

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GEORGE'S C OF E HIGH SCHOOL

Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique reference number: 133638

Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Warner

Lead inspector: Ross Maden

Dates of inspection: 17 – 21 November 2003

Inspection number: 258770

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	717
School address:	Cherry Tree Road Marton Blackpool Lancashire
Postcode:	FY4 4PH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd A Wren
Date of previous inspection:	26 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St George's C of E High School in Blackpool is a smaller than average secondary school. There are 717 pupils on roll and the school has increased rapidly over the last two years. The number of pupils with special educational needs is 218, including 18 with statements, which is above the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is lower than most other schools and only five pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is over 35 per cent and is above the national average. The school became a Voluntary Aided Church of England School in September 2002 and is undergoing expansion with a £5.2 million capital programme, which started in 2002. The school has a high level of pupil mobility and issues relating to transience are a significant aspect of school life. Half the pupils attending the school are from homes in the most disadvantaged ten per cent wards of the area. The school is involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Excellence in Cities, Young Enterprise, Leadership Incentive Grant and Behaviour Improvement Plan. In 2000 the school gained the School Achievement Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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25743	Peter Butler	Team inspector	Science
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21822	Helen Maskew	Team inspector	Special educational needs History
17868	Eileen Metcalfe	Team inspector	Citizenship
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Most pupils make good progress across the range of subjects and courses. Standards, whilst below national averages are improving – especially in the number of pupils leaving the school with five or more GCSE grades A*-G. Teaching and learning are good. Most teaching is good, with a considerable amount that is better than this. Leadership is strong and well-developed through the school. Management is good. The school has the confidence of parents, which reflects the increasing popularity of the school. Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. The provision of support, advice, guidance, care and welfare of pupils is a particular strength of the school. The value for money provided by the school is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievements are good across all subjects but especially in drama and dance.
- The very high proportion of lessons judged to be good or better.
- The high quality of leadership throughout the school.
- The high quality of support for the personal development of individual pupils.
- The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C, whilst improving, remains well below the national average.
- There is a weakness in ensuring that all the effective policies for improvement are implemented consistently.

Overall, the school has made **good** progress since its last inspection. National tests and GCSE results have improved. Attendance has improved. There has been a significant increase in the quality of teaching. In tackling the key issues identified in the last report there has been satisfactory progress. Several of the issues have been tackled effectively and are no longer weaknesses, but some issues still remain and limited progress has been made.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Achievement across Years 7 to 11 is good. Improvement in Year 9 national test results in 2003 was reflected in inspectors' evidence in work seen: standards as reflected in test and examination results were below average in Years 7 to 11. GCSE results are good compared with attainment in national tests at the end of Year 9. Recent GCSE results in English were below average; achievement was good. Mathematics and science results were below average; achievement was satisfactory. Standards in mathematics and science seen in Year 11 lessons were better than indicated by last year's results. There are high standards in dance and drama. There is a pattern of continuous improvement since the last inspection. Boys outperform girls, which is the reverse of the pattern nationally.

Pupils' attitudes are good. Behaviour is satisfactory but there are too many fixed-term exclusions for a school of this size. Relationships are good. Attendance is improving but is still below the national average, in part, because too many parents are taking their children out of school for family holidays. Punctuality to school and to lessons is unsatisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good across the school with nearly three out of every four lessons judged to be good or better. The quality of teaching and learning are stronger for older pupils. Whilst there is good use of information and communication technology (ICT) by teachers to improve teaching, opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning are restricted. There is a particular strength in the preparation and planning

of lessons. There is insufficient support for pupils with special educational needs. Tasks set for higher-attaining pupils do not always match their needs. Assessment is satisfactory, although the marking of pupils' work so they know how to improve is a strength in Years 10 and 11 across all subjects.

The breadth of the curriculum has improved but remains **unsatisfactory**, overall, because not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive their full entitlement to ICT. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils make good use of the independent learning centre to support their learning.

The school provides **very good** care, guidance and support for its pupils. Adults in the school provide very high levels of support, advice and guidance for those in their care, and make good arrangements for seeking, valuing and acting on their views. A skilled and very committed pastoral team translate the school's caring ethos into its daily life. Very good use is made of the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative to monitor, guide and support pupils.

The school has developed **good** links with parents. There is a good quality of information provided for parents by the school. The school addresses parents' concerns or complaints within the day. The school's links with the community and with other schools enhance the learning experiences for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher sets a clear, firm and positive direction for the school's continuing improvement. Her commitment and determination, and the strong support of the senior management team, have helped the school to make many important improvements. Governors work closely and well with the headteacher and senior staff. They play a very supportive role in planning for the school's improvement. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, in one respect governance is unsatisfactory, as the governing body is failing to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has developed good links with parents. Parents responding to the questionnaire and those attending the meeting with inspectors expressed very positive views about the school. Increased numbers on roll in the lower school, and an increase in the number of parents placing the school as first choice when considering pupils' entry in Year 7, show that the recent improvements at the school have helped to increase the local community's confidence in the school.

Pupils' attitudes are good. In formal discussions with pupils before and during the inspection it is clear that they are pleased with the school and value the efforts made by staff on their behalf. They talk of teachers being extremely helpful and they value the support available to them. Many pupils completed a questionnaire on their views of the school. Their views largely reflect those of parents except that pupils give more weight to aspects they do not like. Many pupils believe that not all pupils behave well. Younger pupils have more positive attitudes to school than older ones.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To increase the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C by
 - Increasing the level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils;
 - Increasing the opportunities for independent learning;
 - Improving the literacy standards for all pupils;
 - Increasing the support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Consistent implementation of policies by:
 - Improving the quality of monitoring by senior and middle managers of school policies, particularly with the use of registration time, literacy and mathematics across the curriculum.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensuring that all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum requirements for ICT;
- Ensuring that the school provides a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good**, overall. Achievement is good across all year groups. Boys achieve better than girls, which is the opposite of the picture nationally. Average- and lower-attaining pupils make good progress. GCSE results in English, mathematics and science are below average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards in dance and drama.
- The continuous improvement since the last inspection in National Curriculum test results and GCSE results.
- Good achievement by pupils in all year groups across most subjects.
- The very good performance in National Curriculum tests and at GCSE when compared with similar schools.
- The underachievement by girls.
- A lack of challenge and extension activities in some lessons for higher-attaining pupils.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.3 (29.7)	33.6 (33.3)
Mathematics	33.1 (30.4)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	30.9 (29.6)	33.5 (33.3)

There were 126 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Pupils' achievements in the 2002 National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were well below the national average. However, there was a significant improvement in the 2003 results although standards remain below the national average. However, in comparison with similar schools, results for English, mathematics and science were well above average. There has been a consistent improvement in the average points score pupils achieve in the National Curriculum tests each year since 1998, with the exception of a dip in the 2002 results. Girls outperform boys in the English tests but boys outperform girls in mathematics and science and, in relative terms, boys' performance is closer to boys' performance nationally than it is for girls. A smaller proportion of pupils reach the higher Level 6 and above than is found nationally.
2. Standards seen in lessons are closer to the national average in Years 7 to 9 than the test results would indicate. In part this is a reflection of the improvements that have taken place within the school since the last inspection and in part to the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. As a result of pupils receiving good teaching they are making good progress and achievement. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average. By the end of Year 9, although standards are below average, most pupils are achieving well.
3. For individual subjects, by the end of Year 9 standards are in line with national averages for science, drama and art and design, and for all other subjects they are below. However, in relation to their prior attainment most pupils are achieving well by the end of Year 9 in all subjects except for mathematics, geography and art and design where achievement is satisfactory.

4. Individual pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress, which is in line with their peers. In good lessons, teachers are effective in matching their teaching styles to the specific learning needs of the pupils, for example, in a fast-moving history lesson where, with support, a pupil with SEN was able to achieve good results in an activity and share the results with the whole class.
5. There are currently very few pupils in the school who are at the early stages of English acquisition or who speak English as an additional language. These pupils are achieving well, in line with their peers, through the attention paid to them by most classroom teachers. These pupils receive extra support from a mentor who makes herself available to them in order to assist with any problems they may have with their work, and from the co-ordinator for special needs. As a result, their language skills advance quickly so that they are able to participate and learn well in lessons. Their test results and their GCSE results reflect this good level of achievement. Like other pupils with special educational needs, however, they do not always receive sufficient classroom support in key subjects to ensure that their language use matures as they move through the school.

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	29 (24)	52.6 (51.6)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94.1 (92)	88.6 (87.1)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99.2 (100)	94.6 (94.6)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	31.2 (26.5)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 118 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C was well below the national average in both 2002 and 2003. However, there was a significant increase in 2003 over the 2002 results. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G for both 2002 and 2003 is above the national average, as is the proportion gaining one or more GCSE grade A*-G. When these results are compared with similar schools pupils' performance is well above the average. In 2003, the school met its targets for the proportion of pupils gaining one GCSE grade A*-G and for average points score but did not meet the target for the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C.
7. Overall, most pupils are achieving well. Considering that over 30 per cent of pupils have special educational needs it is a remarkable achievement that so many pupils leave the school with five or more GCSE grades A*-G. A further factor which has an impact on standards is the very high number of pupils who did not start their education at the school in Year 7. The performance of these pupils, considering the turbulence they have had in their continuity of learning, is good. They are carefully monitored and supported. One of the school's strengths is the ability to provide high quality teaching and learning allied to a comprehensive system of pastoral and academic support from specialised teams within the school.
8. There is some underachievement, especially amongst girls. Over a three-year period boys outperform girls, which is a reversal of the national picture. The school, from its monitoring of results, has identified this issue and is adopting several strategies, such as single-sex science classes, to tackle girls' underachievement.
9. Gifted and talented pupils have been clearly identified and through the involvement with 'Excellence in Cities' have access to a wide range of enrichment activities. Less well-developed is the identification of extension activities in individual lessons to ensure that higher-attaining pupils are being fully stretched. In English, higher-attaining pupils do not always

succeed as well as they might because they are not encouraged to work with independence and to develop their research skills. In some ICT and history lessons there was a lack of challenge and a lack of extension work for higher-attaining pupils.

10. Standards seen in lessons in Years 10 and 11 reflect recent examination results. Often standards are higher in lessons because pupils can concentrate for short periods and are encouraged by their teachers. Standards in Years 10 and 11 were judged by inspectors to be above the national averages for dance and drama and close to the national averages in mathematics, science, art and design, and music. Standards were below in English, design and technology, geography, history and ICT. In citizenship, standards were satisfactory. Standards were well below in modern foreign languages. As a result of good teaching, and pupils having positive attitudes to learning, many pupils are achieving well. In drama and dance, pupils are achieving very well. They respond positively to the opportunities for independent work and evaluate their work effectively to improve their levels of performance. Pupils achieve well in English, design and technology and history. In all other subjects achievement is satisfactory, except for physical education and modern foreign languages. In physical education, achievement is unsatisfactory because of the high number of pupils who do not participate in lessons. In modern foreign languages achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 because of the disruption in the staffing of the department in recent years, there are considerable gaps in the knowledge, skills and understanding of the pupils.
11. Improvement since the last inspection is good. In the National Curriculum tests there are improvements in English and science in comparison with the 1998 results. At GCSE, 29 per cent of pupils gained five GCSE grades A*-C compared with 24 in 1998. The greatest improvement has been in the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-G: up from 77 per cent in 1998 to 94.1 in 2003.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Relationships are good. Attitudes are good and behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes of the majority of pupils are good and this shows in the supportive relationships in the school.
- The school is willing to give pupils from other schools a second chance.
- The behaviour of pupils in most lessons is often good but more variable in registration and around the school.
- The monitoring of attendance is good.
- Some parents do not see the value of ensuring that holidays are not taken during school time.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions is still too high.

Commentary

12. Pupils' attitudes are good. In formal discussions with students before and during the inspection it is clear that they are pleased with the school and value the efforts made by staff on their behalf. They talk of teachers being extremely helpful and that they value the support available to them.
13. These attitudes help with the difficult building conditions with which pupils and staff have had to cope. Movement about school is orderly but there is a lack of urgency to get to lessons and the building is too easily used as an excuse for poor punctuality. The lack of a form registration time at the beginning of the day has some benefits but it has removed the 'buffer zone' between arrival and lessons and if pupils are late they miss part of their first lesson.

14. The behaviour of most pupils is satisfactory but this has to be viewed against the significant proportion of pupils who do not attend and those who are excluded. In addition, the school admits pupils who have been excluded from other schools and has some success with them. Sometimes sanctions are necessary for inappropriate behaviour and the school has an extensive system of dealing with difficulties. The ultimate sanction of exclusion is used by the school to manage inappropriate behaviour. Although the school is trying to reduce their use, the number of fixed-term exclusions is too high and has increased since the previous inspection.
15. Students for whom English is an additional language approach their learning of English with interest and a good level of motivation and effort. They are anxious to learn the language as quickly as possible and work with enthusiasm to that end. They co-operate well with teachers and other staff and show a desire to achieve as highly as possible.

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	696	129	7
White – any other White background	8	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	2	0
Chinese	6	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

16. There is very little graffiti or litter and, despite the disruption caused by the extensive building programme, pupils do respect the buildings and site.
17. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility. Some pupils serve on the School Council and most pupils consider this to be a useful venture.
18. The vast majority of pupils are happy and relaxed and feel safe in school. As in most schools, there are incidents of bullying but pupils feel that these are few and are dealt with appropriately by staff. The relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils are supportive of one another.
19. In many lessons, pupils are too passive and highly reliant on the teacher. As a result, many are not over-enthusiastic about learning and their personal learning skills could be more developed.
20. Pupils' spiritual awareness is satisfactory. There is good provision for spiritual development in religious education and pupils respond well to the emotional impact of music, dance and drama. There is no clear promotion of the spiritual or other uplifting aspects in most other subjects. Since the school became a voluntary aided C of E school, spiritual development has been a major school priority. In this respect the school has made good progress.
21. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They consider moral issues formally in religious education, science, ICT, personal, social and health education and drama. The vast majority of pupils acquire good social skills and work well in groups, sharing agreeably as required. They volunteer to help others and support major charities.
22. Pupils have a reasonable appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions. Pupils study literature and art from other cultures. They gain knowledge of other cultures from drama. They

visit France and French theatre productions. However, the cultural aspects, which other subjects could contribute, are not prominent. The preparation of pupils for living in a multi-cultural society is satisfactory.

Attendance

The pupils' attendance rate, though greatly improved, remains unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The target group for both attendance and punctuality is clearly identified through the very effective registration and same day follow-up procedures.
- The significant improvement in attendance since the previous inspection is a result of the school's successful strategy, including the employment of two dedicated attendance officers.
- The school has secured the support of the bulk of parents and carers in ensuring the regular and prompt attendance of their children.
- The school's inability to reduce the number of term-time holidays, and to control the movement of families into and out of the area, are the main reasons for its unsatisfactory attendance.
- There is no sense of urgency by pupils to attend lessons on time.

Commentary

23. Although the raw figures for attendance remain below the national average they have, nevertheless, greatly improved over the last four years, largely as a result of the school's strenuous efforts. The adoption of a clear strategy and accurate targeting, the appointment of two dedicated attendance officers, very good co-operation from the Education Social Work Service, same day follow-up and increased parental support have each combined well to effect this improvement.
24. Registers are now marked automatically using a commercial system. This is working well and enables the school to have a detailed breakdown of its attendance data. However, some teachers did not appear to have an up-to-date and accurate list and showed some uncertainty about the total. This system is proving particularly effective in alerting parents to their children's absence from school.
25. While most parents now support the school's efforts a small number do not ensure that their children arrive in school on time. Late arrivals disrupt lessons, and the school acknowledges that it needs to deal more effectively with lateness. The school recognises that term-time holidays account for too many absences. The high number of non-routine admissions reflects the high number of families moving in and out of the area. Only about 50 per cent of pupils starting their secondary education at this school will complete it there. These factors limit the effectiveness of the school's good strategies to improve attendance and punctuality. There is also a lack of urgency by pupils to arrive to their lessons on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (89.7%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.4	School data	0.9
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are good. The breadth of the curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 but the extra-curricular activities are good. The school provides very good care, guidance and support for its pupils. It has developed good links with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory although the marking of pupils' work so they know how to improve is a strength in Years 10 and 11 across all subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 11 but are stronger in Years 10 and 11.
- There has been very good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- There is very good use of ICT by teachers to support their teaching.
- The preparation and planning for lessons is a strength.
- The management of pupils' behaviour is good.
- There is insufficient support for pupils with special educational needs.
- The tasks set for higher-attaining pupils do not always match their needs.
- Insufficient use of ICT by pupils to support learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 106 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	22 (21)	55 (52)	27 (25)	2 (2)	0	0

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

26. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. Teaching is stronger in Years 10 and 11, with four out of every five lessons being judged good or better compared with two-thirds of lessons judged good or better in Years 7 to 9. In Years 7 to 9, teaching was very good in drama. Teaching was good in all other subjects except for art and design, history and modern foreign languages where it was satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 teaching was very good in drama and dance. It was good in all other subjects except for art and design, history, modern foreign languages and physical education where it was satisfactory.
27. Since the last inspection, much work has been undertaken to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A co-ordinator has been appointed with responsibilities for teaching and learning. The emphasis has been on improving classroom management, using the three-part lesson encouraged in the national Key Stage 3 Strategy and lesson planning. A greater variety of teaching and learning styles has been implemented as a result of the introduction of study skills. There has been an increase in the observation of teachers and more openness in sharing good practice in both teaching and how pupils learn effectively. The impact of all these strategies has been an increase in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Now the proportion of lessons judged to be satisfactory or better is 98 per cent compared with 87 per cent in 1999 and the proportion of lessons judged to be very good or better has increased from 5 per cent to 21 per cent. One of the contributory factors to account for this significant improvement is the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the headteacher, senior staff and curriculum leaders.

28. One of the strengths of teaching and learning is the thoroughness of planning and the preparation of lessons and the variety of activities that pupils experience in lessons. As a result, most pupils make appropriate gains in their learning. Most pupils try hard in lessons to acquire new knowledge and skills. A strength of the teaching is the encouragement and confidence teachers give to pupils, ensuring good relationships and good levels of effort.
29. The extent to which pupils become independent learners is limited by several factors. Self-evaluation is an important learning skill and is especially effective in drama, dance and physical education. In some lessons, higher-attaining pupils, in particular, rely too much on what their teachers tell them and too little on their own ideas and responses.
30. In lessons, gains in pupils' knowledge are generally good but they do not always retain this over longer periods. This has an impact on GCSE results because pupils do not recall information easily and do not write at length.
31. The setting of work to match pupils' needs is satisfactory. In the main, the match is good but in mathematics, ICT and history the work is not always sufficiently matched to meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils. In some physical education lessons the work is not sufficiently matched to the wide range of needs found in any one teaching group.
32. In some lessons the specific needs of pupils with learning difficulties are not sufficiently recognised; materials and resources provided are not always appropriate. There is satisfactory use of support assistants in the classrooms, overall. There are occasions when teachers would benefit from the use of support teachers but, as at the time of the last inspection, the level of support for pupils with special educational needs is insufficient. Where they are used most effectively, they are well informed as to their role and the level of support they are expected to provide. This is particularly true in science and design and technology. In less effective lessons there is a lack of awareness by teachers as to how they should best be used to ensure high quality support for learning.
33. Teaching for pupils for whom English is an additional language is generally good. Each pupil has an individual education plan with specific targets, drawn up as a result of testing by local education authority specialists when they enter the school. These plans are given to teachers and support assistants, who use them to ensure that pupils acquire the structure and vocabulary they need for their studies and that help is available to overcome difficulties. Assessment of these pupils is good. They are tested on arrival at the school and their progress is reviewed regularly and targets modified.
34. All teachers are aware of the need to promote the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and most teachers are successful in this. However, there is a lack of consistency across the school and some teachers, for example, in geography, have insufficient planned opportunities to extend the literacy and numeracy of pupils. In ICT, higher-attaining pupils have limited opportunities to practise extended writing and are content to use writing frames and templates that have been provided for middle- and lower-attaining pupils.
35. Teachers' use of ICT to support teaching is very good. In science, business studies, leisure and tourism, dance and in many lessons in other subjects teachers are making very good use of laptop computers with projectors. However, pupils' use of ICT to support learning is a weakness and the reason for this is the difficulty of accessing the existing computer rooms. At the time of the inspection few pupils in lessons had access to computers. The new accommodation will expand significantly the number of fully equipped computer rooms and increase the number of computers within the school.
36. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most teachers are skilful in managing pupils' behaviour. There is challenging behaviour within lessons and most teachers have the range of skills to deal with such incidents calmly and effectively and ensuring that such behaviour does not have an adverse impact on the learning of other pupils in the lesson.

37. Assessment is satisfactory. Considerable efforts have been made since the last inspection to improve the quality of assessment. The policy is good but there is a lack of consistency across the school in its implementation. It is stronger in Years 10 and 11 where there is a consistency across all subjects of marking pupils' work so they know how to improve. In Years 7 to 9, marking and assessment of work is regular but does not take sufficient account of the National Curriculum levels and pupils are less sure about what they have to do to improve. However, what is less well-developed across the school is the need to incorporate the results of their assessments in the planning of lessons so that individual needs can be dealt with more effectively. In art and design, meaningful target-setting for pupils is needed to raise standards. In drama, pupils are given clear guidance on how their work will be assessed and because of this pupils know what they have to do improve. Assessment in music is good but is a weakness in citizenship.
38. Assessment for individual pupils is good. Individual educational plans (IEPs) are well monitored and annual reviews provide good assessment information by which targets for progress can be established and monitored. However, the school should provide a mechanism by which it can monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs as a separate group and compare their progress with the rest of the school.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **unsatisfactory**. As at the previous inspection, statutory curriculum requirements for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not fulfilled in ICT. In other respects, the curriculum is broad and well planned. It meets pupils' needs, ensures progression in learning and provides some good opportunities for enrichment. Provision of accommodation and resources for learning is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Statutory requirements are not met in the ICT curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils make good use of the independent learning centre to support their learning.
- The number of staff to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs is inadequate.

Commentary

39. As the school expands in size it has been possible to extend the curriculum opportunities for pupils. The school has been successful in introducing courses, especially in Years 10 and 11, which meet the needs of pupils. Good developments include the inclusion of a vocationally based leisure and tourism course in Years 10 and 11. There are plans to extend the vocational element by introducing a health and care course. A course in study support helps pupils to develop their learning skills and provides valuable practice in revision skills. The provision of a GCSE course in dance is a successful development. The establishment of good links with feeder primary schools in the core subjects ensures smooth progression into school and continuity of learning.
40. Pupils value the good opportunities to follow particular interests outside of lessons. They enrich and extend their personal and sporting development through participation in a good range of activities in physical education and through involvement in activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and Young Enterprise. Field trips in geography help pupils to develop their research and investigative skills. Visits abroad in modern languages broaden their cultural horizons.
41. Pupils receive good support for work outside the school day. The independent learning centre provides access to information from books and also from a study area housing 20 computers. It is staffed all day and is used for class lessons and for independent research. It operates a homework club after school every day. It is well used, particularly by pupils in Years 7 to 9, both at lunch-time and in the evening. An Easter school that lasted three days provided valuable support for the learning and revision of 20 pupils from Year 7, 45 from Year 9 and 30 from Year

11. At a summer school that spread over five days, 20 pupils developed learning skills through participation in a variety of activities with Year 6 pupils from the primary schools.
42. The number of teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory. Nearly all teachers have appropriate qualifications and experience to teach the courses timetabled for them. However, the number of staff to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs is inadequate.
43. Resources for teaching and learning are generally sufficient to meet curricular needs. Good resources support pupils' learning well in design technology. There is a good supply of books in English, but, as in many other subjects, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT in lessons to support their learning.
44. Accommodation is currently unsatisfactory in physical education and design and technology. Classrooms tend to be scattered around the site, and space is at a premium in mobile classrooms. However, a major building programme, which is due to be completed in different stages over the next twelve months, will significantly improve accommodation. In particular, the additional rooms dedicated to ICT and the increase in computers waiting to be installed will provide further opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning.
45. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, other than for support staff, is satisfactory. SEN pupils are well integrated into appropriate groups. Those with learning difficulties are provided with a good range of activities outside the classroom to support their learning and to increase their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Vulnerable pupils and those with behavioural difficulties are well supported by learning mentors and other specialist staff. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are of a good quality but not always used effectively by teachers in the classroom.
46. The curriculum is good for those for whom English is a second language, since they receive good support from both teachers and from classroom assistants when they are provided and are therefore included in all school activities.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **very good** provision for the welfare, protection, health and personal safety of its pupils. Adults in the school provide very high levels of support, advice and guidance for those in their care, and make good arrangements for seeking, valuing and acting on their views. This aspect of school provision is one of its strengths.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very well rehearsed procedures for child protection, first aid, fire safety and school security provide a safe environment that greatly aid learning.
- A skilled and very committed pastoral team translate the school's caring ethos into its daily life.
- Very good use is made of the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative to monitor, guide and support pupils, especially those in the greatest need.
- The School Council, elected by pupils, is consulted regularly by the school's managers on matters such as the new building, and pupils know that staff take them seriously.

Commentary

47. Those adults charged with the responsibility of care in this school show themselves to be knowledgeable, dedicated and well trained in their work. They go to great lengths to get to know each individual, carefully monitoring their attendance and behaviour with the help of

class teachers, and keeping parents fully informed. They are readily identified by pupils as the people you go to with your problems, and by colleagues as valued members of the staff team.

48. The learning mentors, attendance officers, school counsellor, the Learning and Social Education Resource (LASER) and the Pupil Referenced Outreach/Focused Intervention Team (PROFIT) co-ordinate and provide very effective care and support for individual pupils and their families. Home visits are a common feature of life in this school, and most parents welcome the additional support in caring for their children. Induction arrangements for new pupils, whether at the start of term or in term-time, are carefully planned so as to minimise the trauma of moving to a new school. The resulting climate of calm, well-being and improved self-esteem among troubled pupils makes a significant contribution to raising standards.
49. Membership of the School Council is taken seriously both by pupils who are elected by their peers, and by staff, who consult pupils on matters relating to the daily life of the school. The School Council, for example, was shown around the new extension before other adults in the school had been allowed to see it.
50. At the time of the inspection the school was subject to a major building programme, which caused substantial disruption to the normal running of the school. The school has worked well with the contractors to minimise disruption and several of the contractors made unsolicited comments to members of the inspection team to say how impressed they were with pupils from the school. The building programme caused additional pressures for the caretaking staff and it was evident from their efforts that they demonstrated a great pride in the school and made a valuable contribution to ensuring the highest possible standards in the maintenance of the accommodation.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The **good** links that the school has developed with parents, with other schools and the community make a good contribution to the education of its pupils and are strengths of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents responding to the questionnaire and those attending the meeting with inspectors expressed very positive views about the school.
- There is a good quality of information provided for parents by the school.
- The school addresses parents' concerns or complaints within the day.
- The school's links with the community enhance the learning experiences for pupils.

Commentary

51. This school is winning the struggle to secure the support of parents in the education of their children because it keeps them well informed, and it listens to them. If a child does not arrive at school an automated telephone call is sent to the main carer, and is repeated until the call is acknowledged. The attendance officer or the school counsellor or the learning mentors follow up unresolved issues, in an attempt to engage and support the child and family. Nearly 90 per cent of parents agree that the school seeks their views and takes account of their suggestions, while 97 per cent declare that they feel comfortable about approaching the school to express any concerns or complaints. For its part, the school formally consults parents about school matters and agrees to respond to any complaint on the same day, thus showing parents that it takes them seriously.
52. Pupils become aware of their membership of a wider community beyond the school by raising money for charities, both local and further afield. They have supported a local children's hospice, the British Heart Foundation and many others through taking part in 'Jeans for Genes', and Comic Relief. Through their growing partnership with the local Rotary Club they have filled

shoe boxes with 'goodies' for disadvantaged children in foreign lands, while they themselves compete for Pupil of the Year, awarded annually by the Rotary Club. They take part in mock interviews to prepare them for their future careers, and are actively involved with the Education Business Partnership.

53. Senior members of staff have established good links with other schools and colleges with a view to enhancing the further education prospects of their pupils. Thus, membership of the National Centre for School Leadership, Tower Network Learning Community, a partnership with two specialist colleges, a joint venture with another high school's history department, as well as links with further education and higher education training providers provide increasing opportunities for St George's pupils to enhance their prospects for further education and employment.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is good and the leadership provided by other senior staff is good. The governing body is supportive of the school and management is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clear vision of the headteacher and the senior leadership team gives a positive direction for the school's continuing improvement.
- The good leadership provided by middle managers and subject co-ordinators has improved teaching and learning.
- The effective use of self-evaluation has been used to identify very good provision for staff development.
- There is a need to ensure a more rigorous monitoring by senior and middle managers to ensure that school policies are consistently applied.

Commentary

54. Governors work closely and well with the headteacher and senior staff. They play a very supportive role in planning for the school's improvement. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that targets for raising standards are set and monitor the effectiveness of their implementation. However, in one respect, governance is unsatisfactory, as the school does not meet statutory requirements. The school is failing to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are receiving their full ICT entitlement. These were both issues at the time of the last inspection.
55. The headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards. Her strong leadership has motivated and influenced staff and pupils. She has created a team of teaching and non-teaching staff who are committed to improve the education of pupils in the school, and to raising the reputation of the school in the local community. She is given strong support by the senior management team. Subject leaders and pastoral leaders provide mainly good, and never less than satisfactory, leadership.
56. The management of the school is good. The school has well-written policies, which provide the basis for turning the vision into reality. However, there is a need to ensure that senior and middle managers are effective in ensuring that there is a consistent interpretation by all teachers of their policies, for example, in the monitoring and auditing of literacy and mathematics across the curriculum policies.

57. The school improvement plan has an appropriate number of effective targets for raising standards, Departmental improvement plans are based on the whole-school plan, with an appropriate focus on teaching, learning and staff development. Previous years' plans have been thoroughly evaluated and this evaluation forms the basis of the next plan. The effectiveness of the planning could be improved by the greater use of measurable criteria for success and more precise estimates of the resource implications. Department and subject leaders make insufficient use of the analysis of data provided by senior staff into curriculum action points, and to ensure that sufficiently challenging targets are set for all pupils.
58. The successful implementation of performance management reviews and the school's systems for the monitoring of teaching have led to good improvement in the quality of pupils' learning. The professional development of teachers is very good. It is linked to priorities in the school and departmental improvements plans. A very good programme of induction helps new and newly qualified teachers to settle in quickly to the school's routines.
59. The special educational needs department is administered effectively. Annual Reviews and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) meet statutory requirements; documentation is well organised and maintained. However, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs to ensure that planning and delivery of lessons takes into account the specific needs of these pupils. Teachers need more support in developing skills to modify work to suit different levels of ability. The deployment of support assistants is not always well managed. For example, it is inappropriate to deploy a support assistant to a subject area because that is where they have a specific interest when this has an impact on support for pupils elsewhere. All staff need specific opportunities for professional development in aspects of special educational needs.
60. Leadership of the work for students who speak English as an additional language is good. The co-ordinator ensures that early assessment is undertaken and that individual plans are tailored to suit each student's needs. These plans are reviewed regularly and used to move students on to the next stage of their learning.

Financial information

61. Finances are managed effectively and efficiently and this judgment is endorsed by the latest auditor's report. The principles of best value are central to management. This is well displayed in the procedures adopted for allocating tenders on the extensive building work that is taking place. The school has a very high figure for income that was not spent during the previous financial year. Much of this balance has not been spent because it has been budgeted for future expenditure, in the main, related to the building programme.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,179,152
Total expenditure	2,129,207
Expenditure per pupil	2,707

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	368,883
Balance carried forward to the next	418,828

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 by the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11.
- The small proportion of pupils entered for English Literature at the end of Year 11 attain above average standards.
- The curriculum is well planned, both for lessons and in the longer term, and the Key Stage 3 literacy strategy has been introduced well, ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is good.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- Improvement in the provision for the subject has been good since the last inspection.
- Standards in English are below the national average at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11.
- Higher-attaining pupils do not always succeed as well as they might because they are not encouraged to work with independence and to develop their research skills.
- There is insufficient classroom support for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as a second language.
- There are insufficient ICT resources.

Commentary

62. Current standards in English are below the national average at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. This is reflected in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE results for that year. However, there are encouraging signs of improvement at both levels, particularly at the end of Year 9, where pupils are achieving very well when compared with similar schools. These improvements are feeding their way through Years 10 and 11 and are particularly noticeable in the work of the current Year 10. Overall, pupils' achievement is good by the end of Year 9, when measured against the level of attainment with which pupils enter the school and the levels they attained in Year 6 tests. Inspection evidence suggests that achievement is also good by the end of Year 11. There has been steady improvement since the last inspection, as a result of a stable and dedicated teaching staff, the effects of good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the extensive revision of planning in the last few years. Good teaching, good curriculum planning and good leadership of the department have helped bring about this trend in improvement.
63. Although only about one-sixth of each year group sit the GCSE examination in English Literature, results are above those of the national average. This year, however, a larger number is being entered for Literature, in line with the overall improvement in achievement and the department's successful policy of teaching language through literature throughout the school.
64. Pupils' speaking and listening skills vary widely. Many pupils offer contributions readily, but often find it difficult to express themselves in a sustained fashion or to conduct a reasoned argument. Vocabulary is often thin and sentence structure not always coherent. Many pupils have little understanding of the purpose of their speech and cannot always select the appropriate style for the occasion. Reading skills are the most advanced, so that many pupils read with a good deal of technical competence and fluency. They do, however, find it more difficult to read with full comprehension and to draw inferences from what they read. Reading aloud frequently lacks the expression to reflect the content of what is being read. Teachers use literature well in the form

of novels, stories, plays and poems to improve speaking and comprehension skills. Many pupils accomplish much sustained written work and are able to write in a wide range of styles for many purposes. The range of work covered at all stages is now good, due largely to the introduction of the literacy strategy. Teachers make good use of homework to enable pupils to complete longer pieces of work, such as coursework. Some good pieces of coursework were seen in Years 10 and 11, such as work on *Journey's End* and poetry of World War I.

65. Curriculum development uses the Key Stage 3 literacy strategy well to plan good coverage of literacy targets, in all years. The head of department has produced good new plans for all years, prompted by the literacy strategy and new examination programmes. These plans are ensuring improvement in the quality of work in English and are starting to affect the quality of knowledge and learning of literature, as pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 study more literary texts and more language teaching is done through literature. Pupils in Year 9 were working enthusiastically on the dramatic presentation of the witches in *Macbeth*, and Year 7 pupils were using Roald Dahl's *Boy* as a basis for understanding autobiography.
66. Teaching and learning are good, overall, and some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and secure, lessons are planned thoroughly and teaching methods are varied and engage pupils' interest well. A strength of the teaching is the encouragement and confidence teachers give to pupils, ensuring good relationships and good levels of effort. Resources are used well, homework is used well to reinforce work done in lessons and marking is full and helpful in telling pupils what level they have reached and how they could improve their work. Very good teaching was evident in some of the lower ability sets in Years 9 and 10, where teachers had the support of classroom assistants to help pupils with special educational needs. In some less successful lessons, management of classes is less secure, because classes are large and there are insufficient support staff to help teachers deal with some inattentive and disruptive behaviour, so that time is wasted and the achievement of those pupils who want to work is hindered. Teachers do not always help their pupils to work with independence and do not encourage them to research for themselves, so that the higher-attaining pupils, in particular, rely too much on what their teachers tell them and too little on their own ideas and response.
67. The team of teachers is well led by the head of department, who has a clear determination that standards in the subject shall rise further. He has made good innovations to the curriculum and presents a very good role model to both staff and pupils. After a period of many staff changes, he has now created a good sense of teamwork amongst the now stable staff in the department and plans and monitors the curriculum well. He ensures that pupils' work is checked carefully and their progress analysed, tracked and targeted, in a determination to ensure that standards improve and he observes lessons regularly to help spread good teaching and learning practices throughout the department. Pupils are assigned to groups appropriate for their levels of attainment.
68. The access to ICT facilities for the subject is unsatisfactory, since there are too few opportunities for pupils to use them.

Literacy across the curriculum

69. 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, which are currently unsatisfactory. All departments have been included in training and many have taken steps to improve literacy in their separate subjects. There is some good practice evident in some subjects, in the form of word banks

and writing frames, particularly in science, drama and history. However, the progress of the initiative is not yet being fully monitored and audited. The co-ordinator is in process of liaising with other schools in the area and looking to spread good practice further.

Modern foreign languages

French

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving in Years 7 to 9 and achievement is good.
- GCSE results are much lower than they should be.
- A recent change in the leadership of the department ensures a commitment to the raising of standards.
- The number of pupils who continue to study a foreign language in Years 10 and 11 is low.
- The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is inadequate.
- Good relationships in the classroom ensure more positive attitudes to the subject.

Commentary

70. GCSE results during the last two years were well below the national average. The modern languages department has suffered from a prolonged period of staffing difficulties and standards have fallen significantly since the last inspection. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 shows that standards were well below the national average in 2003 but improving on those of recent years. Girls perform better than boys and the difference reflects the national picture.
71. In Years 7 to 9, pupils show good improvement in their understanding of French. Written work is improving, too, as a result of the emphasis placed by teachers on the learning of grammar. Speaking skills are satisfactory in activities controlled by the teacher in the classroom, but pupils lack confidence when required to respond spontaneously. Standards are well below average by Year 11. Because of the disruption in the staffing of the department in recent years, there are considerable gaps in the knowledge, skills and understanding of the pupils. Their achievement is consequently unsatisfactory.
72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons well and enable pupils to develop their language skills through a wide range of appropriate activities. Activities are well matched to pupils' needs and enable pupils with special educational needs to achieve as well as their peers. A lively pace in most lessons keeps pupils on their toes. Teachers contribute effectively to their pupils' literacy development by encouraging them to think about patterns in language. Appropriate use of praise and rewards encourages good relationships in the classroom. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use French in routine exchanges and communication. Consequently, pupils' speaking skills remain underdeveloped. Not enough use is made of ICT to help pupils to develop their language learning.
73. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. However, the good leadership and sound management of the recently appointed head of department have had a positive impact upon the development of modern languages in the school. She has a clear vision of the growth of the subject and a strong commitment to the raising of standards. Daily organisation is good. Procedures are clear and there is a consistency in the style of teaching adopted with all classes. As a consequence, improvements are evident in Years 7 to 9. However, the number of pupils who continue to study French after Year 9 is disappointingly low.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The national strategy for use during Key Stage 3 is being implemented effectively.
- A stable staffing position in which the teachers possess good subject knowledge.
- The 'setting' arrangements throughout the school are beneficial to all the pupils.
- There is a need to raise the performance of pupils in the GCSE at the end of Year 11.
- The use of ICT needs to be improved throughout the entire mathematics curriculum.
- There is a weakness in the use of assessment data to influence teachers' planning and target-setting for individual pupils.

Commentary

74. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in this subject is below the national average. At the end of Year 9, the national test results for the pupils was below average in 2002 when compared with all schools, but well above average when compared with similar schools. The results for 2003 show a similar picture, with the percentages obtaining Level 5 and above continuing to rise. This represents satisfactory achievement. The boys out-perform the girls at these tests.
75. At the end of Year 11, the GCSE results were significantly below the national average in 2002. The performance of the pupils in this subject in 2002 was half a grade below their performance in comparison with other subjects in the school. The results in 2003 show that there has been a slight rise in the percentage of pupils obtaining A*-C and a significant rise in the percentage of pupils gaining grades A*-G. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys at this level. This shows satisfactory achievement.
76. The evidence of work seen in lessons and during scrutiny of exercise books showed that standards are below average when compared with all pupils. However, taking into account the poor numeracy skills of a significant number of these pupils satisfactory progress is being made in Years 7 to 9 when compared with similar pupils. The work of the majority of the pupils showed much care and attention. This was exemplified in a lesson in Year 9 in which the pupils were showing a great interest and eventually they came up with their own explanations for the use of coordinates to find a line of reflection. This demonstrates satisfactory achievement over these years. Similar progress was seen in a Year 11 lesson on factorising quadratics, in which the teacher built on the pupils' previous knowledge of multiplying out brackets. At the end of the lesson, the majority of the class can do a range of examples correctly and even the minority having difficulty know how to set about the problem. During the scrutiny of Year 11 books examples of investigative work showed clear evidence of knowledge and understanding being used in open-ended situations to good effect. This represents satisfactory achievement.
77. The majority of pupils with special educational needs made satisfactory progress. During a minority of lessons support assistance was available for individual pupils, which was being used appropriately. However, the progress of these pupils would be improved with a sufficiency of support assistance being allocated to lessons in this subject. Although gifted and talented pupils were identified on teachers' lessons plans no extension work was provided for these pupils.
78. Teaching and learning are good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. The lessons benefit from good quality explanations and interventions. The use of overhead transparencies encourages pupils to take part in the lesson and ensures a good pace to learning. In Years 7 to 9 the national strategy is having a good effect because all lessons have a clear structure to them. This format has been extended into Year 10. Clear explanations, good pace and the good management of pupils' behaviour exemplified the best of the teaching. All the teachers make good use of starters to lessons to emphasise both numeracy and literacy skills. Homework is set regularly and well marked, with helpful comments for pupils to improve their work. However, there is a need to incorporate the results

of their assessments in the planning of lessons so that individual needs can be dealt with more effectively.

79. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The essential everyday matters of the department are managed well. The head of department is supportive and wants to raise standards. There is a department development plan but it needs to be more robust with regard to timings, costs and who is responsible for overseeing the outcomes. He monitors pupils' performance and analyses external examination results but this does not result in the targets, which are set for pupils in Years 10 and 11, being challenging enough. There is a good team spirit among the members of the division and the effectiveness of their teaching is well monitored. The setting arrangements on the timetable are an aid to giving appropriate work to the majority of the pupils. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good – a particularly good feature is that teachers have a sufficient supply of instruments so that if pupils forget anything then lessons continue with the minimum of disruption. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

80. A significant number of pupils arrive at this school less than confident of tackling problems involving numeracy without having to approach others for help and assistance. There is a good understanding and practice among the mathematics teachers of when and where to use mental skills for calculations. Calculators are used sensibly when the size and complexity demand it. Evidence of the use of mathematics was found in science, ICT and music. There was little evidence of its use in other subjects during the inspection. There is a school policy on mathematics across the curriculum and in-service training has taken place for all teachers. The effects of the policy have not been evaluated. It would be appropriate for an audit of the policy to be undertaken to see how the mathematics department might better support the way in which mathematical skills are taught, developed and practiced across all subjects in the school for the benefit of the pupils.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching in all years, to which pupils respond with good behaviour and a positive approach to the subject.
- Pupils put commendable effort into their work and learning is productive.
- Good leadership and management and shared commitment of staff are identifying and implementing action for improvement.
- Resources relating to ICT are unsatisfactory, thus limiting the possible impact on the curriculum.

Commentary

81. GCSE double science results in 2003 are below the national average. However, standards are improving and there is a substantial rise in numbers achieving A*-C compared with previous years. Year 9 test results in 2003 are below average when compared with all schools but well above average in comparison with similar schools. Standards are improving and there is a good increase in numbers achieving higher levels. Overall, boys' results are better than girls but strategies to tackle this, such as single-sex groups in Years 10 and 11, have been introduced.
82. Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9. They settle quickly on entry and soon display good scientific thinking. A Year 7 class demonstrated they could both develop their learning and enjoy science as they orbited around each other to illustrate day, night and seasons. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. The department has recognised that pupils need to be encouraged to think for themselves, taking more responsibility for their own learning. This was

evident in a Year 10 lesson when pupils working individually produced a range of clever scientific ideas for energy production and conservation in their role as energy co-ordinator for a group of people on an isolated island. Gifted and talented pupils are identified in lesson plans but there is little evidence of extension work being set to help them develop to their full potential. Other pupils with special needs receive good support, participate fully in lessons and progress as well as others.

83. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' good subject expertise and high expectations encourage pupils to improve their own performance. Good relationships between teachers and pupils, together with high standards of behaviour, lead to productive working. Effective planning and the setting and checking of clear lesson outcomes help pupils assess their progress and to overcome difficulties. Pupils' interest is grabbed by good use of starter activities and maintained by employing different teaching approaches. Some staff make good use of laptop projectors and all place a major emphasis on practical work. Marking of work is regular but inconsistent in giving specific advice to pupils on how to improve. At its best, particularly in Years 10 and 11, helpful diagnostic and constructive comments are given.
84. Science is well led and managed by a department head with a clear sense of direction for the future of the subject. All staff share a strong commitment to improvement that has already raised standards and they work well together as a team. Schemes of work are regularly reviewed and allow for different levels of attainment. There is a strong emphasis in teaching on literacy, and work in all years is adequately supported by pupils' numeracy skills. Wall displays are impressive and teaching accommodation is satisfactory. Preparation and storage space is poor, the laboratory technicians serve the department well but under difficult conditions.
85. Generally, improvement since the previous inspection is good. Strategies have been set in place to improve the low standards of attainment and are proving successful. Resources have been improved. The issue of the limited use of ICT across the curriculum still remains; however, it is being tackled by the provision of a computer suite for science and the appointment of a member of staff with responsibility for development of ICT in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good.
- Teaching and learning in GCSE ICT are good.
- Very good technical support has a positive effect on teaching and learning.
- National Curriculum levels are not shared with pupils in Years 7 to 9 to set individual targets to improve attainment.
- There is inconsistent use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.
- Provision of opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in ICT for pupils in Years 10 and 11, who do not study GCSE ICT or related vocational courses, is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

86. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9, in 2003, indicate that pupils' attainments are very low for ICT. In work seen during the inspection, standards in ICT in Years 7 to 9 are below average. Pupils enter Year 7 with well below average attainments in ICT, so the achievement of pupils by the end of Year 9 is good.
87. In 2002, the GCSE results achieved by pupils aged 16 were very low when compared with national averages. The 2003 results are similarly very low, although there is an improvement. Girls did better than boys, which is not in line with trend of other subjects in the school. In work seen, pupils in Year 11 who study GCSE ICT have skills that are below average but their level of achievement is, overall, satisfactory.
88. By the end of Year 9, pupils use word processing, desktop publishing and multi-media software packages to present work, databases and spreadsheets to process information, and are confident users of the Internet to research topics. Higher-attaining pupils have some understanding of how to apply different packages to different situations. Lower-attaining pupils display satisfactory technical skills but do not always complete their work thoroughly. Their limited literacy skills hinder their progress. In most lessons, pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress.
89. By the end of Year 11, those pupils studying a full GCSE course in ICT are competent users of word-processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheet, and multi-media software packages. Higher-attaining pupils are able to explain the development of their work. However, in a minority of lessons these pupils are not given work that challenges them to the full. Lower-attaining pupils produce printouts that require satisfactory technical skills but their work is often incomplete and lacks explanation. Those pupils who study other vocational courses with high ICT content make satisfactory use of word processing and desktop publishing to present their work, use the Internet effectively for research, and use spreadsheets to present numerical data and to produce graphs. The achievement of these pupils is satisfactory. There is a small number of pupils who make limited use of ICT, other than researching topics on the Internet and word processing coursework, whose achievement is unsatisfactory.
90. Teaching and learning are, overall, good. When teaching is good or better, lessons are well-structured and use a wide range of activities that capture pupils' interest, pace of learning is brisk, and clear teaching and learning objectives are met. In a Year 7, lesson when pupils used a desktop publishing package to present information about the events in a local town, the teacher made good use of a variety of stimulating resources to capture pupils' interest. She encouraged good discussion and use of technical terms, gave practise in using angles to rotate text in different ways, and gave pupils the opportunity to experiment individually to produce their own information sheet. Pupils with special educational needs had specially adapted work which enabled them to take full part in the lesson. All the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience and made very good progress in developing their ICT, numerical and literacy skills.
91. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well, relationships are very good, and pupils collaborate well with one another. However, in a minority of lessons, some pupils present challenging behaviour, which disrupts the learning of others in the class. Teachers work hard to hold pupils' concentration.
92. Feedback to pupils on how to improve their work is given during lessons, but pupils in Years 7 to 9 are unaware of the National Curriculum levels at which they are working, and they do not know what needs to be done to get to the next level. In Years 10 and 11 individual targets are shared with pupils and clear information is given to them on how to improve their work. However, for some higher-attaining pupils targets are not as challenging as they might be.

93. The contribution that ICT makes to the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Key words are displayed around the rooms and are used in most lessons. Pupils practise speaking and listening skills in collaborative work. They extend their numeracy skills using formulae in spreadsheets, and are aware of rotations of angles and enlargements of shapes when displaying information. However, higher-attaining pupils have limited opportunities to practise extended writing and often are content to use writing frames and templates that have been provided for middle- and lower-attaining pupils.
94. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has revised schemes of work in line with the national strategy. He has given good support and guidance to non-specialist staff who teach ICT. Developments are planned to improve assessment and target-setting for pupils in Years 7 to 9. There is very good technical support, which promotes confidence and assists in raising standards. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory. A new building is almost completed, which will enhance access to ICT facilities and resources for all subjects in the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to use the ICT facilities for extra-curricular activities at lunch-time and after school.
95. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Teaching and learning have improved. Further investment in computers, electronic whiteboards and additional software has improved the use of ICT. Teachers are making good use of laptops to prepare lessons and to develop electronic presentations for pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

96. There is inconsistent use of ICT across the subjects of the curriculum to improve pupils' learning. Effective use is made of computers in business studies, leisure and tourism, design technology, PSHE, careers and geography. Computers are used for word processing to present coursework, and the Internet is used effectively to research topics in some subject areas. However, although the resources have improved since the last inspection, there are insufficient to ensure that all subjects have easy access to facilities. English, modern languages, art, science and mathematics do not make enough use of ICT to support learning in their areas. The ICT facilities in the new building extension, which will soon be opened, will provide additional resources for all subject areas.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and the staff are caring and supportive of all pupils, thus helping their achievement.
- The leadership of geography is good, giving clear guidance and developing a strong team that shows a determination to improve standards.
- The use of ICT is a great help in supporting learning.
- The GCSE results are well below average.
- The low level of literacy of many pupils depresses their geography results.
- The standards of work seen, especially in presentation of work, are too low.

Commentary

97. Standards of work seen during the inspection were below average. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a limited knowledge of the geography they have studied. The majority of pupils are aware of physical processes and their impact on landforms but the lower-attaining pupils often have a

very confused understanding. Similarly, they know that Bangladesh has a high population density but are unable to provide explanations. The lower-attaining pupils are less confident and find it difficult to structure their work and reach conclusions. The levels of literacy, of many pupils, limit their progress.

98. GCSE results in 2002 were well below the national average. Pupils performed less well in geography than in their other subjects. Girls did not perform as well as boys. In 2003, the GCSE results remained well below the national average and there was less of a difference between boys and girls. The standard of work seen in lessons, although below average, is better than the recent examination results because pupils can concentrate for short periods and are encouraged by their teachers.
99. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory, in lessons, in Years 7 to 9. Lower-attaining pupils achieve well where support is consistent, but the in-class support is insufficient and not available in every lesson. Given that pupils are below average in geography when they arrive in Year 7, their progress is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is satisfactory. It is not better because there is a small but significant proportion of pupils who do not reach their target grade and a high proportion of girls did not even achieve a grade in GCSE examinations.
100. Teaching and learning are good. This is because of the caring and committed teachers who are well prepared and have good geographical knowledge. Teachers manage their classes well and ensure that some pupils who are not well motivated do not become a bigger problem. The teaching is sometimes very good, for example, when it involves all the pupils in positive active learning. A Year 10 lesson on flooding was a good example of interesting, lively learning. In all lessons, pupils make gains in knowledge but do not retain this over longer periods. This has an impact on GCSE results because pupils do not recall information easily and do not write at length. The planning of lessons is often good but the implementation of the plans is not sufficiently focused to ensure that all pupils are aware of their learning in areas such as citizenship. Whilst opportunities for the development of moral and cultural development are identified they are not given sufficient attention in lessons to help pupils to improve. The marking and assessment of work is regular but does not take sufficient account of the National Curriculum levels and pupils do not always know how to improve their work. Whilst teachers are aware of the need to improve basic skills there are insufficient planned opportunities to extend the literacy and numeracy of pupils. Learning is satisfactory, but too many pupils are not actively involved in their learning and concentration levels vary widely. The department makes good use of computers to support learning but is unable to use data-logging in weather studies because of a lack of equipment.
101. Leadership in the department is good and is developing a strong committed team. The management of the area is satisfactory but has yet to analyse rigorously all the assessment data that is available, assuming that once something is written down it happens.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the department and the standard of teaching set by the head of department in his lessons.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding.
- Use of imaginative teaching techniques, which support learning.
- The poor literacy skills of many pupils, which impede progress.
- Lack of challenge and provision of extension work for higher-attaining pupils.
- Lack of suitably modified work, and availability of support assistants, for pupils with lowest attainment and those with special educational needs.

- Lack of opportunities to use ICT to support learning and achievement.

Commentary

102. The results of the National Curriculum teachers' assessment of pupils at the end of Year 9 have been consistently below average over the last two years, but in line with school results, overall. GCSE results are also well below the national average, although in 2003 there has been a slight improvement in the number of pupils achieving five or more A*-G, and a very small number achieved A* and A grades. Low standards of attainment reflect the poor literacy skills of many pupils.
103. Achievement for the majority of pupils is good when their prior level of attainment is taken into account. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Although they are not always provided with suitably modified work, the achievement of lowest attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with their peers. Higher-attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress because teachers provide insufficiently challenging and stretching work for them.
104. Teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. Pupils learn best in lessons where teaching strategies are adapted to their learning needs. In a very good lesson, Year 9 pupils were provided with a selection of facts and information for analysis and, working collaboratively, were able to make informed and considered judgements on whether Guy Fawkes was a villain or a victim. They were enthusiastic and fully engaged, particularly as the teacher introduced a competitive element with a prize for the winning pair. Year 10 pupils studying the American West showed good knowledge and understanding of why the cattle industry declined. The teacher's high expectations, precise questioning and reinforcement of speaking and listening skills enhanced their learning skills. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and are skilful communicators. Pupils have a positive attitude to history as a result of the rapport teachers build with them in the classroom. However, in less successful lessons they fail to stretch the highest attaining pupils, or provide sufficiently modified levels of work, materials and support staff to support the lowest attainers and those with special educational needs. In a very few lessons, the behaviour of some pupils disrupts the lesson and interrupts the learning of the rest. The teachers do not have the appropriate strategies to manage those pupils with the most challenging behaviour. Greater use of support assistants is needed in these circumstances. In lessons and work scrutinised, there was no evidence of the use of information technology to support learning.
105. The department has suffered recently from a lack of consistent leadership and management. The newly appointed head of department provides good leadership and has a clear view of what needs to be done to raise the attainment of pupils and is taking steps to ensure that effective strategies are implemented to make an impact on pupils' progress. There has been immediate action to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning improve. His own teaching provides a very good role model for teachers in the department. New schemes of work are being systematically updated and improved and monitoring of teaching is a priority in planning. There is a need to build up a range of artefacts, software and other resources to give pupils the opportunity to use first-hand sources for historical enquiry and interpretation.
106. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. There are increased opportunities for pupils to answer questions, and marking has improved. The deployment and use of support assistants is still not effective in supporting pupils with special needs.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment has improved over recent years in all years.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.
- ICT is used effectively in all aspects of the subject areas.
- GCSE results in resistant materials are well below average.

Commentary

107. In National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment was well below average in 2002. Results in the most recent year, however, though still well below average, show a significant improvement, particularly in the number of pupils gaining above average grades. These results represent good achievement from standards on entry and reflect improvements in teaching. This is confirmed in the progress evident in the work seen in Years 7 to 9. In lessons, imaginative work in textiles was seen and, in food technology, pupils showed skill in food preparation with appropriate regard for hygiene and safety.
108. At the end of Year 11, overall results in GCSE examinations were well below average in 2002. There was an improvement in 2003. In the resistant materials option, results in 2003 improved markedly in comparison with those of the previous year. The highest results were attained in child development and, though still below average, represent good achievement. Two pupils attained very high grades and ten pupils exceeded their predicted results.
109. During the inspection, Years 10 and 11 pupils taking the child development option, showed serious commitment and sound research skills. Very good presentation was a feature of their work. In all years, confident use of ICT aids progress. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are required to write a report on their progress in the use of computers. They develop skills in computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing, computer control is experienced in baking, and computer-aided design in dietary analysis. In Years 10 and 11, pupils use computers in the presentation of work folders and computer control is exercised in milling and engraving.
110. The quality of teaching and learning are strengths of the department. Lessons are planned carefully to deliver the full range of National Curriculum Programmes of Study and the GCSE syllabuses for the resistant materials, food technology and child development options. The level of challenge is high. Numeracy and literacy are developed by measuring and calculation in 'design and make' projects and by the constant analysis of subject vocabulary with an emphasis on clear, accurate writing.
111. The quality of presentation is an area being given particular attention as a means of raising standards and improving attainment. A notable feature of all the teaching in the department is the sensitive one-to-one help and tuition during practical sessions. This is sensitive to individual need and promotes good progress by pupils with special educational needs and those with special talent. A pleasant working atmosphere prevails in lessons.
112. Procedures for assessment are detailed and thorough and progress is monitored carefully. Relevant homework is set and marked regularly. Pupils respond well to the teaching, they concentrate well and behaviour is good in most lessons.
113. The department is led enthusiastically, with good relationships in evidence and with a high level of commitment shared by both teaching and non-teaching staff. Shared accommodation produces difficulties for specialist teaching.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lesson objectives are met when teachers' planning and preparation is thorough.
- Attention to the National Key Stage 3 Strategy for Literacy is raising standards.
- Appropriate and well-prepared resources for teaching are raising standards.
- Progress for pupils is limited when the school's disciplinary procedures are ignored.
- Some opportunities to show pupils how to improve are missed.
- GCSE results in 2003 are well below the national average.

Commentary

114. Standards in the current Year 9 are in line with national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement for the pupils in relation to when they started at the school in Year 7. Homework is used effectively to raise the standard of work. Pupils in Year 9 used the drawings of their bedrooms to compose a surrealist picture incorporating the ideas of the painter René Magritte. Teacher assessments of the standards reached at the end of Year 9 have fluctuated over recent years but in 2003 they matched the national average. Standards in the current Year 11 are in line with national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement compared with the National Curriculum levels attained in Year 9 in 2002. Thorough preparation by pupils on the GCSE course raises the standard of their work. This was seen when pupils preparing for their mock GCSE examination translated four examples of interlocking tessellations seen in the work of M C Escher into their own work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their peers. Pupils who are gifted and talented are given challenging learning opportunities.
115. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but it varies from good to unsatisfactory. It is most effective when planning and preparation is thorough and when good resources support teaching. This was seen in a lesson about cubism, in which the essence of the concept was skilfully taught using a beautifully prepared sheet of three of Cézanne's still-life paintings. This had a significantly impact on pupils' progress when drawing an object from observation from several viewpoints. Teachers promote literacy in a positive way. In an analytical discussion about surrealism the teacher used adept questioning to elicit thoughtful replies. Some opportunities to show pupils how to improve are missed. Provision for teaching through the use of ICT is unsatisfactory, as it was in the previous inspection. Assessment is satisfactory but further tracking and meaningful target-setting for pupils is needed to raise standards. Attitudes of pupils are generally positive and most pupils co-operate with teachers. Behaviour is generally good, but this depends on the teachers' adherence to the school's disciplinary procedures.
116. The leadership of art is satisfactory. The head of subject has built a cohesive team determined to drive up standards. Management is satisfactory. The department's development plan has identified strengths and weaknesses and how to manage them. Monitoring of teaching and learning has insufficient formality to raise standards. Improvement since the last report is satisfactory but some issues, such as making progress with observation drawing, and how pupils use their knowledge of artists, needs further attention.

Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and this contributes to the high standards.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to citizenship.
- The subject promotes thinking skills and problem-solving.
- There is as yet no discrete drama offered to pupils in Years 7 and 8.

Commentary

117. Drama as a distinct subject was introduced into the curriculum in recent years. The first group of pupils took GCSE in 2003. Standards were well above average. Drama is now provided for all pupils in Year 9 and as a GCSE option course in Years 10 and 11.
118. Standards are average by Year 9 and above average by Year 11. This represents good achievement given pupils' standards at the start of the courses. Pupils in all years acquire and improve on the key skills associated with drama. These include observation, listening, posture, use of voice and how to display emotions and feelings. They acquire a high degree of composure in lessons. They learn how to adapt a script to suit a given audience such as children. By Year 11, pupils have a good knowledge of drama from different cultures. They learn to speak carefully so that their words carry the precise meaning they wish to convey.
119. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teachers have very good skills and expertise in the subject. They present pupils with themes that are stimulating and pupils respond with a high level of interest. They have a good rapport with their pupils and excellent class management skills. Lessons are well structured and involve all pupils fully. Issues are explored in a step-by-step approach that leads to a good depth of study. Teachers promote listening and thinking skills and employ a problem-solving approach. In this way pupils gain skills that are useful in all other subjects. In Years 10 and 11 there is ongoing assessment in all lessons. Pupils are given clear guidance on how their work will be assessed in GCSE. Because of this, pupils know what they have to do to improve. Pupils enjoy the subject and show confidence and composure.
120. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to citizenship by exploring issues such as fear, despair, intimidation, famine, cruelty and the abuse of power.
121. There is new leadership for this new subject. There is good vision for extending the subject to all pupils. The teachers work well together as a team. The new purpose-built studio, soon to be opened, will enhance the provision in drama.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has excellent features.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good.
- An 'open house' and inclusive policy for pupils features strongly.
- Support for the newly qualified teacher is very good.
- The lack of the use of ICT reduces access to composing for all pupils.

- The Programme of Study lacks coverage in some areas.
- The take-up for instrumental and vocal lessons is not currently matching the growth in the size of the school.

Commentary

122. In 2003, results at the end of Year 9 were below those recorded nationally. Most girls reached the national average but the performance of boys fell behind. Prior attainment is very low on entry to the school. Overall, the trend is rising in Years 7 to 9 but in 2002 staffing issues caused a dip in performance.
123. In a Year 7 lesson pupils make very good advances in musical skills and confidence in their version of *Dance Macabre* using the elements of ostinato, pitch and rhythm. Year 8 pupils make good advances in Sangita and use a wide range of percussion instruments, including orchestral xylophones, gongs, tabla and salsa drums and keyboard instruments. Higher-attaining pupils can recognise Chinese music from patterns of notes, but most pupils find the sound of Indian music difficult to imitate. Year 9 pupils are not achieving as much as they should because the Programme of Study is not fully covered. Consequently, performing standards fall and pupils are not inspired by the task on the topic of 'Music and War'. Some pupils with SEN arrive late and others refuse to engage with tasks so that insufficient achievement is made. Word banks, keywords and learning about how words are used in context, support literacy. All pupils use keyboards to support improvisation in music and modelling in ICT.
124. In 2003, at the end of Year 11, attainment at GCSE grades A*-C was below the national average but more boys achieved the higher grades than girls and these pupils made very good progress. Attainment was at the national average for grades A*-G, which represents good achievement based on performance in Year 9. Boys achieved less well but the school target grades were met. Performing shows a high level of commitment, although teacher moderation is generous in some performance options. Composing activities are stimulating and imaginative in character but teacher moderation is severe in ideas, medium and style. The work of lower-attaining boys and girls shows good consistency and achievement.
125. Visiting teachers funded by the school give additional lessons on violin and brass instruments. The take-up for instrumental and vocal lessons is below expectation and affects the participation in instrumental and vocal groups, concerts and performances in the school. The level of support for GCSE, including shared teaching, is good.
126. Teaching and learning are good, with some excellent features, in all lessons, including the extra-curricular activities, and teachers know their subject well, crisply impart knowledge and use stimulating questioning. Most pupils enjoy music lessons and work with application when the task is clear, when whole-class activities using the voice and basic skills in music are strong, and when there is a review at the end. Year 9 pupils want to learn more but are not provided with sufficient opportunities to learn skills in music. Pupils are often engaged in thinking about the 'powerful' nature of spiritual and cultural aspects in music using words such as *eerie*, *uneasy*, *sad*, and *triumphal*.
127. The department has an assessment scheme that informs pupils what they should do to improve their work. In Years 7 to 9 tape recordings of work in progress are used to inform planning and to show the value-added effect throughout the school. The use of national assessment material is not yet used to support all pupils.
128. The head of department offers considerable experience and very good leadership. Teacher assessments in Years 7 to 9 are currently a little severe although standards are below the national average. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities is very good in concerts and in performances outside of the school.

129. Since the opening of the new school the department has experienced physical disruption through reorganisation. This has contributed to the negative effect on standards, especially in Year 9, in use of the voice, and some composing activities in Years 7, 8 and 9. The match of courses to pupils' needs in Years 10 and 11 is rightly under consideration. Criteria for success in the development plan are appropriately under review. Woodwind instruments are to be introduced in the future. The use of ICT has not yet been integrated into the scheme of work and much remains to be done in setting up new technologies. The department has recently been fortunate in securing higher levels of government funding, private donations and LEA support. With a newly qualified teacher contributing to the quality of the music provision, the department is well poised to move forward with renewed vigour.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and make good progress because teaching is good.
 - Standards in GCSE dance are well above average.
 - Extra-curricular provision is a good feature that is helping to raise standards.
 - Assessment procedures are good in Years 7 to 9.
 - Work is not always matched sufficiently to the range of pupils' capabilities in lessons.
 - Non-participation in Year 11 is a cause for concern.
 - Current facilities are inadequate, and the department lacks a suitable base for GCSE theory work
130. When pupils join the school in Year 7 they have a wide range of capability and experience in physical education. Good introductory subject assessment procedures in Year 7 indicate that their overall standards are well below average at this stage, and this is confirmed by inspection findings. Throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 both boys and girls achieve well and make good progress because effective teaching stimulates their positive attitudes to the subject. As a result, standards improve so that by the end of Year 9 they are close to, although below, average overall. At this stage girls make particularly good progress in dance and gymnastics.
131. The impact of this good teaching in Years 7 to 9 is not yet reflected in Years 10 and 11 where standards are lower than average. A good feature of the work in Year 11 is the opportunity provided for pupils to use the very good facilities at a local sports centre as well as the currently limited school provision for physical education, with a positive impact on their standards and achievement. These pupils are able to select or specialise in a wider range of activities – this helps to generate interest and enthusiasm for some, although non-participation rates are a cause for concern. Those pupils who do take part regularly are achieving well and their overall standards are average. Standards in GCSE physical education are below average; practical work is improving, but some pupils have difficulty with the theoretical demands of the course. Recent results are well below average for the higher A*-C grades because some pupils do not do as well as they should in their theory work. Results across the full range of A*-G grades are in line with the national picture. Current standards in GCSE work are below average but represent satisfactory achievement for the pupils concerned. The recent introduction of GCSE dance is a notable success. The initial group in Year 11 will take their examinations in 2004; their practical standards are well above average and these pupils are achieving very well.
132. The quality of both the teaching and the learning that it promotes are satisfactory, overall, and good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and hardworking, and have clear expectations of their pupils. Relationships are good and pupils respond well to the positive manner in which they are taught. Behaviour is mainly good and discipline is firm, non-confrontational and effective. Boys and girls are keen to learn, work well together, and most concentrate fully in lessons, although some have poor listening skills and short attention spans. Their overall interest and enthusiasm are, however, key factors in their good progress in Years 7 to 9. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan work well to match the needs of different

groups of pupils. They share clear learning objectives, so that pupils understand what it is they are learning and why, and they frequently question pupils to check on their understanding. In this way, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with higher ability, achieve well because they are properly stretched by appropriate tasks. This was illustrated well in a successful Year 10 GCSE theory lesson that ensured that pupils of all abilities were challenged to develop and explain their understanding of bones, joints, and associated basic movements in different physical activities. The varied teaching strategies ensured that pupils' achievement and progress were good. Whilst teaching is consistently satisfactory, some lessons are slow to get underway, whilst others do not provide work that is sufficiently matched to the wide range of needs in some groups.

133. The department is well led but, as at the last inspection, facilities are inadequate at present, although welcome improvements are in the pipeline. The lack of a dedicated base for theory work is a major disadvantage to GCSE development. Information provided by the good assessment procedures is not always used to help teachers plan suitable work for pupils with differing capabilities, and formal monitoring of teaching and learning does not take place often enough. However, the new department is emerging well and their strong commitment is reflected in the good programme of extra-curricular activities provided – these are popular with both boys and girls and are helping to raise standards.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The business studies course and the leisure and tourism course were not subject to a full inspection report. Overall, five lessons were seen and the quality of teaching and learning in all lessons was good. Both courses are popular with pupils. In particular, they respond positively to opportunities to research and work collaboratively. Both subjects make very good use of ICT to support both teaching and learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

The provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The personal, social and health education programme of work makes a good contribution to pupils' education in citizenship.
- There has been a good audit of where aspects of citizenship are being taught within other subjects.
- There is not enough promotion of research and independent learning.
- Although teachers identify citizenship issues in their lesson plans they do not focus clearly enough on these to make pupils fully aware of citizenship.
- Assessment needs to be developed further so that pupils understand how they can make progress.

Commentary

134. Standards are satisfactory in citizenship and in personal and social education. In both these areas the oral and practical aspects of pupils' work are of a higher standard than their written answers, which are hindered by poor skills in literacy. By the end of Year 9, pupils demonstrate that they are confident and work well in groups. They acquire the key skills of observing and listening that will contribute to their future work. For the most part, pupils display good social skills and they observe the usual courtesies that make for good citizenship. In Year 9, all pupils do a short course in Business Studies within ICT. This informs them of the main features operating in the world of business. In religious education, there is a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that makes a positive

contribution to citizenship and to pupils' personal and social education. There is a clear focus on communication skills and rights and responsibilities in preparation for the two weeks work experience for all pupils in Year 10. In general, pupils do not do enough independent research.

135. Pupils are given good opportunities to be involved in active citizenship through the School Council, the prefect system, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and helping new pupils in the school. They contribute well to a range of charities, including Barnardo's, The British Heart Foundation and 'Jeans for Genes'.
136. Teaching and learning are good, overall, especially in the aspects of citizenship that are taught within the PSHE programme. It is satisfactory in the areas taught within other subjects. Teachers are clearly committed to encouraging pupils to become responsible, confident and aware of their duties to the community. There are opportunities for pupils to discuss opinions and form judgements in most lessons. Pupils benefit from the use of days when the timetable does not take place. This enables them to focus in depth on friendships and relationships. In PSHE lessons teachers make effective use of professional schemes of work to cover study skills and to make pupils aware of the world of work. Drugs education and sex education are covered adequately. The school makes use of appropriate visiting speakers to add to the provision in personal, social and health education. Assessment of pupils' work needs to be developed further. This will highlight what aspects need to be covered in greater detail. It will also assist teachers in promoting citizenship across a range of subjects. In both areas it will enable pupils to have a good understanding of their progress.
137. Leadership is good in citizenship and in PSHE. There is good vision for promoting these areas. There has been a good audit to establish where aspects of citizenship are being covered. There is good planning to identify and support all the relevant aspects. Management is satisfactory. There is a need to ensure that the aspects of citizenship that are being covered by other subjects are given due emphasis.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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