Year 6 pupils held in the term prior to them joining the school. Links between SEN staff and parents are very good. In addition to strong informal links parents are kept fully informed of the provision made including changes in targets set. Parents are fully involved in reviews of progress and receive reports on progress-to-date prior to reviews.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### **Outstanding links with schools and colleges.**

Testimonials from primary schools show that they are delighted with the support that they receive from staff at Reddish Vale. An ICT teacher provides high quality teaching to pupils of all ages, carries out staff training and gives technical support. He also runs the primary learning centre (which is a classroom exclusively for the use of primary school pupils within the school), booster classes and the summer school. Primary pupils are also introduced to modern foreign languages by school staff. Other teachers also offer support for science, food technology, sports and the performing arts. Links with colleges are also outstanding because they result in carefully planned courses to broaden pupils' opportunities. Staff at the colleges are trained in managing pupils aged 14 to 16 and college managers are heavily committed to making the courses successful. Links with higher education include many amazing trips, projects and competitions in science and astronomy, maths, history, engineering and technology. Pupils are urged to aim higher and consider going to university to fulfil their potential. A particularly successful element is the Careers and College Evening that is attended by more than 1000 people providing essential information for the whole school community.

## Example of outstanding practice

### Outstanding links with the community

The school is very much at the heart of the community and there are some strong partnerships with local groups and very good relationships with the community. The school newspaper is widely circulated to 10,000 local people. It promotes the school and encourages the use of facilities through participation in the many programmes on offer. School facilities are used very well by many user groups especially the hall, theatre, basketball centre, sports hall and swimming pool. Many people attend the adult learning for both examination classes and recreational purposes. The lettings generate large sums that are used to benefit learning. The North West Basketball Centre is very prestigious and encourages excellence in basketball both in school and in the wider community. Links with Stockport County FC have improved standards in soccer especially amongst the girls. Work with the Youth Offending Team and police has encouraged use of sports facilities for social inclusion and crime avoidance for some of the most disaffected pupils. The consequences of drink driving, drug abuse and joy riding are also conveyed as strong messages in citizenship lessons. Links with outside agencies to support pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties are very good. The school has strong links with the school nurse, the "Making it back" drug recovery group and "Relate" who are specialists in family problems and are oversubscribed.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and senior management team is good and the school is well managed. Governance is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has built a good team of senior staff who share a common commitment about the direction of the school
- The leadership of subjects and the pastoral system is very good overall
- The leadership of the curriculum is very good
- Targets in the improvement plan lack precision, are too numerous and are not closely enough linked to financial planning
- Governors have not ensured that statutory requirements are fully met
- Partnerships that the school has forged with other institutions and agencies have improved learning and achievement

### Commentary

87. **The headteacher leads the school well.** He commands respect among pupils, staff and parents for his integrity and for his educational values. Relationships in the school are good and this derives from the headteacher's firm but non-confrontational approach to management. He recognises that many senior staff, including himself, have limited experience of other schools and has sought to develop partnerships with others to bring in fresh ideas.
88. The headteacher has built a cohesive senior management team. One of the deputy headteachers leads the Technology College work very well, drawing together the various strands successfully; the other helps maintain the school's strong links with other institutions. The Excellence Cluster initiative is very well led as is the development of whole school assessment and progress monitoring and the pastoral system.
89. **The headteacher, senior managers and governors have been very successful in broadening the school's provision** by taking part in a wide range of local and national initiatives. The Excellence Cluster programme has brought the school closer to other schools in the area and this has been beneficial in the sharing of good practice. Elements of the programme are helping to provide greater learning opportunities for more able pupils while pupils at risk of disaffection are being supported in a range of ways, for example, by the learning mentor.



90. **Leadership of the curriculum by the headteacher and senior staff is very good.** Technology college status was awarded in 1995, many years before specialist schools became commonplace. Pupils have benefited greatly from the opportunities that Technology College status has brought, particularly in the development of their computer skills and in using computers to improve learning in all subjects. Other action that has contributed to the broadening of the curriculum includes the forging of curriculum links with local colleges, the adoption of separate sciences alongside double award science, the strong focus on performing and creative arts, the Nexus programme, the excellent extra-curricular sport programme and the development of citizenship. A leadership weakness is the poor provision made for religious education.
91. Since the last inspection the school has made satisfactory progress. Standards have risen broadly in line with the rise in standards nationally and significant improvements have been made to the curriculum as a result of action by the senior management team.
92. The impact of the leadership incentive grant (LIG) training initiative has been very good. Senior managers have been motivated by the programme and have widened their understanding of effective leadership. The sharing of ideas between schools has had positive results, for example, in enabling the senior team to identify weaknesses in improvement planning which are now being tackled.
93. Senior staff have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning as shown by their pre-inspection evaluations. Improvements in standards in some subjects such as design and technology and music are testament to the work that has taken place in recruiting good teachers and improving teachers' effectiveness. Action to tackle weaknesses in French has not had enough impact.
94. **Governors make a good contribution to the school's strategic planning.** They have helped shape the direction of the school by; for example, supporting the work of the headteacher and senior staff in developing the broad and inclusive curriculum. Many have a long-standing association with the school and this gives them a good understanding of the needs of the pupils and the challenges facing staff. They have a strong commitment to giving all pupils' good opportunities to succeed. Some are actively involved in working with the pupils; for example, one governor regularly coaches basketball.
95. Governors have not ensured that statutory requirements for the provision of religious education are met. Since September 2003, religious education, citizenship and personal, social and health education have been drawn together into a faculty. Previously, form tutors were responsible for teaching citizenship and personal, social and health education and the school's self evaluations reveal that the quality of teaching and learning was inconsistent. The idea of drawing religious education into the programme is sound but in practice, pupils do not spend enough time on the subject to meet legal requirements. For many years the school has not met the requirement for a daily act of collective worship. There is not enough room in the school for all pupils to assemble each day but the school makes satisfactory provision for reflection during tutor periods. Some required elements of the annual report of governors to parents are missing. Owing to breaches of statutory requirements, this element of governance is unsatisfactory but the strength of governors work in other areas means that **governance overall is satisfactory.**
96. **Subject and pastoral leadership is a strength.** The leadership of English, mathematics, science, design and technology, ICT, geography, art, music and drama is very good and in all other subjects except religious education it is good. Subject heads have developed good schemes of work and have been proactive in looking for new ways of improving learning. In geography, for example, ideas recently introduced to the school through a training programme have been rapidly and successfully adopted. The good pastoral provision is very well led and managed. They are all based in the same area, work closely as a team and keep meticulous records.

97. Subject management is good. Heads of department are well organised and they ensure that day-to-day matters are dealt with efficiently. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good but more use could be made of achievement data for improvement planning.
98. The leadership and management of religious education are poor because the subject does not fulfil the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and therefore pupils are disadvantaged. This is an issue for senior management and governors.
99. The improvement plan for the past three years is coming to the end of its life. It appropriately prioritised raising achievement and improving teaching, learning and behaviour; progress has been made on all of these areas. The headteacher and senior management team acknowledge that it has too many targets and that the criteria for assessing whether targets are met are too vague. However, many improvements have been made as a result of the plan; for example, in substantially improving the involvement of the school with the community. The new improvement plan is under construction and the objective of creating a more sharply focused plan has been shared with governors.
100. A very striking feature of the school's off-site provision is the strength of the partnerships that have been developed. This includes partnerships between the school and other schools, between the school and colleges, and between the school and the local education authority. In all cases leadership is very strong in seeking to develop and further enhance the provision, and in all cases management is very strong in putting in place the detailed arrangements that enable courses and work placements to run each year. The commitment displayed by all those involved is excellent. Plans are finalised well in advance of final confirmation of external sources of funding and this demonstrates clearly the level of commitment within the partnerships. All institutions involved have demonstrated their commitment by ensuring that key personnel at an appropriate level are responsible for both the management of current provision and for the development of future provision.
101. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with SEN are very good in relation to the use made of available resources. Every effort is made to maximise the resources available from local authority SEN funding and to maximise their impact through careful deployment. Identification, assessment and monitoring procedures have been developed very effectively including a comprehensive database that provides a very wide range of information on each pupil's current needs and progress.
102. The SEN co-ordinator and SEN staff as a group have played a significant role in enhancing the school's commitment to inclusion through the role they perform in the classroom. The very strong links between the SEN co-ordinator, the learning support unit, the learning mentor and pupil services staff enhances the whole school approach to special needs with, for example, key staff meeting together weekly to review the progress of individual pupils. A multi-agency approach has been developed very effectively, with very strong links established with the local education authority and with key external specialist services.
103. The absence of classroom support for the large number of pupils who are at the first stage of the SEN register is a notable gap in the school's provision especially in teaching groups where there is a significant proportion of pupils with special needs with no additional support. This compromises learning and leads to underachievement.
104. A weakness in the very thorough assessment procedures is the difficulty in accessing information about groups of pupils from the school database. This limits the school's ability to plan when, for example, it wishes to review the effectiveness of the deployment of additional staffing resources in particular year groups.
105. **Leadership is satisfactory for those pupils in the early stages of learning English but not for those who speak English as a second language.** However, the school has recently appointed an ethnic minority manager, who has responsibility for all aspects of liaison and

welfare for these pupils; this is a positive development in improving the school's provision for inclusion. Overall, the school is an inclusive school and strives hard to meet the needs of all pupils.

106. The framework for performance management is well structured and focuses on accountability. This is contributing to improving skill levels in all departments in critical areas such as ICT. All staff have received training for the Key Stage 3 strategy. The programme of professional development is wide-ranging. There is a clear commitment to address not only the needs of the individual but also the main objectives in the school development plan. A supportive programme is mapped out to provide appropriate information for staff when they first join the school. Large numbers of trainee teachers are welcomed into the school each year to participate in a range of schemes and placements.
107. Arrangements for the recruitment, retention and deployment of staff are good. Senior staff and governors take care to appoint teaching staff to match the needs of the curriculum and discretionary points are appropriately used to support recruitment and retention. The process of assessing teachers to move through the threshold has been effectively managed and a number of teachers have successfully progressed onto the upper pay scales.
108. The deployment of support staff is well managed and the school has made a good start on remodelling the workforce in accordance with the 2003 National Agreement on workforce reform. LIG funding has been well used to appoint additional support staff so that heads of department have more time and opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in their curriculum areas. A proposal to restructure roles and responsibilities in relation to the management of school premises, finances and personnel is in preparation and will be available for consultation. The headteacher has a very good understanding of the issues that need to be tackled so that remodelling is coherent with the other current initiatives. The school has not yet produced a draft strategic plan for the next phase of its development. The headteacher is aware that the fixed term nature of some of the sources of additional income together with the forecast reduction in pupil numbers will raise issues about the financial sustainability of the remodelling.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,719,606	Balance from previous year	23,915
Total expenditure	4,745,950	Balance carried forward to the next	(26,344)
Expenditure per pupil	3,134		

109. **Approaches to financial management are satisfactory.** The governing body finance subcommittee works well with the headteacher and the school's finance manager. Regular meetings monitor patterns of income and expenditure. The school benefits from additional funds from national initiatives such as the specialist schools' programme, excellence cluster and leadership incentive grant. The school also makes very good use of its premise and facilities not only to promote community links but also to earn income from lettings and services.
110. Overall expenditure per pupil is below average. In the current financial year the school projects a balanced budget with a very small surplus. While spending decisions are explained in minutes of governors' meetings and budget updates, the arrangements for evaluating the benefits to pupils are less well developed. The school produces well presented reports to account for the use of resources generated by initiatives such as Technology College

specialist status. The links between educational priorities, strategic planning and financial management are less well defined in the current improvement plan.

111. Well targeted spending has improved ICT facilities and the extensive services offered to the community. The governing body has determined the roles and responsibilities of the finance subcommittee and the headteacher but the most recent LEA auditor's report advises that the delegation of responsibilities is ambiguous and requires further clarification. The school has yet to respond to all the recommendations in the auditor's report. Systems for financial and administration are efficient.
112. **The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value in managing and using resources.** Governors effectively monitor how senior staff implement best value principles when allocating resources but do not have sufficient experience and information to evaluate thoroughly the school's cost effectiveness. A programme of support for governors has been arranged to assist the finance subcommittee to develop its strategic role. The school is beginning to use financial benchmarking systems so that it can compare spending decisions with schools and colleges in similar contexts. There are good procedures for allocating resources to subject departments and funds are identified for curriculum development. This is reflected in the breadth of the curriculum especially for Years 10 and 11 and the successful introduction of new courses such as citizenship. Arrangements for evaluating the impact of resource allocations on raising standards and achievement are not yet embedded in department development plans. Overall the school provides good 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**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English is good in Years 7 to 9
- Standards are below the national average at the end of Year 11
- Teaching is good throughout the school
- The Key Stage 3 literacy strategy has been introduced well in the planning of lessons and in longer term planning, ensuring that pupils progress well
- The attitudes towards work and the non-attendance of a significant minority of pupils, particularly boys, prevent higher achievement
- There is insufficient classroom support to help teachers to cope with the pupils with behavioural problems as well as the many with SEN
- Marking is not always directed at showing pupils how to improve their work
- Resources are insufficient to meet the needs of the subject

#### Commentary

113. **Standards are average at the end of Year 9 and below average at the end of Year 11.** National Curriculum test results in Year 9 fell in 2003 but they were still above average compared with similar schools. In the same year, results rose slightly at GCSE and those in English Literature rose appreciably, though remaining below the national average. **Achievement is good by the end of Year 9**, when measured against pupils' level of achievement on entry to the school. Although **achievement is currently satisfactory at the end of Year 11**, it is improving steadily, as a result of a more stable teaching staff after several years of much staff absence and many supply teachers and the benefits of the National Literacy Strategy.
114. Pupils' achievement by the ends of both Year 9 and Year 11 is improving, through good teaching, good curriculum planning and very good leadership of the department. The trend in English has been one of improvement when measured against pupils' earlier attainment, especially by the end of Year 9, since the last inspection. This is also the case in English Literature, where GCSE results have remained below average, but are improving. Not all pupils' standards and levels of achievement are improving as fast as they should be because of the disaffection and lack of interest in school work demonstrated by a significant minority of pupils, particularly boys, and the resultant lack of completed coursework. There is also a high number who take other vocational qualifications rather than GCSE, but who are included in the GCSE statistics.
115. The school has a high percentage of pupils with SEN and, although these pupils receive high quality support in lessons from the SEN teachers and assistants, there is insufficient classroom support available to deal in addition with the pupils with behavioural needs and the few who speak English as an additional language. The department does works hard to stimulate and extend higher attaining pupils well and teachers do their best to cater for the individual needs of those with SEN and those few who speak English as an additional language.
116. Pupils' speaking skills are the weakest of their literacy skills. Most pupils are willing to offer contributions to class discussions, but many find it difficult to express themselves with coherence and a significant minority refuse to try to contribute relevantly and sensibly.

Vocabulary is often narrow and sentence structure inaccurate. Pupils find difficulty in choosing an appropriate style of speech, despite the great care which teachers take to promote oral skills and the good role models they offer. Again, some pupils make little attempt to listen or to contribute. Reading skills are generally sound and many pupils read fluently, although they frequently read without expression. Teachers use literature well in the form of novels, stories, plays and poems to improve speaking and comprehension skills, contributing well to pupils' cultural development. Many pupils accomplish much sustained written work and are able to write in a wide range of styles for many purposes, though with technical weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and structure. The range of work covered at all stages is now good, due largely to the introduction of new schemes of work based on the literacy strategy, and teachers make good use of homework.

117. **Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and often very good.** No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. The combination of very dedicated teachers and good curriculum development which uses the Key Stage 3 literacy strategy well to plan good coverage of literacy targets, both ensure that pupils make clear progress. Teaching in the subject is characterised by enthusiasm and energy, as well as good humour and patience. The growing use made of assessment information is helping teachers to prioritise areas for improvement. Teachers show very good expertise in the subject and in their teaching of literacy skills. They are adept at using methods calculated to hold the attention of pupils and encourage them to become interested in and involved with their work. Time is used well and homework is set to good advantage, enabling those pupils who are willing to work to achieve well. Occasionally, particularly when a class is unsupported by classroom assistants or special needs teachers, the management of pupils becomes insecure. Teachers' marking, though regular, does not always consistently inform pupils on ways in which they could improve their work.
118. **The subject leader leads the department very well.** He has a clear understanding of how the subject can improve further, presents a very good role model to his colleagues, promotes a very good sense of teamwork, despite the many staffing changes and absences of late, and plans and monitors the curriculum well. **Management is good.** The head of department ensures that pupils' work is carefully checked and their progress analysed, tracked and targeted, in a determination to ensure that standards improve. He observes lessons to help spread good teaching and learning practice throughout the department. There are, however, management issues beyond his control, particularly those of poor attendance and the disaffected and disengaged minority of pupils, which hinder higher achievement. The provision of resources, too, especially books and audio-visual equipment, is unsatisfactory. ICT is now beginning to be used well in the teaching and learning of English and access to ICT facilities is satisfactory.
119. **Improvement in the quality of provision for the subject since the last inspection has been good,** despite below average standards at GCSE. At the time of the last inspection standards were below average at the end of Year 9; they are now in line with it. The head of department has produced good new plans to meet the literacy strategy and new examination programmes and there is very good emphasis on the use of literature in teaching English at all levels. The lower performance of boys as compared with that of girls is also a concern which is being addressed vigorously by the department and the analysis of data is being used well to allow the department to address the next priorities. The department has forged very good links with its feeder primary schools and has initiated a valuable transition programme. Many intervention measures have been introduced, such as a summer school targeted at improving the underachievement of boys, the introduction of 'express' classes in Years 10 and 11 to help higher attaining pupils achieve to their full potential and many after-school extra tuition sessions. All of these strategies have been successful in raising standards. ICT has been well assimilated into the English curriculum.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

120. The school is aware of the need for the National Literacy Strategy to be widespread throughout the school and has taken steps to ensure that all curriculum areas are involved in their role in raising standards of literacy. The development of literacy has been enhanced by the effort that the school has put into the adoption of the National Literacy Strategy for Years 7, 8 and 9. Many of these measures, led by the school's working party on literacy, are beginning to have a beneficial effect on whole school literacy. There is some good practice evident in some subjects, in the form of word banks and writing frames.
121. The school has a full and productive policy to encompass literacy within the whole school. This policy covers the needs of all pupils, monitoring their work and supporting their writing skills. Teachers have received training and regular meetings are held to explore future initiatives.
122. Most teachers provide good models for oral work, taking the opportunity to promote sustained and structured speech and good listening techniques. Reading is generally fluent and comprehension techniques emphasised throughout all subjects. Written work is usually of good length and covers a good range of activities, though there are weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar and vocabulary is often thin.
123. Teaching and learning in literacy for pupils with SEN or the few who speak English as an additional language, are good. However, this good provision does not always extend to the significant minority with behavioural problems or who are disaffected with school or those for whom English is an additional language.

## Modern Foreign Languages

Provision in German is **satisfactory**. Provision in French is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Determined leadership and teamwork are getting to grips with consistent planning of the curriculum
- Pupils who have chosen to continue with a language in Years 10 and 11 have positive attitudes, particularly in German
- Speaking levels are too low in both languages in Years 7 to 9, and in French in Year 11
- The quality of teaching is insecure; it varies between good and unsatisfactory
- The organisation of the timetable is unsatisfactory
- Some pupils – especially in Year 9 – disrupt the learning of others in the class

### Commentary

124. **Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average in German and well below average in French.** Many pupils enter the school with low levels of communication. Taking account of this, **achievement in German is satisfactory but unsatisfactory in French.** Achievement is closely linked to teaching arrangements and styles. Some pupils have as many as three teachers in the 10-day timetable. Others have all their lessons in one week and none the following week. Teachers collaborate closely to minimise the effects of these arrangements. Nevertheless, continuity is affected, and this impedes rates of progress in Years 7 to 9.
125. GCSE results until 2003 included all pupils in the year group. The current Year 10 and 11 groups comprise only pupils who have chosen to continue their studies. This has a positive impact on both teaching, attitudes and standards in both languages.
126. **Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well below average in French and broadly average in German. Achievement is good in German but unsatisfactory in French.** GCSE results in

French have shown consistent underachievement in recent years. In the current Year 11 standards are still well below average. Nevertheless, pupils are beginning to realise the need for thorough preparation, especially for oral examinations. Writing levels are improving as a result of regular exposure to extended writing tasks. Attempts to develop conversations are frequently tentative and very few pupils are able to sustain dialogues that do not follow a well-rehearsed pattern.

127. In 2003, German GCSE results dipped considerably. Prior to that, they usually matched national averages, with girls performing particularly well. However, work in the option groups indicate that standards have risen once again to match average levels. Pupils use language with a good level of accuracy and are often ambitious when writing independently. Speaking is the weakest element, but the most able can develop meaningful descriptions with attention to important elements such as word order and agreements.
128. **Teaching and learning are good in German and unsatisfactory in French.** In French the quality of teaching varies considerably both by individual teachers and among the teaching team. This lack of consistency prevents pupils learning at an appropriate pace and this lowers achievement.
129. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is usually good. Teachers are confident and work in partnership with their classes. Lessons have pace and purpose and pupils show good levels of commitment. Generally, this is also true in Years 7 and 8. However, some teachers are unable to motivate a significant number of disaffected pupils – often boys – in Year 9. In these lessons organisation is not tight enough and learning objectives are not pursued vigorously. Pupils are kept busy – but not stretched. In groups with more able pupils, there is sometimes a lack of challenge. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on what they are doing or to use the language actively. As a result, too many become passive observers whilst the more adventurous dominate whole class question and answer sessions.
130. Throughout the school, lessons are prepared thoroughly. Pupils with SEN are considered carefully, and resources are tailored to help them succeed. In the best lessons, learning from previous lessons is regularly reviewed. This is especially evident in German and is one factor in the higher standards achieved in that language.
131. There is a strong commitment to the use of ICT. PowerPoint presentations are a regular feature of lessons and they help to heighten pupils' interest and to generate pace. English is used too readily in many lessons and this is a barrier to pupils using the language for real communication.
132. A key strategy to help raise standards is the work of the department with partner primary schools. Lessons are given regularly to primary school pupils to help them prepare for regular language tuition when they join the school. A puppet, Thierry, is a 'hit' with the primary children. The teacher uses him very effectively to give explanations in English as she uses French throughout; this is good practice.
133. **Leadership is good and management is satisfactory.** The recent redistribution of management responsibilities has been effective. All members of the team pull together and a sound framework to improve standards has been established. The head of department has been in post for four terms and is a good role model. The development plan is well conceived to raise standards. Schemes of work have been totally rewritten and monitoring procedures are systematic. Assessments now lead to individual targets for all pupils. Staff have been trained to use the ICT resources. However, pupils have few opportunities to read simple texts or current publications. The department organises regular trips to France and Germany.
134. Although **progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory**, there is a strong commitment to improvement. Almost every teacher taught at least one good lesson during the inspection.



## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching, especially concentrating on preventing common misconceptions, allows pupils to make good progress
- Teachers' commitment and readiness to devote time out of normal lessons to support pupils' learning make a major contribution to pupils' progress
- The very good leadership and management of the department have a significant effect on the quality of teaching and learning
- Marking does not always inform pupils precisely what they need to do to improve
- The library provision is poor, so that some opportunities to develop pupils' independent learning skills are lost

### Commentary

135. **Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average, however the achievement of pupils is very good.** Achievement is well above that expected from pupils' results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests; this has been the case for the last few years. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests, taken at the end of Year 9, were below the national average, but well above average when compared with pupils in similar schools. The difference between boys' and girls' standards mirrors the national trend with boys performing better, however the size of the difference is more pronounced. Standards are rising steadily, in line with the national trend. The school's attainment in mathematics is similar to that in science, but stronger than that seen in English.
136. **Standards in Years 10 and 11 are average and the achievement of pupils is good.** GCSE results in 2003, and in the last few years, were broadly in line with national averages. Boys' standards and achievements are slightly higher than those of girls, which is the reverse of the national picture.
137. Pupils with SEN make the same progress as their peers. This is a consequence of realistic challenge in the work, combined with good teaching coupled with good quality support provided by the learning support assistants (LSAs). This is helped by the good liaison between teachers and LSAs. There are also a number of out of class activities for these pupils. Gifted and talented pupils also make progress at the same rate as other pupils in the school. Extension work and various planned enrichment activities such as trips to lectures, local and national mathematics competitions are available for them.
138. **Teaching is good overall, and a significant proportion is very good.** Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and the difficulties their pupils may encounter. Lessons are challenging and pupils are often asked to explain their working and thinking. This not only reinforces understanding, it also helps develop speaking and listening skills. Care is taken with the introduction of new mathematical vocabulary with word lists prominently displayed in classrooms. Relations between staff and pupils are good. Discipline is firm but friendly, creating a good working atmosphere. Pupils express gratitude for teachers' commitment in offering the number of after-school, weekend and holiday classes. The overall quality of assessment is good. Marking of work is conscientious and painstaking, spellings are often corrected, and there is clear evidence that a proportion of pupils act on the written comments. However, the marking does not always give pupils clear indications as to how their work may be improved. Nevertheless pupils know their minimum target grades and are conscious of their areas of weakness – usually involving algebra. Parents/carers are not only informed of any causes for concern with pupils' progress, but also of instances of good work.

139. **The good teaching supports good learning.** Overall, pupils have a positive attitude to the subject. Their quality of presentation is good, regardless of attainment level. They usually persevere and are sufficiently mature to ask for help when necessary. Relations within classes are good, with pupils readily helping each other.
140. The quality of the curriculum is good. There is very good provision for extra revision lessons and a selection of enrichment activities. The use of ICT to support learning is good. Effective use is made of recently acquired 'smart' boards, and the two computer rooms, as well as video and graphical calculators. The computer facilities are available to groups during registration/tutor time, at breaks and after school. Valuable support is provided for pupils in Years 7 and 8 attempting to reach National Curriculum Level 4. Parents of these pupils are invited into school to view the supporting software used, copies of which are freely available for home use. Full advantage is taken of the various National Numeracy Strategy materials designed to bring pupils up-to-speed. One weakness in the curriculum is that over a quarter of groups are taught by more than one teacher. The other is the small number of mathematical texts in the library. This reduces pupils' opportunities for observing mathematics in a wider historical or multi-cultural context.
141. **The leadership and the management of the department are both very good.** Leadership is democratic, by example and has clear direction. Teachers are well supported and encouraged to innovate and develop their professional skills within the context of the development plan, for example: the introduction of a new strategy to promote learning. The department is efficiently run on a day-to-day basis. It is ambitious for its pupils and staff. There is a strong emphasis on improving standards and the analysis of results to evaluate changes, for example: the shift to a modular GCSE examination, initially for sound reasons, was found to slightly depress middle attaining pupils' results. This attainment band has now reverted to the previous examination course.
142. **Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.** There has been a reduction in the proportion of lessons lacking pace and challenge, and increased use of video to enhance teaching and learning. There is also an increase in achievement in Year 7 to Year 9.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

143. Standards of numeracy are broadly average. Numeracy skills acquired in mathematics support pupils' progress in other subjects. Pupils have a satisfactory recall of basic number facts, although some of the least capable pupils may not always use the most efficient methods. In order to identify those pupils who have deep-seated problems with numeracy (dyscalculia), a nationally recognised commercial computer program has been purchased – a promising innovation which will mean that these pupils will receive more appropriate teaching. Pupils in all year groups have opportunities to practise and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects. They read scales, interpret and draw various graphs in science. Formulae are used in ICT to construct spreadsheets and basic numerical skills used to check these. Pupils draw and interpret a range of graphs and tables in geography and history. In Years 10 and 11 geography pupils also plot scatter graphs and draw lines of best fit. They analyse questionnaires in religious education and perform calculations involving simple fractions in music.
144. The planned provision for numeracy and the teaching of numeracy skills within subjects is good overall. The overall provision has developed well since the previous inspection. Subjects have numeracy policies and schemes of work that indicate planned provision. Each subject sends a representative to the whole school numeracy group which meets each half term to co-ordinate provision. Its present task is the final arrangements for a numeracy week. This will involve each subject highlighting numeracy, and also various displays and competitions about the school.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very well led and managed department with a strong team of teachers and technicians provides an effective framework for good learning
- Achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11
- Some mid ability girls underachieve at GCSE
- The well-organised curriculum, whose delivery is enhanced by very good accommodation and good resources contributes to the good learning
- In some lessons pupils are not given enough opportunity to design and predict the outcome of practicals

### Commentary

145. **Standards are below average in Years 7 to 9 but the achievement of pupils is very good.** Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests, taken at the end of Year 9, were below the national average for all schools, but above those found in similar schools. The results were lower than in 2002 but the pupils achieved very well: much better than would have been expected from their standards in Year 6. Girls outperformed boys, more able pupils did well and pupils with SEN made good progress. The fall in results was probably due to problems with staffing and reaction to changes in course requirements. These have now been resolved.
146. **Standards are below average in Years 10 and 11 and the achievement of pupils is good.** In 2003 at GCSE, considering science as a whole, the proportion of pupils gaining grades in the range A\* to C was below the national average. A number of courses were offered. In the single award science, taken by very few pupils, standards were very low: no pupils obtained grades A\* to C, as this was a course offered to lower ability pupils. In double award science, taken by the majority, the proportion of pupils gaining A\* to C grades was below the national average. However, boys' results were in line with the average, whilst those of the girls were below. Achievement, overall, was good across all the courses as the more able, the less able and pupils with SEN performed better than might have been expected from their standards in Year 9. This was not the case for girls in the mid ability range. Where girls are not doing well it is partly because they are proving difficult to motivate and often have poor attendance. Good teaching is promoting good achievement for most pupils.
147. The curriculum has been changed this year. Single award is no longer offered, except in special circumstances. The majority are following the double award GCSE, but there is a top set doing the separate sciences. The standards of these pupils reflect national standards in the separate sciences. Staff and pupils' enthusiasm is reflected in the time they give up after school and in the holidays for further tuition and study. Many of these pupils also benefit from the very good programme the school runs for its most able pupils.
148. **The quality of teaching is good and the pupils learn well.** A significant proportion of the lessons seen were very good or excellent; there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Lessons are effectively planned with crisp objectives made clear to the pupils. Previous lessons' learning is checked and reinforced while new learning is usually tested at the end. Strong features of the teaching include the skilful use of questions to check understanding. ICT is well used by teachers to illustrate lessons and by pupils for independent research, data analysis and presentations. Most teachers employ a wide variety of strategies and all are well informed about their subject. All this results in good learning.
149. The pupils are interested; most really enjoy their science lessons and work hard. They behave well and work together productively; many are keen to volunteer answers to questions. Where lessons are less successful pupils are told how to do practicals rather than invited to

contribute to their design. The consequence is that they know how to do them rather than why they are doing them. Some practicals are voyages of verification rather than voyages of discovery. There are also lessons where only pupils who volunteer get to answer questions, so others do not have to think. The teaching ensures that pupils make good use of mathematics, becoming confident with formulae and graphs. Literacy is emphasised to good effect, however there is a lack of extended free writing. Almost all work is marked, but the occurrence of useful corrections and suggestions on how to improve is unevenly distributed.

150. **The department has a strong team of teachers and technicians, very well led and managed by its new head.** The development of new schemes of work and assessment systems is ongoing and already having a favourable impact on standards. The curriculum is good and enhanced by an excellent transition unit from primary and a very good programme of visits and events, which stimulate interest by bringing science to life. The pupils also enter competitions and were finalists in the ASC BNFL Science Challenge. **Improvement since the last inspection has been good:** there are now much better systems and good achievement for most pupils. The very good staff, very good accommodation and good resources are all effectively utilised to bring about the good levels of achievement for the great majority of pupils.

### **Agriculture**

151. Standards are well below average in a course that is generally taken by lower ability pupils. GCSE results were well below average in 2003 and below average in 2002. The current Year 11 pupils are underachieving. Motivation is low and most pupils are making little attempt to produce work of an appropriate quality. Teaching and learning in the lesson observed were unsatisfactory. In contrast, the Year 10 group are making satisfactory progress in response to satisfactory teaching. The pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy both the practical and theoretical aspects of the course.
152. The main reason for underachievement is the nature of the course. It is an academic course which does not play to the strengths of the pupils who opt for it, most of whom would be better served by a course that gave more emphasis to practical work; only five per cent of the examination is based on practical work. Pupils spend a large proportion of course time on activities in the farm which interests the pupils but reduces time spent covering course requirements.
153. The other main reason for underachievement is that work is not planned well enough to stretch the most able pupils. At least one pupil in the Year 10 groups is capable of gaining a very high GCSE grade.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has a well implemented vision for the development of ICT both as a single subject and in its application across the curriculum
- The curriculum gives pupils very good learning opportunities
- Pupils achieve well; last year over 70% of pupils left school with a formal qualification
- The intranet and its use as a tool for learning is very valuable resource
- Good departmental management is sustained by excellent technical and website support, including very effective services to eight partner primary schools in ICT support and training
- In some classes teachers do not have enough support in managing challenging behaviour

- There is very good extra-curricular provision for gifted and talented pupils, as well as input to summer schools for able children from partner primary schools
- In some ICT rooms the range of teaching and learning styles is constrained by lack of space, difficult sight lines and inflexible layout

### **Commentary**

154. **In ICT, achievement is good and standards above average throughout the school.** Teacher assessment in 2003 shows Year 9 achievement for both boys and girls above school averages for other subjects and above national averages in ICT. Last year over 70 per cent of pupils left school with a formal qualification in ICT. The success rates in GNVQ ICT (equivalent to two GCSE passes) and in GCSE Business and Communication were both above both school and national averages for A\*-C pass rates in those subjects. Seventy eight pupils completed Level 1 Key Skills in ICT, and a further eighteen gained Level 2.
155. Pupils' work seen during the inspection was above average, particularly in Years 7 and 8 where the work undertaken with primary school partners and the very good implementation of the national Key Stage 3 strategy are having a discernible impact on achievement.
156. **The quality of teaching and learning is generally good**, with some very good lessons being observed. Because the department makes very good use of assessment, pupils understand the criteria against which their work is judged, and more importantly are encouraged to improve by thorough evaluative feedback. There is good attention to numeracy and literacy, both in schemes of work and in classroom practice. Much of the project work is in the form of reasonably extended writing (describing the uses of ICT at school, for example) and pupils have been encouraged to produce very literate and well laid out presentations. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have used spreadsheets to derive profit and loss projections for a bicycle hire business. The quality of presentation is commendably high. At all levels, pupils have been encouraged to write comments on the printouts, which in turn receive comments from staff giving a kind of dialogue of evaluation.
157. Assessment practice is very good. Teachers make good use of target grades; there is a thorough ongoing assessment, and week by week checks and records of the work completed in each folder. Pupils understand the criteria against which they are being judged. In a small minority of classes, some challenging behaviour is not especially well managed, while the concentration in some classes of a high proportion of children with particular learning needs does not get the support needed for them to make best progress.
158. The breadth of curricular opportunities in ICT is very good, with very good discrete ICT provision in Years 7, 8 and 9 and a very good range of options in Years 9 and 10. The double award vocational GCSE has been successfully introduced into the school's option scheme this year. GCSE Business and Communications contains a strong ICT component, while for pupils not opting for either of those GCSE programme there is a Key Skills programme, as well as a combined ICT and Citizenship programme, using the short course GCSE in each of those subjects. Good departmental management is sustained by excellent technical and website support, including very effective services to eight partner primary schools in ICT support and training.
159. **The department is well managed and very well led.** The school has a clear strategic vision for the development of ICT. Colleagues have worked unrelentingly hard to make best use of the school's ICT resources, and development planning is strongly focused on the quality of pupils' experience and staff professional support. Curricular planning is particularly strong, with exemplary schemes of work matched by detailed and thorough assessment. Lesson plans, schemes of work and imaginative teaching materials are shared and available through the school intranet.

160. Some rooms - by their size and layout - constrain the teaching strategies that can be used, and there are a few groups where policy on setting has created difficult classes in which greater input is needed to the management of challenging behaviour.
161. **Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.** The previous inspection noted that information technology "is a particular success story and pupils' work shows good evidence of progress". The management of the department ensures that this continues to be the case, and the contribution of teachers to extra-curricular activities (from lunchtime computer clubs to special projects for gifted and talented pupils) has secured a very good standard of provision in which children of all abilities make good progress.

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

163. **The use of ICT to promote learning in subjects across the curriculum is excellent. The school's intranet is quite outstanding,** and can be accessed by pupils and staff both in school and through a password protected web connection. All subject departments have areas on the site, within which the content ranges from good to outstanding. There are worksheets, revision tests, videos, subject glossaries, illustrated charts of animal anatomy, historical simulations, interactive quizzes on Shakespeare - a list reflecting the breadth of staff skill and commitment, and the formidable resource at their disposal. The structure and presentation are elegant, the focus soundly on curriculum and learning.
162. The level of hardware provision means that many departments have access to clusters of terminals as well as a number of bookable suites. A software library is supplemented by licences for specialist applications where appropriate. There is a four year replacement cycle for equipment, with older machines given a renewed lease of life in thin client networks. Half-termly meetings of departmental representatives with the Director of ICT and Training create a structure for the dissemination of good practice, into which children's views are also built.
163. Schemes of work comply with statutory requirements, and departments make very effective use of ICT in learning. Much student work is word processed, and ICT is used for presentation, Internet based research, the design and making of artefacts, manipulation of sounds or data and for analysis of information. There is increasingly good use of interactive whiteboards. In science, spreadsheets are used to analyse information derived from data capture and data logging. Art is well resourced, and ICT is effectively used for image manipulation. Provision in science, history and modern foreign languages is particularly good but all subjects make good use of resources. There is a thorough and helpful database record of special needs, but a case for some further provision of hardware and software in the department.
164. **The school offers an excellent service to partner primary schools,** both in technical ICT support and through an ICT link teacher who spends time in all the schools, working with colleagues to enhance their confidence, develop children's ICT skills and support all areas of the curriculum through the use of ICT - in which they have surpassed the need identified in the previous inspection for better co-ordination of ICT provision, which is now excellent.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **very good**.

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

- Teaching is a strength especially in Years 10 and 11
- Achievement in GCSE examinations is good
- The management of pupils and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good

- Very good leadership and management and effective team work amongst teachers
- To improve provision further development planning needs to be more detailed and focused on extending the schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 so that they are more effectively linked to National Curriculum levels

### **Commentary**

165. **In Years 7 to 9, standards are average and the achievement of pupils is good.** The emphasis in Year 7 on map skills, subject vocabulary and basic concepts enables pupils to accelerate their learning. As a result of the well planned schemes of work and good teaching pupils develop increasing competence and understanding of geographical ideas. In the National Curriculum assessments for 2003 the levels reported appear below average. This is not reflected in the work seen during the inspection.
166. **Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average and achievement is good.** About one third of the pupils opt to study geography for GCSE with almost equal numbers of boys and girls. In 2003 results were above national average. At the higher grades of A\*-C girls' attainment was higher than boys' but boys are attaining better than boys nationally. For all pupils achievement is good when compared to prior attainment and performance relative to other subjects. The standards achieved in GCSE examinations have been consistently good in recent years and reflect the very good opportunities provided through the curriculum and the high quality of the teaching.
167. **Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11.** Well planned lessons are based upon teachers' very good subject knowledge and their awareness of the needs of pupils.
168. Resources including support staff are effectively used and lead to a stimulating range of lesson activities that provide very good opportunities for pupils to participate in the learning. A very good Year 8 lesson required pupils to work in small teams to construct a sketch map of Brazil so that they not only developed their knowledge of the country and their skills of map drawing but also their capacity to work co-operatively.
169. In excellent lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 the pace, challenge and expectations of the teaching were matched by the curiosity, productivity and achievement of the learning. The clear lesson objectives, good starter activity, well chosen video clips, very clear worksheets and skilfully directed oral work enabled a Year 10 class to understand the interrelationship of physical factors and the sequence of stages that lead to the formation and development of waterfalls. Pupils work well with each other and co-operate with their teachers. Relationships are very good and teachers are skilful in managing pupils. Pupils' work is regularly marked and high standards of presentation are set. Assessment of National Curriculum levels for standards in Years 7 to 9 require refinement so that they are more closely integrated into schemes of work in a way that increases pupils' understanding of how to improve. On a few occasions when the teaching does not make most effective use of the good lesson plan and materials the active involvement of pupils in the lesson is reduced. These lessons are satisfactory but do not enable pupils to progress as quickly and achieve as well.
170. The curricular opportunities are good. Schemes of work are well organised and good arrangements exist in all years for fieldwork. The department makes effective use of ICT to enhance the work and there are good contributions to literacy and numeracy. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to work in small groups so that they learn to co-operate and take increasing responsibility for their learning. The good range of lesson activities contributes to the personal and social development of pupils.
171. **The leadership and the management of the head of department are very good.** Support for school aims and policies are consistently and effectively reflected in the work of the department. Teamwork is enriched by the very good range of experience and expertise

amongst teachers and the way in which this is shared. There are good arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning and self evaluation shows an astute understanding of the work of the department. The head of department has identified areas for further improvement in order to raise standards even higher. These are not yet fully expressed in a focused department development plan document. **Good progress has been made since the last inspection.**

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know the capabilities of their pupils and give them good individual attention, though there is not enough additional support for those with SEN
- ICT is used effectively to enhance learning
- Curriculum arrangements in Years 7 to 9 have a negative effect on achievement
- Most pupils have positive attitudes and work hard
- Too few lessons have opportunities for independent learning
- Effective assessment procedures allow pupils to know how well they are doing

### Commentary

172. **Standards overall are average.** In 2003 the results of teacher assessments for both boys and girls at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average. Work seen in the inspection confirms that standards in Years 7 to 9 are in line with expectations. The 2003 GCSE results were well below average, a marked decline from the previous year when results were close to average; the performance of girls in particular was well below that expected. The fall in results may in part be attributable to the unforeseen departure of two experienced teachers. However, inspection evidence indicates that good teaching is now bringing standards in Year 11 back in line with the national average.
173. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of historical skills and understanding. By the end of Year 9 pupils of all abilities show a grasp of chronology and historical terms to produce structured written response to knowledge-based questions. The majority can offer explanations of events and changes, often supported by evidence from written and graphical sources. However, only the most able can link and evaluate the relative importance of causes and question the usefulness and reliability of sources. In discussion, many lower attaining pupils display a better understanding than they can convey in writing, despite the good support they are given for literacy. Given their low prior attainment, **the progress made by most pupils in Years 7 to 9 represents good achievement.**
174. In Years 10 and 11 pupils develop further skills in interpreting historical evidence and write at greater length in response to the demands of examination questions. Most can support description and explanation with evidence, but relatively few construct the more sophisticated arguments and critical evaluation of sources needed to attain the very highest GCSE grades. In view of progress since Year 9 and the lack of effort and poor attendance by a small minority of both boys and girls, **achievement by the end of Year 11 is no more than satisfactory.** However, pupils of lower ability and those with SEN achieve well due to the good individual support they are given.
175. **Teaching and learning are good overall.** Teachers know pupils well and establish good relationships with them, setting high expectations for work and behaviour. Tasks and materials are well planned to challenge pupils of different ability levels, though there are insufficient extension activities for gifted and talented pupils. Lessons have precise objectives which ensure good progression in learning by building on previously acquired knowledge and skills. Homework is used effectively to consolidate and extend what is done in lessons. Pupils with



poor literacy are well supported and are not disadvantaged by excessive writing demands; frequent oral questioning and discussion allows them ample opportunity to express their understanding. The work of learning support assistants with individuals and small groups is effective but insufficient. Teachers give good feedback to pupils in lessons and written work is thoroughly marked, though there is not enough comment on improvement. ICT, particularly the rapidly expanding history section of the school intranet, is used very effectively, both to develop historical understanding and skills and to allow the high quality presentation of work. The history museum offers a stimulating resource for the study of the period of the two world wars. However, the lessons seen did not have enough opportunities for independent enquiry and research. Most pupils respond positively to the relaxed and humorous style of teaching and work with enthusiasm, though a small number in Years 10 and 11 show minimal interest and are content to remain largely passive.

176. **The leadership and the management of history are good.** Teachers enjoy good working relationships that ensure a strong sense of teamwork, with much sharing of ideas and good practice. Development planning is well focused on raising standards and determines the acquisition of resources and staff training. Teaching is closely monitored through the inspection of lesson planning; work-sampling and lesson observation and schemes of work and lesson planning are constantly under review. However, the current curriculum arrangements for Years 7 to 9 do not allow the ability setting which would allow teaching to be more closely matched to pupil needs. An area for further development is the provision of extra-curricular activities in history. Good assessment, target setting and monitoring procedures mean that both teachers and pupils are well informed about progress.
177. **Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.** Standards have been maintained, ICT is integrated into schemes of work and target setting and tracking procedures are now well developed. Lower attaining pupils now achieve well with the help of specially prepared materials, though these are not yet sufficiently available for pupils of higher ability.

## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **poor**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The legal requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus are not met
- Leadership of the subject by senior managers and governors is poor
- The scheme of work is out of date
- None of the teachers has a qualification in the subject
- The provision of resources is unsatisfactory

### Commentary

178. Pupils were last entered for the GCSE examination in religious studies in 2002. Results were below average. Girls' results were close to average at the A\*-C level and they outperformed boys.
179. **The quality of provision in religious education has declined since the previous inspection and it does not meet statutory requirements.** Leadership and management are therefore poor. Insufficient time is provided to teach the Agreed Syllabus for religious education in the required depth and breadth. The current curriculum arrangements do not effectively support the progressive development of knowledge understanding and skills in the subject. The scheme of work has not yet been updated to reflect recent developments in teaching religious education. None of the teachers has a specialist qualification in the subject. Resources are limited in quantity and quality.

180. Religious education shares curriculum time with citizenship and was not being taught during the time of the inspection other than in the case of some Year 7 classes. These lessons were part of a programme of visits to the school made by a local Christian, youth work team. One lesson was observed. Teaching and learning were good and there was a good level of pupil interest in practical activities, which enabled them to see how Jesus' teaching in the parable of the "Good Samaritan" could be relevant to life in modern Britain. This apart, the time allocated has, so far in the current academic year, been entirely devoted to citizenship and consequently, no written work in religious education was available for inspection. It is not possible therefore to make judgements on current standards or the quality of teaching and learning.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and Technology

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership is very good and provides an environment for pupils to learn well and develop good knowledge and skills
- The pupils attain high standards in ICT linked to design and technology because of good teaching, good resources and well-integrated schemes of work
- There is a lack of general in-class support for all the pupils with SEN
- The option choices form groups in Years 10 and 11 that are very gender biased

#### Commentary

181. **Standards throughout the school are average and the achievement of pupils is satisfactory.** By the end of Year 9 pupils' graphical skills are average. They use ICT well for drawing but their skills with drawing instruments are below average. They use ICT well to illustrate their designs and the results of their projects. Their technical vocabulary is average but fluency in answering questions in a series of linked sentences is poor. This represents good progress given their lack of technical knowledge when they entered the school in Year 7. Practical skills have improved considerably especially in resistant materials where the teaching of a lot of metalworking skills enables pupils to attempt complicated projects later in GCSE work. All the machines are used regularly including some portable electric power tools.
182. Results in the 2003 GCSE examination are in line with standards nationally. The trend is rising. Boys did better than girls, which is different from the national picture. By the end of Year 11 practical skills in all areas are well developed except for a few disillusioned boys in Year 11 who lack motivation and whose progress has been poor. A successful new GCSE manufacturing course has been introduced in Year 10 to counteract this. Most pupils show confidence in using a range of materials and processes. Pupils' ICT skills overall are good especially their graphical skills which are very good. There is a good variety of practical work of a satisfactory standard but the accuracy and standard of finish of some work could be improved. Folders are full of good quality work but the more able pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not challenged well enough and this reduces their levels of achievement.
183. **Teaching and learning are good.** In Years 7 to 9 pupils benefit from very knowledgeable teachers. Teachers structure lessons well and a good range of activities capture the interest and involvement of almost all pupils. Homework is used well to reinforce learning and more is given out than appears in many homework diaries. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are actively engaged in a variety of interesting and challenging activities because teachers plan lessons very well. Pupils and teachers are not afraid of innovation and the trying of new ideas as in a textile lesson on designing a prototype for large-scale manufacture. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are usually good but instances were seen of good teaching producing an unsatisfactory response from classes mainly of boys.

184. Teachers are particularly well informed about the requirements of the courses they teach. The pace of learning is almost always brisk and clear teaching and learning objectives are met. Marking and assessment are good but often pupils take little notice of instructions to finish off or correct work. A strong feature is the way in which most pupils show an interest in the activities, work co-operatively and produce a good amount of work. Teachers plan well to ensure that the needs of different groups of pupils are met but there is too little in-class support for the large proportion of pupils who have SEN. Setting in Years 7 to 9 ensures that the most able pupils are challenged sufficiently. A strength of the teaching is seen in the way pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed with word walls used in most rooms and complex calculations performed in electronics.
185. Most rooms and many corridors have good displays of work. The value of the displays in motivating pupils could be increased by letting them know how the work compares with national standards. There was a lack of some high quality exemplar work in the resistant materials area.
186. Teaching groups, especially in Years 10 and 11, are very gender biased with few boys in the food and textiles area and few girls taking resistant materials or electronics. One of the textiles rooms needs urgent refurbishment. It is drab and has insufficient electrical sockets for all the sewing machines.
187. **The department is managed well; very clear vision and direction is provided in all areas. Excellent progress has been made since the last inspection.** Standards are much higher and the quality of teaching is much improved. New courses have been introduced and the department's project booklets give pupils good support in developing their knowledge and understanding. Technical support has been improved and this has enhanced the quality of provision.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

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

- GCSE results are consistently well above the national average
- The leadership and management of the department are very good
- The curriculum is regularly reviewed to meet the needs of pupils
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not given enough experience of three-dimensional art and they do not use proper sketchbooks

#### **Commentary**

188. **Standards are average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11.** In 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 and above was well below national average, whereas in 2002 results closely matched the national average. Girls consistently outperform boys but the gap is no bigger than experienced nationally. Year 9 work suggests that standards are in line with the national average for both boys and girls.
189. **In Years 7 to 9 the achievement of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds is good** and work becomes distinctly more sophisticated from year to year. Pupils develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of colour, tone and composition using a range of media. There is also a progressive and systematic improvement of basic drawing skill, which results in above average standards.

190. At GCSE, the percentage of pupils gaining an A\*-C grade has improved significantly since 1999 when the figure was below the national average. Since 2000 the figure has been consistently above the national average. The difference in overall GCSE performance between boys and girls is no greater than experienced nationally.
191. **The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good.** Pupils develop very good levels of skill in a range of media in both two- and three-dimensional art. They have the ability to use colour, tone and composition effectively to create high quality, finished pieces of work. They can derive inspiration from famous artists and incorporate features of famous work into their own art. These standards are underpinned by high drawing standards.
192. **The quality of teaching and learning is good.** No lessons seen were judged unsatisfactory and some very good teaching was observed. Pupils learn well because lessons are well prepared with clear objectives. Teachers show great diligence in ensuring that pupils' technical skills progress well. To this end, lessons contain a mixture of whole group instruction and individual practical work. The achievement of pupils with SEN is good as a result of individual support and well prepared and appropriate additional resources. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and expertise. On occasions the final part of the lesson is not given sufficient time to allow for effective review of the lesson. Some teaching approaches particularly on the graphics course are overly prescriptive and do not allow sufficient freedom of expression and personal response. This means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to explore their own creativity and style.
193. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and students respond well to the teaching. Behaviour is at least good in all lessons seen.
194. **Leadership and management of the department are very good.** The experienced head of department has a clear vision and strong principles centred on raising achievement, which are shared by colleagues. This provides direction and momentum to the department. The teaching staff have a balance of curriculum expertise, are well led and supported and work together well as a team. Schemes of work are thoroughly produced to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum. However three-dimensional work is very limited in Years 7 to 9 due to the practical difficulties arising from overly large class sizes compounded by an acute lack of storage space.
195. There is very effective review of provision each year, incorporating the views of pupils. As a result the curriculum reflects and meets the abilities and specific needs all pupils. The quality of teaching is also regularly monitored. The use of ICT for art making is limited in all years. Access to computers is not planned sufficiently well to ensure equality of opportunity across all courses. Assessment of work is very thorough and all pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve. However the department lacks confidence in carrying out teacher assessments in Year 9.
196. There is no use of proper sketchbooks in Years 7 to 9 which is currently hampering the development of personal ideas. Not all pupils benefit from gallery visits. Links with artists and outside agencies need developing to enhance and give more relevance to the curriculum. Pupils can continue their work before and after school as well as at lunchtime.
197. **Improvement since the last inspection is good.** GSCE results have improved significantly and slower progress in Year 9 is no longer a problem.

## Performing Arts

Music, drama and dance are managed within the faculty of Performance Arts which is housed in a purpose built block. Music and drama are taught to pupils in Years 7 – 9, and all three subjects are offered as an option in Years 10 and 11. A GCSE course in expressive arts is being undertaken for the first time by pupils in Year 10, and this involves the three disciplines. The leadership and

management of the faculty are very good and staff work together effectively to provide a range of learning opportunities in the performance arts.

During the inspection, music was inspected in depth. Drama, dance and expressive arts were sampled, with drama having the most emphasis.

## Music

Provision in Music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the department is strong, purposeful and ambitious
- The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good
- Teaching strategies, and tasks set, do not cater for the learning needs of all pupils in the class
- The department offers very good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning outside of class lessons

### Commentary

198. Pupils enter the school with standards which are below average. **Standards in Years 7 to 9 are average and the achievement of pupils is good.** By the end of Year 9, pupils are familiar with the keyboard, can use musical devices when performing and composing, and have an understanding of a range of styles. The department works hard to rectify pupils' lack of musical knowledge through a very systematic approach to the teaching of musical terminology.
199. **Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and the achievement of pupils is very good.** GCSE results have been consistently high for the past two years; the achievement of the current Year 10 and 11 groups is also very good. This is because the department provides very good opportunities for the development of performance skills within and outside of timetabled lessons. Pupils are taught how to create compositions that show craftsmanship although these lack imagination because they sometimes compose without knowing how the music sounds. The current Year 10 group are attaining particularly high standards.
200. **Teaching and learning are good.** There is some imaginative teaching which engages everyone in the group and motivates them to learn. In all lessons seen, extended questioning of the whole class meant that some pupils were not engaged in giving answers and became passive. The achievement of less able pupils is satisfactory: they work well at practical tasks because of the positive encouragement given by teachers, although their written work shows that they do not always fully understand what they are doing. The well organised teaching, resulting from the very good management of the department encourages a good learning atmosphere. This engenders good attitudes and respect for equipment. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. Work is consistently marked and pupils are given encouraging feedback but in Years 7 to 9 they are not told what skills they need to work on in order to improve.
201. The opportunities provided for pupils to extend their music making outside of class lessons are very good, with a range of instrumental lessons on offer. Extra-curricular groups, shows, and competitions are an integral part of school life, and pupils engage in these activities enthusiastically. The department is resourceful in finding ways of bringing in musicians to work with pupils to extend their experiences.
202. **Improvement since the time of the previous inspection has been very good. Very good leadership means that the department has made considerable strides forward over the last two years, within an ambitiously planned framework.** The monitoring of classroom and instrumental teaching is thorough, and action is taken to secure improvement.

Standards in Years 7 to 9 have improved and the curriculum is well balanced. Singing is now an integral part of classroom work. The department has a good range of technological resources to support pupils' learning but these are not being used in Years 7 to 9. The number of pupils studying music to GCSE level has increased significantly over the past two years, and the number of pupils taking instrumental tuition is now above the national average.

## DRAMA

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement throughout the school is good in drama
- Teaching is very good
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject
- The department is very well led and managed
- Standards of attainment are below average
- Pupils' oral skills are the weakest area of the attainment targets
- ICT resources in the subject are unsatisfactory

### Commentary

203. Drama is taught in all years in the school. Because most pupils enter the school with little or no experience of the subject, **standards are well below average at the end of Year 9 and below average at the end of Year 11.** Standards gained by pupils at GCSE in 2003 were below the national average. However, **pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11,** when measured against ability in the subject on entry to the school. The very good leadership of the subject manager and the very good teaching ensure that pupils make rapid progress. The department has improved since the last inspection and now has many more pupils taking the GCSE examination and is a strength of the school, both within the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.
204. Pupils enjoy the subject, as the growing numbers taking the drama option testify. The subject is made accessible to all abilities and many who find more academic work difficult are able to excel in the practical areas of the course and to find self-esteem and self-confidence in the process. Pupils work with willingness and enthusiasm, giving up much of their spare time to participate in drama activities. In lessons, behaviour is good, showing a sense of self-discipline and a level of effort which is sometimes lacking in other subjects. All are engaged and strive to do their best. Oral skills are the weakest and teachers emphasise this area very well, as in a Year 9 lesson which featured the use of choral speaking in the portrayal of the witches in 'Macbeth'. Pupils eagerly learn and practise improvisation and performance techniques and absorb information on dramatic genres and styles. Pupils' drama portfolios in Year 10 and Year 11 are strong and well organised; their written work reflects the course of pupils' response, development and evaluation work well. In these years performance and improvisational skills become impressive.
205. **Teaching and learning are, without exception, at least very good.** Teachers plan very carefully, with the aid of excellent schemes of work, to ensure that all necessary skills are covered and that pupils are completely engaged with the subject. Their subject knowledge is excellent and they are able to communicate it well to the pupils. Management of large classes of boys and girls is very good, since all are interested, are being stretched to meet their full potential and receiving a high level of encouragement and confidence. The pace of work is good and pupils work productively and with effort. Methods are varied and tasks very focused, ensuring that pupils are learning all the time. Written work is set regularly.
206. **The subject is very well led.** The subject manager has written very good schemes of work, firm development plans and brings a strong sense of professionalism to the teaching of the subject, which is shared by her colleagues. **Management is very good.** Work is very well assessed and evaluated, as are teaching and learning. Much of the strength of the department

comes from leadership which does not allow learning to stop at the classroom door. Numerous drama clubs and activities take place regularly, giving pupils from across the school an opportunity to perform and to enjoy the activities offered. Teachers work willingly and unselfishly to bring this about. The subject also contributes greatly to pupils' literacy skills, their cultural development and their social development, in emphasising citizenship and co-operation at its heart. Good links are forged with the English department, so that the teaching of texts for test purposes can be supplemented well.

207. Although accommodation is good, there are insufficient technical and ICT resources, such as lighting and sound equipment, which hinders the acquisition of necessary skills for the GCSE course.

### **Expressive Arts**

208. The GCSE course in expressive arts is currently available in Year 10. After less than one term the group presented performances in local partner primary schools and in the lesson sampled, were being taught how to evaluate this work. The work seen represents very good achievement at an early stage of the course. The teaching, which is planned and delivered collaboratively, is very good, and the outstanding use of ICT ensured that the large group remained fully focused throughout the session.

### **Dance**

209. GCSE results were below average in 2003 and average in 2002. There are a growing number of pupils opting for the GCSE dance course in addition to those who follow a dance strand on the performing arts GCSE course. The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils do as well as expected in their coursework as well as making contributions to the growing enrichment activities out of school. Further work is needed on assessment procedures to explain why external moderations are not matching internal evaluation of performance for GCSE pupils. Good teaching was seen in a Year 7 class which improved timing of movement and choreographic skills. It would be of benefit to the pupils and the school to extend this work to other groups in the same year.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils achieve well
- Excellent links with community providers, outside clubs and local schools enrich the substantial out-of-hours learning programme
- Very good curriculum opportunities in Years 7 to 9
- A minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not achieve well enough because of curriculum weaknesses and negative attitudes

### **Commentary**

210. **Standards are broadly average in all years and the achievement of most pupils is good** when compared with their prior attainment. Pupils make good progress in their early years by experiencing a very good range of activities and enrichment programmes. In 2003 the proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grades in GCSE examinations was above the national average. The proportion gaining A\* and A grades was also above the national average. This represents **good improvement since the last inspection**. A significant number of these pupils, including those with special education needs performed better in their GCSE physical education than in other examinable subjects. Many pupils achieve high standards in basketball, netball, football and athletics. This results in notable local and national achievements for

individual pupils and many school teams. A small but significant number of pupils have not achieved their potential by the time they leave school because they do not actively participate on a regular basis.

211. **Overall, teaching and learning are good.** Teachers have a very good understanding of all programmes of study offered and this especially enables pupils of all abilities to improve the quality of their techniques and to apply them to relevant sporting situations. There are good relationships between teachers and their pupils and lessons are managed well. Although teachers receive little support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties, they have a good understanding of their needs and encourage them to achieve well.
212. Data for pupils following GCSE courses is analysed and action taken to tackle underachievement. However, there is a lack of continuity and progression in the teaching and learning of the theoretical aspects of these courses that reduces the potential for some higher-grade achievement. In swimming and gymnastics, teachers clearly identify what is to be learnt and provide structured activities that optimise pupils' progress. In other lessons, especially with the older pupils, planning is less systematic and this means that progress is not always maintained at optimum levels.
213. Aspects of the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not planned carefully enough and together with timetable weaknesses this has a negative impact on pupils' motivation and learning. Core programmes of study for these pupils do not always build on earlier learning. Some pupils taking GCSE do not do enough independent research and this limits the grades that they achieve.
214. The achievements of a range of abilities, including the able and talented pupils, are enhanced by attendance at the excellent range of club activities and participation in the very wide range of fixtures. These involve excellent links with the local community that is based on the department's shared arrangements with the centre of excellence for basketball, and with contact with an extensive list of local sporting clubs. Strong links with primary schools are raising the standards of pupils who transfer to the school. These arrangements are a strength of the department enabling them to make a strong contribution to the national strategy for the development of physical education, school sport and club links. The energy, enthusiasm and productivity of staff and pupils which enable these arrangements to happen have been rewarded with a National Sportsmark Award.
215. **Good leadership by the head of department has successfully identified areas for improvement. This is why improvement has been good since the last inspection.** The new team share a common purpose that is reflected in a good working ethos and principled aims and policies for their work. Very good analysis of need is determining the relevant training for inexperienced staff and there are satisfactory procedures in place that determine next stage actions. **The management of the department is satisfactory.** Further procedures are now needed to raise standards for all pupils. This will mean further monitoring of the progress of pupils' work by reviewing the subject development plan and its links to teaching practices. There is also a need to review the needs of all pupils as a means of identifying the reasons for non-participation. Not enough use is made of ICT to support learning but the department has plans to strengthen its provision.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business Education**

216. The single option course in business and communication systems combines elements of business studies and ICT well. GCSE results in 2003 were just above average. In lessons and work seen pupils have an average grasp of computer applications including desk-top publishing and spreadsheets. They achieve a similar standard in their understanding of how businesses work and, in particular, the appropriateness of different forms of communication



within the business world. Two lessons were seen during the inspection. In a Year 11 lesson teaching and learning were good. The pace was challenging and questions were well used to consolidate pupils' understanding of key terms relating to methods of communication. Examination requirements were emphasised well including points of misunderstanding evident from last year's results. In a Year 10 lesson teaching and learning were satisfactory. A variety of activities was used but they did not fully motivate pupils and engage their interest. There were too many "small" activities, none of which contained any real problem-solving challenge.

217. Business links are at an early stage of development and this has been prioritised as an area in need of improvement. There is a very successful Young Enterprise group that has on two occasions won a "masterclass" activity in competition against other local schools.

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

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

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

- The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been well planned and implemented
- Teaching and learning are good though more should be done to adapt learning activities to meet the needs of the lowest attaining pupils, and to share the most successful practice
- Learning experiences in citizenship contribute well to pupils' personal development
- A good range of opportunities for active participation has been provided although, as yet, only experienced by a minority of pupils
- The quality of citizenship taught in form time is inconsistent

#### **Commentary**

218. The school's initial measures to introduce the National Curriculum for citizenship proved unsatisfactory and were sensibly discarded and replaced by the current provision. This began to be implemented at the beginning of the current academic year. Consequently, **standards reached by pupils now in Year 9 and Year 11 are below average** despite good teaching and the generally positive attitudes to learning displayed by the majority of pupils, because they have not yet experienced the full range of the citizenship curriculum. Nevertheless, in relation to their recent starting points in studying this subject, most pupils' **achievement is satisfactory**.
219. In Year 9, pupils' knowledge and understanding of issues such as the treatment of asylum seekers, and strategies used in advertising campaigns meets the standard expected for their age. Pupils are beginning to use the knowledge and understanding and the results of their investigations in practical ways; for example, by making suggestions to the school council or expressing their opinions in letters to the press. A minority of pupils experience active involvement as members of the newly re-constituted school council or take part in national competitions; for example, by participation in mock trials. The majority of pupils have not yet had the opportunity to experience their planned programme of active participation in citizenship activities within the local community.
220. In Year 11, pupils have a sound appreciation of the ethnic diversity of modern Britain and higher attainers have a well-developed understanding of concepts such as assimilation and segregation. A small number of pupils in Year 10 follow a GCSE course in the subject and reach standards which broadly reflect their target grades.
221. Pupils with SEN make generally similar progress to other pupils. Teachers are well aware of their needs and plan to provide individual support for them in lessons. However, the reliance on this strategy when there is a relatively high proportion of these pupils in some mixed ability

classes means that the teachers are overstretched and the pace of learning slows for all pupils. Occasionally, despite the teachers' high expectations of behaviour being clearly expressed, the lack of co-operation of a few pupils also adversely affects the pace of learning. **Overall, the quality of teaching is good and the quality of learning satisfactory.** Most teachers have specialist training in the subject and use this expertise well to provide appropriate, interesting and enjoyable learning activities, which do much to generate the positive attitudes to learning evident in the majority of pupils. Learning experiences make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. In the best lessons, starter activities were particularly effective in stimulating interest as well as preparing pupils well for new learning, and the teachers skilfully adapted the planned activities as the lesson progressed to ensure that all pupils were well challenged throughout.

222. **The implementation of this new National Curriculum subject has been well managed and effectively led so that there is a good climate for both learning and subject development.** The newly devised schemes of work provide a good range of learning activities. Appropriate assessment procedures are being developed based on a good understanding of the subject expectations. The quality of the provision of the minor part of the citizenship curriculum taught during tutor time is inconsistent. Some tutors give this work a high priority while others do not prepare sessions well enough.

### **Health and Social Care**

223. In previous years the pupils have taken the GNVQ, but this is the first year of the GCSE course, which more closely meets their needs. In 2003 the standards at GNVQ were below the national average. Nevertheless, achievement was good and better than anticipated from pupils' Year 9 academic standards. The present pupils are working well in both years and some are set to attain good results. In recent years the results have been steadily improving. Almost all the pupils opting for this subject are girls.
224. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are well informed; they give very clear and structured explanations to pupils, which enable them to learn well. Much is centred around worksheets generated by the department; these are very effective in presenting the work and the way it should be developed in a digestible form. Pupils are encouraged to research, to analyse and to write reports on case studies and surveys. All key skills are well developed. The friendliness of the teachers and the clarity of the course do much to boost the pupils' self-confidence. Almost all work is marked, but little indication is given as to what grade the pupils are working at or what they might do to improve.
225. The department is well led and managed. The curriculum is very good and well delivered, consequently pupils achieve well. In addition to the teaching there is input from visitors, such as fitness instructors and health visitors and pupils have opportunities to observe the work of day care centres, primary schools and hospitals. The pupils mostly take their two-week work experience in the theatre of health and social care by working in such places as care homes and primary schools. All this is merged well with the taught lessons to bring the subject to life. There are good links with the North Area College; pupils attend some college lessons and college lecturers come into school.

### **OFF-SITE WORK-RELATED COURSES AND EXTENDED WORK EXPERIENCE**

226. Groups of pupils were seen following off-site work-related courses at both North Area College and at Stockport College during the inspection. In addition three pupils following the local authority's Nexus programme were seen at their work experience placements. A group of Nexus pupils were also observed during their weekly lesson at Reddish Vale.
227. Five pupils on each of the off-site courses are grouped with five pupils from each of two other schools within the local authority. In all lessons seen relationships between pupils from the different schools were good. A striking feature of the provision in both colleges is the real-life

workplace environment that is created. Health and safety is a very strong element in all courses and pupils display a good grasp of health and safety issues in the workplace. All courses followed lead to nationally recognised qualifications, with very good opportunities for further progression. Work on all courses is regularly assessed.

228. Pupils were seen following courses in hairdressing, sport and recreation and beauty therapy at North Area College. On the hairdressing course pupils were seen undertaking different work roles in a simulated working environment that included dealing with external “clients”. On the beauty therapy course pupils practised various procedures on each other including massage and conducted ICT investigations into health issues such as different skin conditions. Sport and recreation course pupils were observed circuit-training; their level of motivation was very high. The course enables them to develop skills in a wide range of sport and recreation activities. They also have regular theory sessions in, for example, the running of competitions and in the identification of potential hazards.
229. Pupils were observed following courses in floristry, hairdressing, building crafts and motor vehicle servicing and repair at Stockport College. In building crafts pupils were making mortise and tenon joints as part of a basic carpentry and joinery skills course. They were experiencing the same level of challenge as older pupils who followed the same course as part of day release provision. In motor vehicle servicing and repair pupils had undertaken a very wide range of tasks to date including the removal and inspection of brakes and suspension units from vehicles. This demanding course includes a computer based theory paper. In both floristry and hairdressing pupils were seen in authentic work environments practising and developing a variety of procedures required in the workplace.
230. In a lesson at Reddish Vale, eight Nexus pupils were seen following the certificate of achievement course in English. Teaching and learning were good. A notable feature of the lesson was the very good collaboration between pupils during activities in which they analysed the differences between characters in a play. Relationships with staff were good and there was a distinct “pro-school” feeling in a group containing pupils who had hitherto found the school environment difficult.
231. Three Nexus pupils were also visited at their work placements, one at a children’s nursery, one at a garage, and one at a hotel. All were very challenging real working environments where the pace of activities was demanding. In the nursery the pupil concerned was seen working very effectively with a three year old, including the use of signing to support a young child at an early stage of language development. In the garage placement the pupil concerned had been given a wide range of tasks including testing procedures and replacing different components. In the hotel placement the pupil concerned worked in the hotel kitchen under the supervision of the head chef. The pace of working was very demanding with the pupil seen at the end of a busy lunchtime, when meals had been prepared for hotel guests. Three other pupils were interviewed in college. Their work placements were in carpet fitting, electrical wholesaling and industrial valve testing. It was apparent that these work environments also offered a high degree of challenge.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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