

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL,
BROWNEDGE**

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119784

Headteacher: Dr J. L. McHugh

Lead inspector: Mrs J Tracey

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 December 2003

Inspection number: 258777

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 11 - 16
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 795

School address: Station Road
Bamber Bridge
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Lancashire
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr D Livesey

Date of previous inspection: 7 December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic mixed comprehensive school situated in Bamber Bridge, close to Preston. It is firmly established in the local community and has recently gained Sports College status. The school is smaller than the average sized secondary school with 795 pupils on roll. Many pupils come from the local area, but others travel some distance. They come from varied backgrounds; a very small number are in public care. Attainment on entry is average. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2002 for raising the standard of pupils' work over time. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin. None is at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average, as is the proportion with statements of need. The school caters for pupils with learning, behavioural, medical and physical disabilities. It is proud of its strong links with the local and church communities. It seeks to live up to its mission - "to prepare pupils, through the experience of being part of a caring Christian community in school, to take their place in later life as committed members of the Church and responsible members of society".

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20270	Mrs J Tracey	Lead inspector	
11077	Mrs J Harrison	Lay inspector	
18676	Mr R Meakin	Team inspector	Mathematics
11508	Mr C Griffin	Team inspector	English Drama English as an additional language
22985	Mrs J Sparkes	Team inspector	Science
2644	Mr M MacLeod	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
32672	Mr S Hammond-Evans	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology
23926	Mr D Howorth	Team inspector	Citizenship Geography
14841	Mr M Duffey	Team inspector	History
23797	Mrs A Powell	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
20490	Mr P Wilson	Team inspector	Music
19295	Mr P Wall	Team inspector	Physical education Business education
4193	Mr C Radley	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
SUBJECTS [AND COURSES] IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Mary's is a good school that provides an effective education for all its pupils. Its strong Christian ethos, combined with good teaching and pupils' very good attitudes, lead to above average standards of work in Years 9 and 11. Leadership and management are very good. They are contributory factors to pupils' good achievement. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school constantly strives to raise standards through its very effective assessment systems. Underachievement is quickly identified and appropriate action is taken without delay.
- Standards are below average in French and food studies.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are fully integrated in all aspects of the school's work.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. It enables them to meet, and sometimes exceed, the targets set for them.
- The school offers a very good and varied range of extra-curricular activities. The rate of success in competitive events in sport and music is high.
- There are not many opportunities for pupils to study vocational or work-related subjects in Years 10 and 11, nor are there enough opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) skills in mathematics, science, art and music.
- The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory but it is not monitored closely enough to ensure that all elements are taught at an appropriate time in pupils' personal development.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in 1998. Action taken in response to the issues raised at that time has resulted in an improvement in standards in science and a better-balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9. In addition, more rigorous monitoring by the leadership team is effective in highlighting underachievement and bringing about improvement. The school's recent designation as a Sports College is further evidence of the far-sighted and innovative leadership.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	A	A	B	B

*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.*

Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good. Overall, standards are above average in Years 9 and 11. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are well above average in English, German and art. They are above average in mathematics, science, ICT, history, music, and physical education. Standards are below average in French and food studies. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because the school's very good monitoring system focuses on building up their learning methodically, step by step. The system also highlights pupils who are falling behind with their learning and action is taken quickly to rectify this. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** It is reflected in pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and attendance. Very good relationships between pupils and adults foster consideration and thoughtfulness for others and contribute to the growth in pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. A high proportion of pupils participate in these, with very good levels of success, particularly in music and sport. However, there are few opportunities for vocational and work-related studies. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, as is indicated by their success in GCSE examinations in Year 11. **Overall, the quality of teaching is good.** Teaching is very good in English, art and German. It is good in all other subjects except design and technology, where it is satisfactory overall, and French and food studies, where it is unsatisfactory. Pupils' learning, based on gains in knowledge and the transfer of skills from one subject to another, indicates that pupils understand what is expected of them and that most are willing to take some responsibility for their own learning. Occasionally, when teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils do not move on fast enough because the work is not sufficiently challenging. Pupils then lose the enthusiasm to reach the highest standards. The very good teaching is characterised by lively, exciting lessons that sharpen pupils' approach and encourage a high level of participation in discussion. Teachers' expectations in such lessons are high. The school takes good care of its pupils and provides very good support and guidance for all aspects of their personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher and key staff are proactive in determining where improvements are needed and what action is necessary. They ensure that teachers and other staff are held accountable for the outcomes of their work, which has resulted in GCSE results improving at a faster rate than the national trend. The major factors contributing to this are the rigorous monitoring system introduced since the previous inspection and the high profile given to pupils' achievement. The school and governors are very responsive to their own self-critical evaluation. This too contributes to the good standards achieved. Governance of the school is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the individual care and attention given to their children. They recognise and appreciate the way that all pupils are treated fairly and equally. Parents also value the commitment of staff and the Chaplaincy team in supporting their children's personal development. A small number of parents think that the school could provide more information about their children's progress. Inspectors agree that the content of written reports on pupils' work is inconsistent. Pupils think highly of the school and consider that it looks after their interests well. Their main concerns are the poor condition of some of the laboratories and toilets. Inspectors endorse these views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in French by improving the overall quality of leadership in modern foreign languages and the management and teaching of French.
- Raise standards in food studies.
- Develop further the use of ICT across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, science, art and music.
- Extend the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to provide more opportunities for vocational and work-related studies.
- Maintain a better overview of the provision for PSHE.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Overall standards of work are above average in Years 9 and 11. Standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science in both year groups. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, achieve equally well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school maintains consistently good standards of work, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' overall achievement is good because they respond very well to the good teaching.
- Pupils' attainment in French and food studies is below average. Overall achievement in these subjects is unsatisfactory because pupils are not working at levels that match their ability. Higher-attaining pupils in particular are not doing as well as they should.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.5(36.6)	33.4(33.3)
Mathematics	34.7(34.9)	35.4(34.7)
Science	33.8(34.8)	33.6(33.3)

There were 151 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Pupils' results in national tests taken in 2003 were above the national average in English and similar to it in mathematics and science. Over time, the trend in results is broadly similar to that found nationally. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils' results in science have improved significantly since the previous inspection because teaching is more highly focused on assisting pupils to apply their knowledge in practical situations and reason out conclusions for themselves. The school consolidates the development of pupils' literacy and numerical skills in Years 7-9, recognising their importance to every area of the curriculum. Overall, pupils' competence in these skills is above average. In Year 9, standards are well above average in English and art and above average in mathematics, science, German, history and music. They are average in ICT, geography, design and technology, physical education and citizenship. Standards are below average in French. Taking into account pupils' attainment on entry, achievement in English, art and German is very good. Pupils achieve well in all other subjects except ICT, where achievement is satisfactory, and French, where it is unsatisfactory.

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	55 (55)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (99)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100(100)	96(96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	36.2(37.4)	34.3(34.7)

There were 140 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ

2. The school is maintaining a consistently good standard at GCSE. During recent years, pupils' average point score has risen at a similar rate to the national trend. The school considers, and inspectors agree, that this is due to good teaching and effective monitoring systems that constantly keep pupils sharply focused on working towards their target grades. In 2003, GCSE results were similar to the national average at five or more A*-C grades. They were well above average at five or more A*-G grades and very high at one or more A*-G grades. No pupil left the school, including those with special educational needs, without a GCSE qualification. Currently, in Year 11, achievement is very good in English, art and German and standards of work are well above average. Achievement is good in mathematics, science, ICT, history, music and physical education. Standards in these subjects are above average. They are average in geography, design and technology (graphics and resistant materials technology) and business studies, which also represents good achievement for the range of abilities in these groups. Standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory in food studies and French. In both these subjects pupils are not covering sufficient ground in GCSE courses, because of weaknesses in teaching, to achieve grades to match their ability.
3. The governors set the school ambitious and challenging targets. These are carefully adjusted from year to year based on the optimum potential of pupils in each year group. In 2003, all the targets were achieved in Year 9. All but one was achieved in Year 11.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good. They are significantly influenced by pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very good, reflecting parents' support and pupils' commitment to the school.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good because they are valued, treated fairly and closely monitored.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good overall, which enables them to learn with confidence.
- The school inculcates very strong spiritual, moral and social principles in its pupils.

Commentary

4. Pupils have very positive views about the school, which are reflected in their regular attendance and active support for it as a whole community. Pupils give to, and gain from, the school. They are keen to learn and the vast majority gives of the best in classwork and other activities. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own progress, which most do. The good overall quality of written work is testimony to the importance attached to its presentation and completion.
5. Staff set clear, fair and consistent expectations of behaviour. They reinforce this by showing that they care about their pupils by, for example, staying behind after school to help them. Pupils respect their teachers and work very co-operatively and attentively in their lessons. Pupils like the house system of merits and points, which rewards good work and effort, and try hard to succeed. It is only on very rare occasions, perhaps with a temporary teacher or when teaching does not meet their needs, that this very good standard of behaviour slips. Pupils with special educational needs are very well behaved. They display very high levels of concentration and interest in the work, listen carefully to their teachers, display confidence in reading aloud, and in taking part in class oral work. Pastoral staff are firm but sensitive in meeting the needs of pupils causing concern for any reason. They agree targets for improvement and closely monitor the results. This consistent level of attention assists in maintaining the high standards of behaviour and effort. It also contributes to the low rate of 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
White – British	778	12 (8 boys 4 girls)
White – Irish	1	
White-any other background	6	
Mixed-White and Black Caribbean	1	
Mixed- White and Asian	1	
Mixed-any other mixed background	1	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	
Asian or Asian British—any other Asian background	1	
Black or Black British- any other Black background	1	
Information not attained	3	
Total	795	12

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

6. Pupils behave very well around the school. They transfer sensibly through the narrow stairways at lesson changeovers and are considerate of those pupils with physical disabilities. There is relatively little bullying at the school. Alleged incidents are dealt with speedily by senior staff. However, pupils feel that there is scope for a more proactive approach to anti-bullying education, perhaps through more surveys or mentoring amongst their peers. Pupils mix easily across age and ethnic groups. They are provided with plenty of opportunities to discuss issues relating to friendships and relationships. This helps them to come to terms with some the tensions experienced in adolescence.
7. Pupils are proud of the school's achievement, not just in its examination results but the way that everyone works together, for example work in support of charities. Discussion with groups of pupils during the inspection reinforced the positive views expressed in the questionnaire completed earlier.
8. Other issues that arose centred around health and social education, in particular, awareness of the misuse of drugs. Pupils felt that their friends at other schools were given more information. Inspectors agree that the school could provide the relevant information at more frequent intervals than at present.
9. Rigorous systems for monitoring attendance quickly alert parents to any concerns, for example, through contact on the first day of unexplained absence. Parents appreciate this care, which has helped to improve attendance to its very good level. Teachers and form tutors check attendance assiduously. The educational welfare officer gives very good support to the school by helping to ascertain the underlying problems for absence and counselling to solve them.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence 2001/2		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.0	School data:	0
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.

10. Pupils' spiritual development is central to the school's purpose and permeates all its work. Daily assemblies, chapel prayers and weekly Masses, together with days of recollection and residential retreats, organised by the school's Chaplaincy team, contribute very strongly to the Catholic ethos of the school. They provide pupils with very good opportunities for reflection and prayer. Across the curriculum, the religious education department plays a major role in the development of pupils' spirituality, with notable contributions from English and history.
11. Moral development is firmly based on Gospel values and pupils clearly learn the difference between right and wrong. Members of staff provide very good role models and there is widespread mutual respect. Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in the life of the parish and to help others less fortunate than themselves. They support many charities at home and abroad through their many fund-raising activities. Social development is promoted very well through the very wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs at lunchtime and after school. Older pupils also devote time to community service, often helping the most vulnerable people, both young and old. Sport and music make a particularly strong contribution to this aspect of pupils' development because pupils work very closely together, in team and groups, with a common purpose.
12. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Both within the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities, including annual visits abroad, pupils have opportunities to appreciate their own cultural traditions and to learn about the diversity of European and non-European cultures and traditions. There is a greater emphasis on understanding the implications of living in a multi-cultural society than at the time of the previous inspection. This is implicit in all the school's work. However, this area could be developed still further because the school is a predominantly a white community. The school has an effective race relations policy.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education, which is underpinned by its mission to provide equally for every pupil to achieve their full potential and become a responsible member of society.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The consistently good quality of teaching in almost all subjects leads to good progression in pupils' learning throughout the school.
- Teaching is very good in English, art and German. Consequently, pupils achieve very well and reach well above average standards in these subjects.
- Teaching and pupils' learning are unsatisfactory in French and food studies. Higher-attaining pupils in particular are not being challenged sufficiently.
- Not enough use is made of ICT in the teaching of mathematics, science, art and music.

- The collection, analysis and use of information gained from assessment procedures are very good. They enable teachers to intervene quickly when underachievement is identified.

Commentary

13. Teachers' professional development in recent years has focused on pupils' learning, with emphasis on the promotion of techniques based on how pupils learn best. Pupils' understanding of the expected outcome of each lesson is at the heart of this. Almost all the lessons observed had very clear aims, which were shared with pupils. They were constantly reiterated at intervals so that pupils knew how well they were progressing. Discussion and activities were pitched at appropriate and challenging levels so that the pace of the work matched pupils' confidence and competence. The exception was in French, where, in some lessons, the most able pupils were not challenged because the work was too easy and did not make sufficient demands on their intellect and maturity. Overall, pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding are giving them the confidence to work independently and experiment with ideas and opinions for themselves. Teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects is infectious and is a contributory factor to the good teaching. The quality of the teaching is significantly enhanced by rigorous monitoring, both within subjects areas and by senior staff. All teachers have regular access to a selection of workbooks from individual pupils. Comparisons are made across subjects and discrepancies highlighted for further action. This ensures that pupils work consistently towards the school's expected standards. Pupils' work is generally well marked, with plenty of helpful advice about how to improve it further.
14. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good overall, and very good within the special needs department. Most teachers take full account of pupils' individual education plans in their lesson planning and adapt their approaches to enable these pupils to acquire new knowledge, to develop their learning skills and to achieve well. This is enhanced by the excellent relationships that exist between teachers and pupils and the very high expectations. Support assistants are very effective in guiding, counselling and giving practical help to enable pupils to derive maximum benefit from lessons.
15. The school has integrated strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills into work in all subjects. Teachers promote these well by encouraging pupils to contribute to discussion, to write grammatically and to consider how mathematics can enhance their work. Information and communication technology skills are increasingly being used in other subjects to reinforce teaching points and to enable pupils to produce refined pieces of course work.
16. The collection and analysis of information relating to pupils' attainment and progress are very good. It enables the leadership team, teachers and governors to determine whether pupils are making sufficient progress during each term and year-on-year and, if not, what action to take. Underachievement is identified at a very early stage. Individual pupils are then supported and monitored until they show themselves capable of taking responsibility for their own work. The system works exceptionally well, as is demonstrated by the difference between the GCSE results in 2003 and the same pupils' predicted results when they were in Year 10.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 98 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (2 %)	27(28 %)	46(47 %)	20(20 %)	3(3 %)	0(0 %)	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.

17. Two outstanding lessons were observed in English (Year 11) and geography (Year 9). In both lessons, teachers' tenacity in constantly thrusting pupils towards higher goals kept the lessons moving at a fast pace. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed in

French was characterised by lack of challenge, work that was not suitably adapted to the needs of pupils in the group and unmarked work over a period of time.

Outstanding practice in a 'master class' English lesson that triggered new insights into a familiar book

Challenging and superbly organised teaching considerably deepened Year 11 pupils' understanding of 'A Kestrel for a Knave' at a spiritual, emotional and intellectual level. A projected image of Billy caressing the kestrel's dead body triggered a powerfully empathetic response from the pupils. The teacher's collation of the pupils' ideas on a flip chart resulted in the pupils securing a wide range of perceptions into Billy's sense of loss, waste and destruction. A shared reading activity of Billy's return to the cinema subtly drew linguistic comparisons between the destruction of Kes and the destruction in Billy's environment. The teacher's searching but encouraging questioning technique, and frequent use of supplementary questions, teased out the pupils' emerging awareness of how destruction permeates the narrative and encapsulates the symbolism in the bird's death. All thirty-two pupils were totally engrossed throughout the lesson, inspired by the subtle sense of inquiry and discovery that had been achieved by the teacher's meticulous attention to the learning process.

The curriculum

Overall, the curricular provision is satisfactory. It meets all the statutory requirements and provides worthwhile opportunities for boys and girls of all abilities, backgrounds and needs. A very good programme of enrichment enhances the taught curriculum and makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning outside lessons. Staffing and resource levels are sufficient to support the curriculum. However, some of the accommodation, particularly in science, is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in most subjects is well planned to ensure progression in pupils' learning as they move through the school. Provision for French and food studies is unsatisfactory, which results in unsatisfactory achievement and below average standards of work.
- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve well.
- The rate of participation in the very wide range of extra-curricular activities is high.
- There is not enough provision for the teaching of ICT skills in Year 9, nor is enough use made of ICT in mathematics, science, art and music.
- There are very few opportunities for vocational education and work-related learning in Years 10 and 11.
- The timing of the teaching of some topics in personal, social and health education does not always meet pupils' needs at the relevant time in their personal development.
- Some of the laboratories are in poor condition. They do not provide a good learning environment for the teaching of modern day science.

Commentary

18. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. Learning is well planned in most subjects so that pupils' knowledge and understanding are carefully built up, step by step. Statutory requirements are met but there are a few weaknesses.
19. In Year 9, a lesson of careers replaces that given to ICT in Years 7-8 so progress in ICT slows and achievement is only satisfactory, whereas it is good in most subjects. All pupils study French as the first modern language in Years 7-9. German is introduced in Years 8 and 9 for those in the highest groups. Provision for French is not good enough because pupils rely too heavily on copying from source materials and do not have enough experience of the spoken word. Only a few pupils continue with both languages at GCSE. Provision for food studies is unsatisfactory because the overall planning does not take account of the need for pupils to build up their skills progressively, based on prior attainment.

20. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 allows for pupils to take up to eleven GCSE subjects, including general studies. Lower-attaining pupils take less so that they can consolidate work in other subjects. Time is also made available for pupils to take up community service. Within the options there is a broad range of subjects but opportunities to study vocational subjects is limited to GCSE applied leisure and tourism. Pupils are satisfied with the range of subjects on offer and the combinations they can choose. However, a small number of older pupils are disenchanted with school because they do not consider the provision relevant to their future. For them, and possibly others, there are not enough opportunities to engage in active and practical work-related activities.
21. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and also for citizenship. Much of the teaching of these aspects, including sex education and awareness of the consequences of the misuse of drugs and alcohol, is covered through other subjects of the curriculum. The input is planned and monitored to ensure that all pupils cover the requisite elements. However, control over the timing of topics within the year groups is not tight enough. Some pupils say they would like to revisit some of the topics, particularly drugs awareness, at different stages in their school life to discuss them in more depth. Inspectors agree that this would be beneficial.
22. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) follow the same curriculum as all other pupils. Whilst they do this very effectively, they should have more opportunities to study specific life skill courses that would prepare them to be more independent when they leave the school. Outside the normal timetable, pupils are offered a range of extra activities to raise their standards of reading and handwriting, a Book Club and a Lunchtime Club to develop their social skills and raise their self-confidence and self-esteem. Overall, provision for SEN pupils is very good because the school's response to their individual needs is sharp, flexible and productive.
23. The school organises a very good range of cultural and sporting events and visits. Most subject departments run clubs, which encourage pupils to develop their talents further in areas of particular interest to them. During the weekend prior to the inspection the school almost wiped the board of awards in a county cross-country running event. The school is highly successful in competitive events in music, sport and public speaking.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for its pupils well. They receive very good support and guidance that emanates from the rigorous monitoring of individual pupils' progress and personal development. Pupils are consulted about school matters through discussion in lessons and form time but, at present, there is no formal channel through which their views can be passed on to the senior management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links between attainment and behaviour are regularly reviewed and pupils given very effective support, with the result that they achieve well.
 - Pupils receive very good personal support, which enables them to become confident learners.
 - Pupils are effectively involved in taking responsibility within the daily working life of the school.
- but*
- Risk assessment with regard to health and safety matters is not systematic or formally documented.
 - Pupils are not sufficiently involved in decisions about school policy and work.

Commentary

24. Parents are very pleased with the individual care and attention given to their children and feel that all are treated fairly and equally. Comprehensive and effective child protection

procedures are in place. Children who are in public care are suitably and sensitively supported. Levels of supervision around the school are good. Inspectors discussed some health and safety issues with the school during the inspection and consider that risk assessment procedures need to be more rigorous.

25. The school's approach to the inclusion of all its pupils is excellent. All pupils with special educational needs, be they learning, emotional or physical needs, are fully integrated and involved in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Within lessons, they are able to take a full part in whole-class oral work, practical and written tasks because they are well supported by special support assistants. This develops their self-confidence and self-esteem to the full.
26. There are some excellent strategies to support pupils. Teachers and pastoral staff regularly stay behind after school to give pupils help to improve or catch up. In Years 7-9, pupils who are underachieving in any subject are identified and action is taken to bring their work back into line. The pastoral team sets and reviews personal targets for those pupils who are underachieving in a number of subjects. Some pupils in Year 8 also receive help from an external mentor, which increases their motivation. In Years 10 and 11, there are daily progress checks on pupils who are underachieving through the 'Log Book system'. This works very well. Nearly all those pupils on this system like it as they have seen how it improved the GCSE results of pupils in Year 11 last year.
27. Induction procedures at the start of Year 7 are good. Prefects help the pupils to settle quickly and find their way around school, which is made easier by the friendly inclusive ethos in the school. The Chaplaincy team provides pupils with excellent personal support and opportunities for discussion about feelings, concerns and events affecting society and the world. The school counsellor also provides very good support by being available for pupils and staff whenever there is a need. The 'Value and Attitudes' programme, run in conjunction with 'Connexions' is giving valuable support to a group of less motivated pupils in Years 10 and 11 in helping to raise their self-esteem. Pupils on this programme have good incentives to meet their negotiated personal targets, so they can qualify for additional work-experience placements or for exciting events such as tall-ship sailing.
28. Pupils willingly accept responsibility as prefects or house captains. They undertake their duties sensitively, gaining the respect of other pupils. The Pupil Sports Council is a newly established body, which has made a promising start in influencing school life. It needs time to embed itself fully before impacting sufficiently on school decisions.
29. The programme for careers guidance is good and competently taught by a specialist teacher. It provides sound, impartial advice as pupils consider the options open to them in the next stage of their education or the world of work. Pupils in Year 11 feel that they are suitably informed about opportunities in further education at 16+ because staff from the colleges visit the school and there are plenty of organised trips to open days.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The home-school partnership is good and effective. Very good parental support is contributing to very good attendance. Most parents give good backing to their children's learning and the school's drive to improve standards. Links with the local community are very good. Those with other schools and colleges are effective and work to the pupils' benefit.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a high regard for the school and give strong support to their children's learning.
- There is an effective partnership between school and home. The school welcomes and responds to parents' views, although does not routinely seek them.

- Communication between school and home is good. The annual written reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory, but could be improved.
- Very good links with the community enrich pupils' learning.
- Good links with other schools and colleges ease pupils' transition at 11+ and 16+.

Commentary

30. Parents are very satisfied with the school. They are particularly pleased with the progress of pupils across the whole range of abilities, the caring Christian ethos, the open and welcoming approach and the range of activities on offer. The Parent's Association is very supportive. For example, last year, in a short space of time parents helped to raise £25000 to make the 'Sports College bid' successful. Parents' support for the school and their children is evident from the high turnout at consultation evenings, prize giving, and the excellent school productions.
31. Effective links with parents are established early on in school life, such as through the 'Learning journey' to tell parents about the curriculum. The links are maintained because parents regularly sign the homework planners to indicate that they are aware of what their children are doing. Parents work with the school and governors on special projects, such as the review of the school uniform. There is very little formal consultation to ascertain parents' views on school policies or general satisfaction with the school's work. The school considers that such information is readily made known through more informal channels. Inspectors found this to be so.
32. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of the targets set for their children in individual education plans. They take a full part in Annual Reviews and are appropriately guided on the help they can give at home to supplement the work of the school. Overall, parents are very satisfied with their children's progress and the level of success they achieve at GCSE.
33. The school enjoys the confidence of all the communities it serves. The questionnaire indicated that some parents would like more information on their children's progress. Inspectors consider that the written annual reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory but agree with parents that they could be improved. Sometimes, comments on progress or the course studied are too short, or the targets set for improvement are vague. Parents are kept well informed about school activities, educational developments and pupils' achievements through the vibrant 'Contact' magazine that is published five times a year.
34. School facilities are used by community sporting groups and for adult education. Pupils benefit from professional sports coaching opportunities, for example in football and tennis. Local businesses and the Education Business Partnership support the school well at Industry Day and through the provision of short placements in work. Several pupils in Years 10 and 11 gain good insight into local affairs and people's needs through active service in the community. Good links are established with primary schools, not only to ease pupils' transition at 11+ through joint projects in curriculum subjects, but, also, to share expertise. For example, teachers take some gymnastics lessons in 6 partner primary schools. The school has developed mutually beneficial links with a nearby special school. Teachers from both schools share in the teaching of design and technology and physical education to severely disabled children. During the week of the inspection pupils from both schools gained satisfaction from working together to develop a wheelchair dance routine for the Christmas show.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is very good. The school is led very effectively by the headteacher and key staff. They manage the organisation very well so that pupils and staff know

exactly what is required of them to meet expectations. Governance is good. These factors, taken together, underpin the school's success in meeting its aims.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership promotes confidence in the school and ensures that the maintenance of good standards remains a priority.
- The school is very well managed on a day-to-day basis, which results in a secure environment where pupils know what is expected of them.
- There is a close partnership between the school, the church and the local community. Parents are appreciative of the caring, Christian ethos.
- There is a good team spirit amongst the staff. Teachers and non-teaching staff work very hard to make every pupil feel valued for their own particular talents.
- The leadership of modern foreign languages and the management of French and food studies are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

35. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff have been successful in bringing about good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have been raised further and the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is better balanced. Adjustments in the allocation of responsibilities within the senior management team have had a particularly significant impact. More rigorous monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning lead to quick intervention where underachievement is identified. The 'Log Book system', which involves pupils producing satisfactory work in every subject each day before they go home, is a good example of this. Analysis of the results of Year 11 pupils who worked with the system last year is proof of its effectiveness in raising standards.
36. There is a quiet calm about the school that inspires confidence and respect. It generates from the style of management and the commitment of the whole staff to putting the school's Christian mission into practice. As a result, pupils' individual talents are recognised and celebrated. The headteacher is innovative; he ensures that raising achievement remains central to the school's work by regularly updating procedures and setting new challenges. Managers of pastoral systems and subjects are held accountable for the results of their work. Governors analyse the self-evaluation returns and expect improvement where they fall short of expectations. The management of English, art, science and special educational needs is very good. Most other subject areas are successfully emulating some of the good practices. In modern foreign languages, however, the management of French is unsatisfactory and practices are inconsistent. They do not reflect the school's guidelines on teaching and the marking of pupils' work. The management of food studies is unsatisfactory because planning lacks clear direction.
37. The school provides very well for pupils of all abilities, need, race and background. The leadership team has responded fully to the issues raised in the previous inspection. The momentum is being sustained through continuing professional development and close co-operation with parents. Analysis of the examination results of minority groups within the school indicates that they achieve at least as well as other pupils, and sometimes better, based on their prior attainment. A mark of the school's additional commitment to the parishes and local community is the vigour with which it pursued its bid to become a Sports College. Concerted effort on the part of everyone concerned produced a groundswell of enthusiasm in anticipation of the new facilities and ventures that are now beginning to come into operation.
38. Governors have developed beneficial links with the school, particularly through the committee structure. This involves governors in in-depth work in specific aspects, which helps to guide and sharpen decisions at full meetings of the governing body. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are proactive in challenging

thinking on contentious issues. Financial control is very good; it is closely linked to strategic planning. The budget is planned prudently, with a reasonable surplus to manage contingencies and secure provision for current pupils. The headteacher and governors are very resourceful in seeking out additional funds.

39. The school has experienced difficulties with recruitment of teachers in some subjects. This has affected test and examination results to a small extent in mathematics and modern foreign languages.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,080,976	Balance from previous year	157,552
Total expenditure	2,044,868	Balance carried forward to the next	193,660
Expenditure per pupil	2,622		

40. Parents have confidence in the school's leadership in the knowledge that their children's education and well-being are of paramount concern. Taking into account the good standards and provision, pupils' achievement and the level of funding per pupil, the school provides very good value for money.

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and are higher than might have been expected given the pupils' prior attainment.
- The teachers' very high expectations and specialist expertise are significant factors in the pupils' very good achievement.
- Very good leadership and management have led to the formation of a strong team of teachers that makes very effective use of all the information available to raise standards further.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development and also motivates them to work hard.
- Not enough use is made of observation of other teachers' lessons to extend and promote the sharing of best practice.

Commentary

41. In recent years, pupils' results in national tests taken in Year 9 have been well above the national average. They were above average in 2003. Pupils achieved very well in relation to their attainment in English on entry to Year 7. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in English at GCSE in 2003 was above average, better than in 2002. Every pupil achieved a grade. This is a significant achievement, since the school enters all its pupils, unlike most schools. Results in English literature were equally good, the proportion gaining A*-C grades being well above the national average. The consistent quality of results over time is underpinned by the thoroughness of work carried out over the year. Standards of work in the current Years 9 and 11 are well above average. Pupils are achieving very well bearing in mind their average, and sometimes below average, attainment on entry. The significant improvement over time is mainly due to the considerable improvement in the quality of pupils' writing.
42. In Year 9, about half the pupils write at above average standards, a higher proportion than when they entered the school. Articulate speakers, they make perceptive comments when discussing texts such as 'Animal Farm'. The proportion reaching average standards has increased through more confident, better-organised and more accurate writing. The minority working at below average standards has made very good progress in improving the clarity of expression and legibility of writing. In Year 11, the quality of course work is good. The proportion of pupils working towards the highest grades of A*/A is well above average. Most write very substantial pieces that are characterised by accuracy and good organisation. Higher-attaining pupils' use of abstract vocabulary is highly effective and persuasive. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of the texts they study. Lower attainers have made very good progress in writing although technical errors often result in work of below average standard.
43. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of very good liaison between all adults involved in their learning. Assessment - and the ensuing support programmes - are very good. English is making a good contribution to the development of the pupils' ICT skills and a satisfactory contribution to their numeracy

skills. The teachers' explicit approach to the themes in the texts they study contributes very well to the pupils' personal development.

44. Teaching is very good and a significant factor in the pupils' very good learning and achievement. The teachers' secure subject knowledge and their very high expectations are evident in the improvements in the pupils' writing standards. Very good relationships and well-planned lessons ensure pupils apply themselves well and are encouraged to strive for higher standards. Lessons usually have good pace and purpose so pupils are busy. Marking is mainly very good but the best practice is not fully embedded in all classes. Assessment procedures are very good. Teachers track progress meticulously and take very effective action to support those not doing as well as they should. Some good target setting procedures are in place but some pupils are not sure about what they should do to meet the criteria of the different grades and levels. Less effective lessons contained weaknesses in the setting and sharing of aims. Occasionally there is not enough open-ended engagement of pupils in discussions.
45. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. They provide an outstanding model of professionalism and highly effective team building. Expectations of staff and pupils are high. The analytical interpretation of examination performances leads to better curriculum planning and teaching. Despite success there is no complacency. Teachers continue to seek better ways of working, such as through the recently introduced 'Writing Initiative at Key Stage 3'. The department is not yet sharing its best practices sufficiently, especially given the current difficulties with recruitment of staff. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. Pupils' literacy skills are above average. They are used well across the whole curriculum. Pupils make fluent spoken contributions during lessons. Most read fluently and extract relevant information efficiently and effectively. The standard of written work is above average, extended writing is well organised into paragraphs. The clarity of some pupils' explanatory writing is not as strong as in other forms of writing.
47. The school is making a good contribution to the development of literacy skills. A notable strength is the support and teaching for pupils who start school with below and well below average standards in English. They make very good progress in reading and writing. For example, teachers make sure that pupils understand the technical words relevant to a subject and use them correctly. Pupils are successfully learning to write in different formats to meet the needs of various subjects, such as in history and geography.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in German because teaching is very good and pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- The provision of opportunities to take part in residential visits to France and Germany contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development.

but

- Leadership of modern languages lacks clear direction.

and in French

- GCSE results and standards are too low and have declined since the previous inspection because the management of the subject and teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.

- Higher-attaining pupils in particular are not doing well enough because the work they do lacks challenge.

French

48. In 2003, GCSE results in French were well below average at grades A*-C and were lower than in 2002. To some extent this reflected the frequent staffing changes in recent years which affected the continuity of learning. Boys and girls do significantly less well in French than in other subjects.
49. Standards of work are below average in Years 9 and 11. Pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge of basic grammar and vocabulary. Speaking skills are weak because pupils do not readily understand familiar questions, responses are hesitant and pronunciation is poor, especially when they read aloud from written prompts. Writing skills are weak because pupils rely heavily on copying from sources and rarely produce work that is really their own. Achievement overall is unsatisfactory, with higher-attaining pupils in particular not achieving well enough.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall, but is variable. Much of the teaching is dull, with unsatisfactory features identified at the previous inspection still remaining. There is a fundamental weakness in planning. This is because the scheme of work, which is course book driven, does not spell out clearly enough exactly what pupils of different abilities should be learning within defined time limits, nor is there any effective monitoring to check for balance in the development of each skill. There is a lack of consistency of approach across the department. Too much teaching is in English and many pupils are not getting the opportunity to hear and speak French regularly in order to develop their listening and oral skills adequately. In a significant proportion of lessons, the level of work is not well matched to pupils' abilities, there is overuse of worksheets and time is not used to best effect, which results in restlessness and pupils not moving forward fast enough. This is particularly so for higher-attaining pupils who are not being suitably challenged because opportunities for them to think things out for themselves and solve problems are lacking. In contrast, a small proportion of teaching is good. This is where newly appointed teachers have fresh ideas and employ good strategies that engage the pupils and provide good opportunities for them to practise and develop each skill. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, learn well and make good progress. The quality of marking is variable. Books are not always marked regularly and there is a lack of supportive comments to help pupils learn from their mistakes.

German

51. Higher-attaining pupils begin German as a second language in Year 8. Standards in Year 9 are above average, which represents very good progress in very limited time. A high proportion of pupils chooses to continue German to GCSE, in preference to French. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of German. Standards in Year 11 are well above average and closely match the 2003 GCSE results in which almost a third of the pupils entered achieved grade A. Achievement is very good.
52. Teaching and learning are very good because planning for progression over time is very good and new learning is clearly explained and thoroughly practised before moving on. Teachers plan lessons that move at a brisk pace, involve pupils fully and give them good opportunities to develop each skill and to work things out for themselves. Pupils respond very well to the teachers' enthusiasm and strive hard to do their best. They are accustomed to hearing German spoken consistently in lessons and to working in the foreign language. This contributes significantly to their confidence in oral work and their very good pronunciation. The provision of opportunities to take part in residential visits to Germany and France contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development.

Leadership and management

53. The leadership of modern languages and management of French are unsatisfactory because there is a lack of clear direction for the subject as a whole and action taken to reverse the sharp downwards trend in results and standards in French since the previous inspection has not been effective. Teaching and learning have not been monitored thoroughly enough because weaknesses identified at the previous inspection remain. The current level of monitoring lacks the requisite rigour and determination needed to drive up standards quickly. While high standards have been maintained in German since the previous inspection, improvement in French remains unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. Consequently, all pupils achieve well from their starting points.
- Standards in mathematics are above average throughout the school.
- Assessment and the monitoring of pupils' work are used effectively to improve standards.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to enrich learning and provide different avenues of approach.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in the development of ideas and exploration of new topics in discussion sessions.

Commentary

54. In recent years, pupils' results in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 have been similar to the national average. In 2003, they were well above average compared with schools with similar prior attainment. This good achievement reflects the school's success in identifying areas of weakness and taking remedial action. At GCSE, results are consistently above the national average in relation to the proportions attaining grades A*-C and grades A*-G. In 2003, the proportion gaining A*/A exceeded the national average.
55. Current standards of work in Years 9 and 11 are above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons. Analysis of their written work indicates that this is sustained as they move through the school. Overall, achievement is good. All pupils study similar topics at levels that are suitably matched to their individual needs. However, not enough use is made of ICT to consolidate work across the range of topics. The most able pupils are appropriately challenged with work that enables them to reach the highest National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. The quality and quantity of the work of lower-attaining pupils is much higher than that usually observed, particularly in Year 11, and is effective in raising their sights, confidence and self-esteem. It is very rare for any pupil not to gain external accreditation in mathematics. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
56. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations of both work and behaviour and they manage pupils very well. Preparation and planning are thorough. They reflect teachers' good subject knowledge and expertise and the positive impact of recent national strategies. Pupils' grasp of mathematical concepts is good; it enables them to apply their skills well in unfamiliar circumstances. The accurate use of correct vocabulary is constantly emphasised and, when given the opportunity, pupils display good levels of articulation. The least effective part of lessons is the discussion. This is because pupils are not sufficiently involved in the question and answer sessions. Consequently, the potential for pupils and teachers to jointly assess learning and develop ideas and explore new topics is not fully realised. Pupils' work is thoroughly marked and assessment is used effectively to monitor progress and set individual targets. Homework is used well to extend the learning in lessons. Relationships reflect the mutual respect between teachers and pupils so that there

is a harmonious and productive atmosphere in lessons. This enables most pupils to sustain interest and concentration levels that result in good levels of learning.

57. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Leadership is energetic and by example. It promotes shared aspirations and successfully provides strategies and support to minimise the impact of some temporary staffing difficulties. The existing team of teachers is effective. Monitoring and evaluation of work in the subject are good but the spin-off from observation of lessons is currently constrained by the time required to deal with temporary staffing. Overall improvement since the previous inspection, including performance in public examinations, is good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. All teachers have been involved in training to aid the introduction of a practical whole-school approach to the use of mathematics across the curriculum. This is proving to be effective. Pupils' competence in mathematics is good. It supports learning in other subjects well.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at the end of Years 9 and 11 are steadily rising because teaching and learning are good.
- Very good assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress contribute to pupils' good achievement overall.
- There is capacity for still further improvement in external tests and examinations, especially in attainment at level 6+ in the National Curriculum at the end of Year 9.
- Not enough use is being made of ICT to enrich scientific studies.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory because of the poor condition of some of the laboratories. However, this is not adversely affecting pupils' standards of attainment.

Commentary

59. Results in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were similar to the national average. They were well above average compared with schools with similar prior attainment on entry. GCSE results of those pupils who took the dual award examination were above average, with a good proportion of A*/A grades. Results in the single award GCSE examination were below average, but accurately reflected the ability range of the pupils. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
60. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards of work are above average throughout the school. This represents good achievement, especially in Years 7-9, in view of the starting point on entry to the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, largely due to the help that they receive from support staff. In Years 7- 9, pupils have a good understanding of the topics they cover. Results in national tests have improved since the previous inspection because more highly focused teaching has successfully encouraged pupils to think for themselves and test out hypotheses before coming to conclusions. By the time they reach Year 11, pupils apply practical skills competently and discuss the impact of science with confidence, such as in relation to ethical issues linked to genetics. Overall, pupils' written work is of a high standard. Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils remain well focused on their written and practical tasks. They handle apparatus with care and co-operate with each other in a mature and sensible manner. Pupils listen attentively and are keen to answer questions.

61. Teaching is good throughout the school so pupils learn well. Lessons are well prepared and contain a variety of activities, which sustain pupils' interest. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and give clear explanations of concepts to help pupils to learn and understand. Mathematical skills are successfully promoted and practised through the use of formulae and the drawing and interpretation of graphs. Good attention is paid to literacy, with particular emphasis on the understanding and use of scientific terminology. Limited use is made of ICT. Homework is set on a regular basis and is used well to reinforce work covered in lessons. Procedures for the recording of attainment and assessment of pupils' progress are very good. Work is carefully marked on a regular basis with helpful comments that inform pupils how to improve.
62. Leadership and management of science are very good. There is a good team ethos and teachers are committed to raising standards even further, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils in Years 7-9. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in externally run competitions such as the Physics Olympiad and the Crest Award Scheme, in which they have achieved measurable success. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall because of the poor condition of two of the laboratories. They do not provide a good learning environment for modern day science. The quality of technical support is good but the time allocation is insufficient to compensate for the extra work generated by the poor accommodation. Improvement since the previous inspection, including the raising of standards in Years 7-9, is very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and pupils' progress in specific ICT lessons in Years 7 and 8 are good.
- There is not enough provision for the consolidation of ICT skills in Year 9. Consequently, although achievement is satisfactory, it could be better.
- Standards in ICT are above average by the time pupils leave the school.
- Good progress is being made in extending the use of ICT across the curriculum. However, not enough use is yet made of ICT in mathematics, science, art and music.

Commentary

63. Standards of work observed in Years 7 and 8 were above average for pupils' age, but, overall, the standard reached by the end of Year 9 is average. This is because pupils do not have separate ICT lessons in Year 9 and there are not enough opportunities in other subjects to develop the full range of skills. As a result, pupils are not augmenting their ICT skills, knowledge and understanding to the degree that matches their growing maturity. Overall, achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because most tasks can be completed at pupils' own rate. Good individual help is given when pupils are working at computers, which ensures all groups progress equally well.
64. The standard of work of the large proportion of pupils who study ICT as part of the Business and Communication Systems GCSE in Years 10 and 11 is above average. This matches the GCSE results of its predecessor GCSE course in 2003. The standard of work of the relatively small minority of pupils who receive their ICT through carefully organised provision in other subjects is average. Overall standards at the end of Year 11 are above average. Pupils achieve well. Most pupils have further developed their skills in the use of spreadsheets, desktop publishing and databases since the end of Year 9 and have made progress in constructing and evaluating web pages. Older pupils demonstrate their competence by producing and maintaining the school web-site which gained a Golden Web Award.

65. Teaching and learning in ICT lessons are good. Teachers plan the work very well and prepare an excellent range of materials and teaching aids. They employ a variety of strategies in well-structured lessons. For example, in judging the quality of a selection of web pages, pupils shared their opinions in groups before analysing the set ups and suggesting improvements. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and the technology that underpins it. They use this extensively in their teaching, for example, in well-produced PowerPoint presentations. Relationships and pupils' behaviour in ICT lessons are very good.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Very good monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is followed by careful evaluation of success and good improvement plans. The subject is well organised, including opportunities for pupils to use computers at lunchtime and after school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Many subjects make good use of ICT and contribute to the development of pupils' skills but its use is not as well integrated into planning in mathematics, science, art and music. This is mainly because teachers do not make enough use of the equipment in the computer suites. Overall, there has been good improvement in ICT since the previous inspection. There are more specific ICT lessons in Years 7 and 8 and there is additional teaching of ICT through other subjects, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

HUMANITIES

In this curriculum area the focus was on geography and history, but a lesson of humanities was also observed. In Years 10 and 11, GCSE humanities is offered as an option subject and it is becoming increasingly popular. In 2003, the results were above average at A*-G but well below average at A*-C. They accurately reflected the range of abilities in the group, pupils obtaining similar grades to those in their other subjects. In the lesson observed, standards were above average. Pupils were making rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding of the importance of employment/work in modern society because teaching and learning were very good.

Religious education was inspected separately by the diocese.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching throughout the school promotes good learning and helps pupils to achieve well.
- The variety of teaching methods and resources is well matched to pupils' individual needs. This enables pupils to engage fully in lessons.
- Pupils' work is effectively assessed so pupils know what to do to improve further.

but

- Fieldwork and map-work skills are not developed sufficiently in Year 9.

Commentary

68. GCSE results in 2003 were similar to the national average at grades A*-G but were well below it at grades A*-C. These results indicate good achievement for both boys and girls considering their starting point in Year 10.
69. Current standards in Years 9 and 11 are average. They represent good achievement in relation to pupils' below average attainment in geography when they enter the school. In Year

9, higher-attaining pupils reach above average standards because they successfully explore information, plot and analyse statistics and explain patterns. However, they do not always increase the depth of their understanding by transferring knowledge, for example, by linking economic development to population growth and employment structure. The work of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is less detailed. They can identify and describe geographical features in photographs and diagrams but do not explain them. Fieldwork and map-work skills are developed well in Years 7 and 8. They are not consolidated enough in Year 9 because the broad curriculum limits the depth to which each topic is studied. However, in Years 10 and 11, pupils make up for this and use these skills successfully. Many pupils use computers effectively to present their work. Higher-attaining pupils produce detailed reports of high quality. Those of lower-attaining pupils are average because they are less detailed, particularly in the analysis of findings.

70. Overall, good teaching throughout the school promotes good learning. The best teaching uses a variety of methods and resources that are well matched to pupils' needs and challenge them to think for themselves. Pupils' learning moves forward at a rapid pace in such lessons. Homework is used well to extend classwork and encourage independent study. Pupils' very good attitudes, especially in research and group work, also contribute to the good learning. Improvement in the quality of pupils' writing, over time, is an indication of the emphasis placed on the development of pupils' literacy skills within the context of geography. Where lessons were satisfactory rather than good, teachers' explanations were too long and learning was limited by the lack of opportunity for pupils to work collaboratively and share ideas.
71. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Pupils' work and progress are effectively assessed and the quality of teaching and learning is ensured through the monitoring of lessons. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Teaching and learning have improved. The time allocation in Year 9 is significantly less than that usually found, which restricts the depth of what is taught with a consequent impact on standards.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average throughout the school and pupils achieve well.
- Information from assessment is used effectively to modify planning and keep pupils focused on their targets.
- Not enough attention is given to the promotion of accuracy in written work or to the assessment of 'on-going' work in lessons.

Commentary

72. Standards of work in Years 9 and 11 are above average. Overall, pupils achieve well throughout the school. The quality of work seen during the inspection reflects the standards attained in GCSE examinations in recent years. In 2003, a high proportion of pupils gained A*/A grades. Regular assessment of pupils' work shows that the school is adding good value to their attainment on entry.
73. Pupils' knowledge of key features of the past and their ability to understand change over time are good. They benefit from structured guidance on the interpretation of source materials and statistics. There is a good emphasis on developing longer pieces of writing and the use of ICT is encouraged effectively. This particularly benefits pupils with special educational needs because it helps them to use their limited literacy skills to sequence events accurately and extract information.

74. Teaching and learning are good overall across all year groups. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods and set varied tasks that challenge pupils and enable them to make good progress. Teachers set high standards for the presentation of work, to which pupils respond well. There is a calm, purposeful learning environment in most lessons. Pupils enjoy their work and contribute well to class discussions. They progressively enlarge the base of their knowledge in history and draw on it well to support their arguments. The response of boys in Year 11 was particularly impressive. Pupils are polite and considerate when working in groups; they willingly listen to each other and share opinions before coming to conclusions.
75. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a strong commitment to the maintenance and further raising of standards. Analysis of data from examinations is very good and it is used effectively to modify planning for lessons. Marking is good overall but not enough attention is given to the promotion of accuracy in written work and to the immediate assessment of work being done in lessons.
76. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Resources have improved and ICT is more securely embedded in the schemes of work and in teaching. Assessment in Years 7-9 is now linked to National Curriculum levels, which enables teachers to track attainment and pupils to see the progression in their work.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

In graphics and resistant materials technology

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, they achieve well.
- Pupils are taught good techniques through demonstration but there is not enough emphasis on exploring materials and concepts through pupils' own practical work.
- Drawing, and the development of pupils' ideas and presentational skills, whilst satisfactory, could be improved further.

In food studies

- Standards are below average because the course is not designed to develop pupils' skills progressively towards the requirements at GCSE.

In design and technology as a whole

- The lack of technical support impedes progress because teachers have to spend a disproportionate amount of their time preparing resources for lessons.

Commentary

77. Pupils' GCSE results in 2003 were above average in resistant materials technology and graphics. The results in food studies were better than in 2002, but still well below average. Currently, standards of work in graphics and resistant materials technology are average, representing good achievement from a below average starting point in Year 7. Achievement in these two areas of design and technology is underpinned by pupils' positive attitudes towards learning. They work well together in a disciplined environment. Practical work develops well because pupils effectively put the good 'design and make' skills they learn into practice. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve similarly in design and technology. Standards in food studies in Year 9 are below average; previously acquired 'design and make' skills are not developed. Pupils have very little prior knowledge or understanding of the subject and very few basic skills. Standards in food studies are below average in Year 11 and achievement is unsatisfactory because pupils do not gain the knowledge and use of skills to achieve the higher grades at GCSE. This is mainly due to pupils' inadequate previous experience in the subject and poor practical skills. For

example, pupils make too much use of ready-prepared pastries, sauces and other elements of food without experimenting for themselves with basic ingredients. The school is aware that the food studies aspect of design and technology requires a complete overhaul and redirection.

78. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in the food studies element because pupils' knowledge and skills are not built up progressively. In the other aspects (graphics and resistant materials technology), teachers organise a good range of well-planned activities. They show good subject knowledge when demonstrating techniques, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Good teaching and learning are features of the graphics GCSE course, where pupils with little previous experience achieve well. In resistant materials technology, metal is not being used sufficiently as a main constructional material, which is a requirement of the GCSE specification. Projects in resistant materials tend to be more academic than exploratory with not enough emphasis on using modern materials and approaches. The school does not provide a separate area for drawing and designing. This puts pupils at a disadvantage because they need a clean, stimulating environment in which to develop their drawing, ideas and presentational skills. A further difficulty is the lack of technical support for resistant materials and food studies. This results in some facilities, such as heat treatments, not being used to a great extent and teachers having to spend a disproportionate amount of time preparing resources.
79. The quality of leadership and management of design and technology is satisfactory overall. It is good in graphics and resistant material technology but is unsatisfactory in food studies. In the former aspects, strong support is provided for the effective team of teachers. The quality of teaching is monitored well through classroom observation and assessment of pupils' work. This, together with effective analysis of examination results, enables suitable targets to be identified to raise standards further. In food studies, courses lack the direction and vision for pupils to achieve the standards expected for their age. In general, teachers have good regard for health and safety in working practices but a few elements of risk, such as the omission of signs, were pointed out to the school during the inspection.
80. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory because the inadequacies noted in food studies at that time have not yet been fully resolved.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

81. Drama is an integral part of the curriculum. Pupils' results at GCSE in 2003 were broadly average, an improvement on the previous year. Standards in Year 11 are average with particular strengths in the pupils' performance skills. Pupils are less self-assured when they evaluate the quality of their own and others' performance. Two lessons were observed and work was sampled from other sources. These indicate that teaching is good. It enthuses the pupils, who confirm how much they enjoy the subject. Lessons have good pace and pupils work hard. Good use is made of equipment and resources to lift performance, but some activities are constrained because the working area for drama is too small. Despite the strengths in teaching, aims are not always clear and there is not enough review of progress towards them. The schemes of work deal well with personal and social issues and so make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
82. The GCSE course is popular. Pupils starting it in Year 10 are better prepared than previously because the curriculum in Years 7-9 has improved. The subject's contribution to extra-curricular activities is very good. It provides pupils with many opportunities to take responsibility. There are large-scale musical productions, reputedly of a high standard.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning result in well above average standards of work throughout the school.
- Pupils work in a stimulating environment that encourages and supports the development of their particular talents.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and willingness to work independently are contributory factors to their very good achievement.
- The extensive range of activities provides well for pupils of all abilities and interests.

but

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT to experiment with changing images in art and design.

Commentary

83. GCSE results at grades A*-C were well above the national average in 2002, and broadly average in 2003. The results were a fair reflection of the range of pupils' abilities in art and design in each group. All pupils who were entered for the examination gained a grade in the range of A*-G.
84. Currently, standards in art and design are well above average in Years 9 and 11. Pupils' very good response to stimulating teaching underpins the very good achievement throughout the school. This includes that of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils grow in confidence as they experiment with new techniques and media. They gain particular satisfaction from developing their own individual styles and having them recognised by teachers for their unique qualities. By Year 11, pupils are moving successfully towards the higher examination grades and are producing good quality work in two and three dimensions.
85. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have high expectations and have created a stimulating learning environment where individuality is encouraged. Pupils respond to the very good teaching in a positive way and respect each other's work, often offering constructive criticism. From Year 7, pupils experiment with line and colour in dramatic ways, often in three-dimensional sculptures and models. They develop very good drawing skills. By Years 10 and 11, pupils' work is lively and dramatic, full of controlled use of colour and texture. Achievement is accelerated because many pupils take advantage of the extra-curricular teaching time made available to all groups of pupils. However, not enough use is made of ICT because there is a shortage of resources, in particular of software to allow the manipulation of images and photographs. A strength of the department is the vast range of activities that pupils are guided towards as their individual talents and interests emerge. This is reflected in the quality of the images and sculpture that are displayed about the school. Very often, the whole class can be engaged in totally independent projects in Years 10 and 11, with pupils learning from each other as the work proceeds. Pupils' work in the art department contributes well to their cultural development. It could be extended further through more visits to local galleries.
86. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. They provide clear direction and create a good team spirit that results in pupils benefiting from the combined knowledge and expertise of all teachers. There has been good improvement in art and design since the previous inspection.

Music

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning, with an emphasis on the development of literacy and number skills, ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- High standards of care lead to an approach that enables pupils of all abilities to gain enjoyment from making music.
- Exceptionally strong extra-curricular work provides opportunities for pupils to experience very high standards of choral performance.

but

- Not enough use is made of computers for pupils in Years 7 - 9 to gain the necessary ICT skills in music.
- The accommodation is restricted, particularly in the very small room used for instrumental lessons. There is also a shortage of storage space.

Commentary

87. In 2003, GCSE results were well above average. All candidates, albeit small numbers, gained grades A*- C, a very high proportion being at grade B and above. Twenty-seven pupils passed instrumental grade examinations, almost half gaining distinctions. There are no significant differences in attainment between different groups of pupils.
88. Standards of work in music in Year 9 are above average. Pupils achieve well taking into account their average musical skills on entry. Pupils with special educational needs achieve equally well. They gain enjoyment from music lessons because the tasks set for them are skilfully integrated into all the activities. There are too few opportunities for pupils in Years 7-9 to develop computer skills in music. However, by the end of Year 9, all pupils can use electronic keyboards competently for performance and composition. At this stage, listening and appraising skills are above average; pupils develop a broad musical vocabulary. By Year 11, compositions display imaginative use of texture and pupils satisfactorily develop the computer skills required in music. Overall, standards are above average and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Pupils' musical and general literacy skills are promoted well. Pupils are articulate and there is a good focus on the accuracy of writing. These have a positive effect on pupils' attainment.
89. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Very imaginative, knowledgeable, and committed teaching leads to good progress, as in a Year 8 lesson where pupils enjoyed writing songs based on the Argentinean tango. A good range of tasks and brisk pace help to consolidate pupils' learning and maintain interest in lessons. High levels of care, with all pupils included in activities, are apparent. For example, in one lesson, pupils with special educational needs achieved well because worksheets were colour coded to aid progression. Thorough preparation, vibrant delivery, and very good organisation characterise the teaching. Some constraints are placed on teaching by the lack of space, for instance, when time in lessons is lost in setting up keyboards and then putting them away.
90. Teaching successfully builds on pupils' prior attainment as they progress to GCSE work in Years 10 and 11. Planning is effective in ensuring similar progress in all the relevant aspects of learning. Most importantly, and of significance to current levels of achievement, teachers are committed to sustaining high standards.
91. The provision for instrumental teaching is good. The visiting teachers make a strong contribution to the curriculum. Their work is meticulously managed and fully integrated into the work of the department. Pupils' achievement in instrumental grade examinations is high because teachers set high targets for individual pupils and encourage them to succeed.

Success in these examinations is reported alongside other results. This is a model of good practice that recognises the importance the school attaches to pupils' all-round development.

92. Leadership and management are very good. Action in response to the firm emphasis on literacy, numeracy and citizenship in department documents and lesson plans is clearly evident in practice. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Two of the issues, concerning the use of computers and restricted accommodation, remain partially unresolved.
93. Extra-curricular activity is very strong and is integral to school life. The Festival Choir has taken part in many competitions with excellent results and winning many trophies. Such opportunities have a strong impact on pupils' musical, cultural and social development. They contribute to the strong ethos of the school in providing for pupils and staff to work together with a common purpose.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching, and hence learning, is good. It is a significant factor in pupils' good achievement and the above average standards in Year 11.
- Pupils' attitudes are consistently very good.
- The collection, recording and use of information from assessment procedures are good and consequently pupils know what to do to improve.
- The department is very well led and managed. It has been very active in support of the Sports College bid.
- There are weaknesses in the accommodation, especially in the changing facilities.

Commentary

94. Standards of work in Year 9 are average and above, in line with the teacher assessments for 2003. Levels of personal physical fitness are average. In Year 11, standards across the whole year group are above average. Over half the year group study the subject at GCSE. Here too, standards are above average. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. The most recent GCSE results are above the national average at grades A*-C.
95. The standards reached in Year 9 represent good achievement from a below average starting point in Year 7. Standards rise quickly in Years 7-9 because all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Older pupils also achieve well, as confirmed by their results in public examinations. Pupils' work and performance in GCSE groups in Year 11 closely match their predicted grades.
96. This degree of improvement over 3, and then 5, years is the result of two key factors - consistently good standards of teaching and learning and a very positive approach from most pupils. Teaching is almost always at least good and in many lessons there are very good features. All teachers know the subject well, which enables them to set tasks designed to challenge for improvement. This ensures that pupils know what to do in order to improve; almost all then work eagerly, with energy and enjoyment. The pupils listen well and value the encouraging style of teaching employed by teachers. All activities are planned with opportunities for assessment. The records provide sufficient and detailed information on which to plan and/or modify future learning programmes. There is scope in many activities to extend pupils' evaluation of their own and their partner's work because, where this does happen, pupils respond well to the immediate, positive feedback that fuels the quest for further improvement.

97. The subject is very well managed by a committed and capable leader. The planning, preparation and success of the bid for "Sports College status" is testimony to the vision and leadership. There are exciting opportunities for all pupils to experience success in the subject, for example, through the wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular sports and games. This is very popular and there is a high level of participation. Many of the staff give generously of their time after school and at weekends to support the activities, which provide a platform from which higher-attaining individuals and teams can reach even higher standards.
98. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Teaching is stronger and the imminent upgrade in specialist accommodation will soon open up more opportunities for pupils and the local community. Current strengths, combined together with the impetus of the newly awarded Sports College status, place the school in a strong position to move forward and raise standards further.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

In this curriculum area the focus was on business and communication systems, but a lesson of applied leisure and tourism was also sampled. This new vocational subject has recently been introduced into the options in Year 10 and leads to two GCSEs. At this early stage of the course standards are average. In the lesson seen, good teaching enabled pupils to successfully prepare Power-Point presentations on various tourist attractions.

Business education

Provision for business education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good. It leads to good achievement overall and to pupils' enjoyment of the subject.
- The subject is well managed and organised. It makes a good contribution to the curricular provision in Years 10 and 11, especially for those pupils who have an interest in work-related studies.

Commentary

99. Standards of work in Year 11 are average, although there is variation across the different groups. In one group of higher-attaining pupils the standard of work observed was clearly above average. Pupils' results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 clustered around the C/D grade boundary but a significant minority gained A*/A grades. These results reflect good achievement and added value over the two years considering the range of pupils' abilities in the group.
100. The quality of pupils' work in business studies is a direct consequence of the good teaching, effective management and clear vision in taking the subject forward. Lessons are very well planned, in considerable detail, and the teachers know the subject well. A particular strength is in the teaching of the ICT components on which the courses focus. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to become skilled and confident in using the specialist equipment and technical language relating to communication studies. As a result, pupils are well prepared to apply this knowledge and understanding to tasks relating to the world of business. Most pupils work eagerly and profitably. They enjoy the course and have a clear understanding of the aims of lessons and how successful they are in achieving them.

101. The department is well organised. The specialist accommodation and equipment provided are of good quality and every pupil has access to the necessary resources. The subject was not reported on in the previous inspection but it has clearly moved on. It is now well established and popular, providing many pupils in each year group with the opportunity to gain a worthwhile qualification in a work-related subject area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education, including awareness of drugs and sex education, is taught primarily in religious education lessons, assemblies and form time. It is also taught in several other areas of the curriculum including physical education, science and English. The provision is effective because pupils develop very good attitudes towards their work and mature into well-rounded young adults with a sense of responsibility towards society. However, inspectors agree with pupils that some information, such as that included in programmes about the consequences of the misuse of drugs and alcohol, should be made available at more frequent intervals than at present.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and pupils achieve well at this early stage of teaching citizenship.
- The school has worked hard to develop a programme for citizenship that embraces all subjects and requires a commitment from all staff.

but

- Learning in citizenship in Years 7-9 is sometimes incidental rather than explicit.
- Good assessment procedures have been developed in Years 7-9 but they have yet to be fully implemented.

Commentary

102. Citizenship is not taught as a separate subject. Planning ensures that it is taught throughout the school through integration into the schemes of work in other subjects. Overall, standards are average in Years 9 and 11. They are the result of good, effective teaching. Pupils' achievement in relation to the below average attainment in citizenship on entry to the school is good. Their very good attitudes contribute to learning that involves pupils in soul-searching and the formulation of opinions about matters that affect society as a whole.
103. In Years 7-9, the content of lessons and examples of work do not consistently identify aspects of citizenship. Consequently, learning is sometimes more incidental than explicit. In form time, the sessions are too short to consolidate learning or provoke useful discussion. However, some good resources are in use, for example, when, in Year 9, pupils identified multi-cultural role models as examples of good citizenship.
104. In Years 10 and 11, materials used in religious education clearly identify aspects of citizenship. Pupils discuss sensitive issues and write argumentative essays about controversial moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia. Good teaching in history, focusing on the rights of citizens and the role of government, ensures that pupils understand the meaning of responsibility in the context of being a member of a family, the local community and the state. In science, pupils are provided with good opportunities to consider ethical issues. For example, a lesson on genetics was introduced very effectively with a critical appraisal of how different newspapers treat the same stories. This helped pupils to understand the significance and impact of the media in society. The GCSE humanities course has a strong citizenship content and standards here are above average. Coursework is based on the global economy, prejudice, persecution and the patterns of family life. It enables pupils to consider balanced judgements from the standpoint of their own experience.

105. Pupils have good opportunities to engage in active citizenship through the wide range of extra-curricular activities and community service.
106. Leadership and management of citizenship are good. Citizenship is firmly embedded in planning for each subject. Regular reviews of pupils' work across the curriculum include evaluation of the degree to which the criteria for citizenship are being met. Good practice is identified and shared but these measures have not been in place long enough to ensure complete consistency in the coverage of all aspects of citizenship. The method of assessing pupils' standards in Year 9 is very well planned but outcomes are not yet available.

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

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