

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105579

Headteacher: Mr W A Daron

Lead inspector: Mr J W Ashton

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 December 2003

Inspection number: 258781

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	930
School address:	Firbank Road Newall Green Manchester
Postcode:	M23 2YS
Telephone number:	0161 437 5841
Fax number:	0161 498 2030
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr Alban Greenwood
Date of previous inspection:	10 September 2001

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Paul's is an 11 to 16 Roman Catholic comprehensive school of slightly below average size, with 930 pupils on roll. There are more boys than girls in every year group except Year 11. Much of the school building is badly showing its age but some parts have recently been refurbished. Eight per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, predominantly white Irish heritage. Only one pupil in the school is at an early stage of learning English. Six pupils are in public care. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils who attend the school are disadvantaged overall. Just over one third of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average. Eighteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, the most common of which are dyslexia, moderate learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is part of the Wythenshawe Education Action Zone and benefits also from Excellence in Cities funding.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4492	John Ashton	Lead inspector	
9952	Lillian Brock	Lay inspector	
5910	Peter Fletcher	Team inspector	Mathematics
33049	David Simpson	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
20380	Neville Pinkney	Team inspector	Science
12356	Richard Dickason	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
31129	Jeff Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design
10941	Renee Robinson	Team inspector	Design and technology
3930	Roy Pitcher	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs
30794	Gillian Murray	Team inspector	History Citizenship
4829	Ian Waters	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages
4697	Robin Black	Team inspector	Music
12985	Shirley Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education
15109	Tom Comer	Team inspector	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
 Anglia House  
 Clarendon Court  
 Carrs Road  
 Cheadle  
 SK8 2LA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

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

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Paul's is beginning to turn the corner after a period of decline. The shoots of improvement are emerging. A temporary headteacher stabilised the school last year and the new headteacher and senior team are beginning this term to turn it around. Whilst providing an acceptable education, the school still has **serious weaknesses** in the standards achieved by its pupils, the quality of the education it offers and the effectiveness of its subject managers. Consequently, the school presently provides **unsatisfactory** value for money.

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

- Standards of attainment are too low and achievement is not good enough.
- Teaching and learning, though better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9, are not good enough.
- Attendance rates are well below those found nationally and many pupils are persistently late for school.
- The new senior leadership team has made a good start and this is improving staff morale.
- Subject managers do not take sufficient responsibility for improving the quality of education and raising standards in their departments.
- Extra-curricular provision, pastoral care and the personal, social and health education course are all good.
- Accommodation and learning resources are still unsatisfactory overall, despite the recent refurbishment.

**Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall.** Some of the key issues identified then have been effectively tackled. Leadership of the school is better than it was. Behaviour is now well controlled around the school and in most lessons. Accommodation for science, music, and drama is much improved. Pupils with special educational needs are better provided for, and most teachers have higher expectations of higher-attaining pupils. There is less of a difference between girls' and boys' results than used to be the case. Pupils' academic progress is monitored slightly better than it was. This said, there is room for much more improvement in standards, achievement, teaching, the use of ICT, library provision and in the management of subject areas.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Current academic standards are well below the national average.** Pupils' achievement is **barely satisfactory** overall and is **unsatisfactory** in some subjects. National test and GCSE results in 2003, continuing their decline of recent years, have been consistently **well below average**. Results are much lower than those of similar schools in Year 9 but match those of similar schools in Year 11.

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

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

The attitudes and behaviour of most pupils are **satisfactory**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory** and this has an adverse effect upon standards. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **unsatisfactory**. Teaching and learning are not good enough, therefore, **unsatisfactory** overall. The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory** and extra-curricular and enrichment activities are **good**. The match of accommodation and resources to the needs of the curriculum is **unsatisfactory**. The school provides **good** quality care, welfare, health and safety for pupils and also gives them **satisfactory** advice, support and guidance in order to help them through the different stages of their education. The school's partnership with parents is **satisfactory** and its links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall.** The leadership of the headteacher and of other key staff is now **satisfactory**. Governance is much improved and is now **satisfactory**. Governors now challenge as well as support the school, but they have yet to ensure that pupils' ICT skills are adequate. The effectiveness of management remains **unsatisfactory**, due mainly to weaknesses at subject level.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the leadership of the new headteacher and the teaching their children receive but they are worried about homework, behaviour and bullying and would like more regular information about their children's progress. Pupils like the helpfulness of their teachers, but want them to sort out the poor behaviour of some pupils.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do now:

- Raise attendance levels and eliminate the unpunctuality of pupils.
- Improve test and exam results to at least that of similar schools, particularly at the end of Year 9.
- Improve pupils' achievement by raising the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Ensure better management of subjects, especially that subject managers take more effective responsibility for the quality of education and standards in their subjects.
- Improve the library and study facilities and accommodation for physical education.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that pupils receive their full ICT entitlement and that their ICT skills are adequate in other subjects in the curriculum.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Current academic standards are **well below the national average**. Pupils' achievement is **barely satisfactory** overall and is **unsatisfactory** in some subjects.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- National test results at the end of Year 9 continued in 2003 their decline of recent years, and are well below average.
- GCSE results are well below average and have declined over the past five years whilst results nationally have improved.
- Results are very much lower than those of similar schools in Year 9 but match those of similar schools in Year 11. This reflects the better quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- GCSE results are relatively higher in science and design and technology, reflecting the good teaching in those subjects.
- Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory overall in ICT, geography and modern foreign languages, and in mathematics in Years 7 to 9, reflecting the relatively weaker teaching in those areas.

#### Commentary

1. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are well below the national average in all three of the core subjects English, mathematics and science. They are very low in both English and mathematics and below average in science, compared to schools with similar prior attainment. The trend in overall results across all three core subjects at the end of Year 9 is below the national trend for the five years leading up to 2003. The English results are very varied. In 2001, they actually matched the national average but usually they are well below average. The science results are consistently well below average. The maths results are also consistently well below average, even further below than the science results. Girls outperform boys in English by roughly the amount that they do nationally. Girls and boys perform fairly evenly in maths and science (when averaged over the past three years).

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003 (2002)*

Standards in:	School results 2003 (2002)	National results 2003 (2002)
English	29.0 (30.3)	33.3 (33.0)
Mathematics	30.3 (30.8)	35.3 (34.5)
Science	31.3 (31.3)	33.7 (32.9)

*There were 179 pupils in the year group in 2003. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The trend in GCSE results over the past five years is a downward one, against a rising trend nationally. The results are well below the national average on every national measure. They are average compared to schools which had similar national test results two years previously. Girls have regularly outperformed boys at GCSE in recent years but the gap narrowed slightly in 2003.



### Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003 (2002)

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	30 (23)	52.6 (49.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	76 (79)	88.6 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	87 (87)	96.0 (96.0)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	24.3 (24.9)	34.7 (34.6)

*There were 196 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- Standards observed during the inspection are also below and well below average in most subjects, including in all three of the core subjects English, maths and science. They are further below in Year 9 than in Year 11, reflecting the better teaching in Years 10 and 11. Notable weaknesses include mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and ICT in Years 10 and 11, reflecting areas of relatively weaker teaching.
- Achievement throughout Years 7 to 11 is barely satisfactory overall. In two subjects (science in Years 10 and 11 and history throughout the school) it is good. In four subjects (mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and ICT, modern foreign languages and geography throughout Years 7 to 11, it is unsatisfactory). Weaknesses in teaching and in management are factors in these subjects. Shortage of equipment and unsuitable rooms are two of the reasons in ICT.
- Pupils with special educational needs, who have either in-class or withdrawal support make satisfactory progress, but there are not enough support staff to ensure that the full range of needs are met to an appreciable degree. For example, pupils with special educational needs in modern languages lessons make less progress than others in the class, for there is very little in-class support for these pupils.
- The school's awareness of the needs of gifted and talented pupils is improving. This is helped by some promising new initiatives, such as summer schools and links with the open university, but also by the strong extra-curricular sport programme which offers good opportunities for all pupils to excel, and particularly those talented in sport. Higher-attaining pupils make more progress than other groups do in English, but not enough is yet expected of them in, for example, Years 7 to 9 in science or in geography in any year group.
- Pupils whose home language is other than English make similar progress to other pupils. However, through the after school club established to develop speaking and listening skills, it has been identified that more work needs to be done to meet the needs of pupils who are at more advanced levels in their use of English.

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

The attitudes and behaviour of most pupils are **satisfactory**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance rates are well below those found nationally.
- Many pupils are persistently late for school.
- Behaviour in lessons is mostly satisfactory, sometimes good, but some pupils let their teachers down by behaving inappropriately and trying to disrupt lessons.
- The attitudes of most pupils in lessons are satisfactory, but the attitude of some girls in physical education is poor.

- Pupils' spiritual and social development is good.

## Commentary

8. Attendance remains well below the national average despite the improvement in the procedures to monitor and promote regular attendance. Whilst many parents encourage their children to attend regularly, there are significant numbers of parents who condone the absence of their children. Punctuality to school is unsatisfactory and the school's measures to improve this are only partially successful so far.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.6	School data	3.4
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

9. The behaviour of most pupils in lessons is satisfactory and in some lessons it is good. Occasionally, some pupils let their teachers down by misbehaving and by trying to disrupt lessons. When lessons lack pace and challenge, or when pupils are not actively engaged in the learning, behaviour deteriorates. Behaviour around the school is satisfactory because pupils are supervised well. Parents expressed concerns about bullying in the school but pupils confirm that the school takes any incidents seriously and deals with them firmly.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	837	26	1
White – Irish	12	0	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	1
Black or Black British – African	8	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	20	0	0

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

10. The attitudes of most pupils to school and to their learning are satisfactory. Most parents confirm that their children like school and that they are encouraged to work hard and achieve their best. On occasions, poor attitudes are apparent as for example when some pupils – mainly girls, do not bring their physical education kit to school and participate in lessons in school uniform. The number of exclusions from school has reduced significantly during the previous school year and during the current term. Pupils are only excluded as a last resort and after all other support systems have been exhausted. There are good relationships in school, which are promoted well by form tutors, year heads and other adults.
11. Those pupils with special educational needs who benefit from small group tuition show positive attitudes to learning, school and each other. Where this is not provided they can become challenging. The school has developed an 'Access Zone' which is for a small group of pupils for approximately six days over a two-week period. Their progress is then tracked when they re-enter the mainstream classes. This system is working well so far.
12. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Although provision is not co-ordinated or systematically planned, some good promotion of this aspect of educational issues was seen in lessons, especially in English. Spiritual development is good, as befits a Catholic school. The consideration of attitudes to evil are well dealt with, for example, in *Macbeth* and by visits to First World War battlefields. Assemblies are clearly a special time of day and, on other occasions too, pupils are given time to reflect. Social development is good. Pupils work well in groups and they behave responsibly on extra-curricular visits. Moral development is satisfactory. Pupils are taught right from wrong, how to respond to bullies and to the school rules. In science, pupils consider the effects of illegal logging in Peru. In physical education they learn to play by the rules. Cultural development is satisfactory. It includes a study of the history of Black Peoples and multi-cultural poetry but local culture was not reflected in lessons seen.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **unsatisfactory**. Teaching and learning are not good enough, therefore, **unsatisfactory** overall. The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory** and extra-curricular and enrichment activities are **good**. The match of accommodation and resources to the needs of the curriculum is **unsatisfactory**. The school provides **good** quality care, welfare, health and safety for pupils and also gives them **satisfactory** advice, support and guidance in order to help them through the different stages of their education. The school's partnership with parents is **satisfactory** and its links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** in Years 10 and 11 but **not good enough** in Years 7 to 9, therefore **unsatisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching overall is not good enough to raise standards as high as they need to be raised, although there are strengths in science, history and music.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory overall in one lesson in every eleven.
- Learning is weak in some subjects, particularly in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and ICT in Years 10 and 11.
- The more successful lessons are the better planned, well managed and pacy ones with clear beginnings, middles and endings, in which pupils are both challenged and involved.

- The less successful lessons are those that are too slow, poorly planned, and with low teacher expectations; where the tasks are too dull or where the teaching is not skilled enough to prevent unruly behaviour.
- The assessment of pupils' work in order to improve achievement is satisfactory overall; good in modern foreign languages, science and music, but unsatisfactory in mathematics, citizenship and physical education, and poor in ICT.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 128 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	8 (6%)	51 (40%)	57 (45%)	12 (9%)	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.*

- Teaching and learning are good overall in science in Years 10 and 11, music in Years 7 to 9 and in history throughout the school. They are unsatisfactory in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and ICT in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in other subjects throughout the school.
- At the previous inspection, teaching was judged satisfactory, although with fewer good lessons than typically seen in an inspection. The subsequent monitoring report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate, a year later, referred to a significant gap between the quality of teaching and the quality of learning. Such a gap was less apparent this time, but the learning problem is still there and still in need of attention, and teaching and learning overall are not good enough to raise standards as much as they need to be raised. Uncooperative pupil behaviour is the main reason for learning in some lessons being less good than the teaching. Those teachers who are less skilled in behaviour management are not always able to achieve satisfactory climates for effective learning.
- There has been a large turnover but also a reduction in the number of teachers in the last two years. Fewer pupils has meant fewer teachers, but unlike at the last inspection, the present teachers are all qualified and almost all are permanent. Teaching is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. The pupils in Years 10 and 11 are more mature and more focused on their forthcoming examinations than the younger pupils. Consequently their behaviour is in most cases easier to control than that of the younger pupils. In just over half the lessons in Years 10 and 11 teaching is at least good, against only four lessons in ten in Years 7 to 9.
- The more successful teaching:**
  - demonstrates, as in the better English lessons: careful planning, recognition and celebration of pupil work, pace, challenging tasks and high expectations. The subsequent learning shows independence, co-operative group work and a readiness to value and attend to the contributions of one another;
  - tells pupils, as in modern foreign languages, the point of the lesson, so that they can focus on what they have to learn, and teachers challenge pupils consistently well in class with the foreign language;
  - usually includes a brisk and challenging opening session, plus an effective recapitulation section near the end, as in the better mathematics lessons;
  - has good 'starting' activities, as in music, but also good use of questions and answers which involves the pupils, raises their enthusiasm and immediately challenges them to think;

- is energetic, as in history, with clear and precise explanations and instructions and well managed classes so that learning is very rarely interrupted. History teachers are adept at involving all pupils, for instance, by the effective questioning at the beginning of lessons, which consolidates previous learning.
17. **The weaker teaching** seen in other lessons in English, mathematics, art and design, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education suffers from:
- the weak behaviour management skills of some teachers;
  - too slow a pace;
  - unchallenging, inappropriate or uninteresting work;
  - lesson planning lacking sufficient useful detail;
  - insufficient use made of homework to consolidate work begun in class;
  - low expectations of pupils.
18. The result of this weaker teaching is unsatisfactory learning in which productivity is too low, pupils' involvement in their own learning is unsatisfactory and gains in knowledge, skills or understanding are weak.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Where there is sufficient detailed teaching support, learning accelerates significantly for pupils with special educational needs, but where they do not have this support their learning is less good. Gifted or talented, and higher-attaining pupils in general, are better identified than they were and are taught satisfactorily in most subjects. The very few pupils whose English is at an early stage of development are also taught and supported satisfactorily.
20. The assessment of pupils' work in order to inform pupils of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve is satisfactory in most subjects. It is good in modern foreign languages, science and music, unsatisfactory in mathematics, citizenship and physical education, and poor in ICT. The marking of GCSE written work in physical education is unsatisfactory, because not all pupils are given the benefit of it. There is too little guidance on how pupils can improve, and no indication of how they are progressing against targets set.

## The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. It meets pupils' needs in most subjects, fulfils almost all the broad statutory requirements, ensures progression in learning, and provides good opportunities for enrichment. However, the match of accommodation and resources to the needs of the curriculum is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weakness:

- Statutory requirements for ICT are not met in Years 7 - 9 or for cross-curricular ICT in Years 10 and 11.
- The method of grouping pupils in lessons from Year 7 onwards is unsatisfactory.
- There are good opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Accommodation and learning resources are unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

21. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of opportunities to meet the needs, interests and capabilities of pupils of all backgrounds. It meets the broad statutory requirements except for ICT in Years 7 - 9 and for cross-curricular ICT in Years 10 and 11. Fieldwork is restricted in history, and is lacking in geography.

22. The format of the curriculum was changed last year. The timetable was reduced from two weeks of fifty periods to one week of twenty-five periods. The curriculum for modern foreign languages, criticised in the previous report, has been re-organised to make French the main language for Year 7. Pupils in the top groups in Year 8 take Italian and continue with it into Year 9. No pupils follow either language in Year 10 this year. Pupils have been grouped into classes in two half-year bands, based on their prior attainment in the primary school national tests. This limits the flexibility of subject heads to modify the composition of groups in their subjects without having to change a pupil's grouping in their other subjects, a very unsatisfactory situation.
23. The curriculum is satisfactory for most pupils, including those with special educational needs. Some inequality of opportunity occurs in physical education (PE) because there are some PE topics open only to girls and some only to boys. The curricular programme for pupils aged 14 -16 is good. Pupils follow a broad and balanced programme of courses in Years 10 - 11 that lead to GCSE. The curriculum meets specific needs and aspirations with a choice of vocational courses for GNVQ, which include travel and tourism, manufacturing and ICT. The school has looked to create additional options for pupils who are disaffected or at risk of truanting. One group follows the very practical ASDAN course with three training providers. They aim to achieve two awards by the end of Year 11 and follow a core curriculum. A smaller group has work placements through 'Nexus' or 'Route 43'. They follow a limited curriculum at school as well.
24. Effective coverage of sex education and the dangers of misuse of drugs and alcohol takes place within the well structured personal, social and health education (PSHE) course. The tutors who deliver the PSHE course appreciate the time spent with their tutorial groups. The true value of many of these lessons lies in the development of pupils' social skills as much as in their educational content.
25. Staffing is satisfactory overall. The school has sufficient qualified and specialist teachers to meet the needs in curriculum areas but is short of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs in normal lessons. The school has good links with three local universities and provides regular places for students on initial teacher training courses. Three teachers have had appropriate training to act as mentors to these students and a very good guidance document has been produced for them. Newly qualified teachers and those new to the school are provided with a good induction programme. After a year in which teachers hardly attended any outside in-service courses, many teachers have resumed regular course attendance aimed at both their own professional development and the overall benefit of the school.
26. Accommodation and learning resources are unsatisfactory. The library has improved since the last inspection and there is a new stock of fiction books, but the number of books is still too small and much of the non-fiction stock is old and unsuitable. The library does not have enough space for books, computers or for work areas in which pupils can study. There are insufficient ICT rooms, although more are being equipped. The ICT network is unreliable. There are not enough computers, books or other equipment such as cameras or scanners. Subjects, including English, mathematics, design and technology and science, do not have the ICT equipment they need to cover fully the National Curriculum. The exception is music, which is relatively well equipped with ICT. The gymnasias are old and there is no sports hall but the netball courts have been resurfaced. New laboratories, music and drama rooms are very good and design and technology workshops are good. Equipment levels in design and technology and science are good. In other subjects resourcing is satisfactory.
27. Overall, the provision for enrichment and extra-curricular activities is good. There is an interesting programme of activities, which extends and enhances the taught curriculum at lunchtimes, after school and, in the case of sport, on Saturday mornings. Regular

productions promote good participation in drama. Many pupils take part in extra-curricular sport and achieve success. Currently, there are a few opportunities for pupils to go on residential trips. The school provides opportunities for pupils to gain extra help with some of their subjects outside the school day.

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

The school makes **good** provision for pupils' care and welfare. Pupils benefit from a strong pastoral team that provides support and advice to them according to their individual needs.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have a good and trusting relationship with adults in the school.
- Pupils in public care are supported well in school and child protection procedures are good.
- Effective procedures are in place for the smooth transition of Year 7 pupils.
- Careers advice is good and pupils make full use of it.
- Assessment procedures are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure that pupils' progress is accurately tracked.

### **Commentary**

28. Adults in school know the pupils well. Staff are alert to the needs of pupils who may be having difficulties and there is a good range of support systems in school. In discussion with pupils, they confirm that they know who to go to for help if they are experiencing problems. Pupils in public care are supported well by the school. Child protection procedures are good. The designated teacher follows local authority guidelines, keeps her training up to date and shares her expertise with staff.
29. Pupils in Year 7 have settled down well due to the good induction procedures in place and their own enjoyment of life in the "big school". With the support of a Connexions adviser, the school offers good careers advice and guidance from Year 8 on. Pupils are aware of the choices for entry into Years 10 and 11 and about the range of training and employment opportunities when they leave school. The work experience programme for Year 10 pupils gives them a good insight into the world of work.
30. The personal and social, and health education programme, which includes information on personal safety, drugs and sex education, is giving pupils the skills and knowledge to make decisions about their lives in and out of school.
31. The procedures for health and safety and first aid are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only been in post for one term and is currently refining the procedures for conducting risk assessments of the site in line with local authority guidelines.
32. Academic advice and guidance is satisfactory but assessment procedures are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure that pupils' progress is accurately tracked. Pupils with special educational needs, however, do have their progress tracked effectively. Their individual education plans are reviewed two or three times each year and pupils with statements have full reviews annually.

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

The school's partnership with parents is **satisfactory** and its links with other schools and colleges are **good**.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents do not receive sufficient information on the progress of their children.
- Parents' concerns are about behaviour, bullying and homework.
- Links with primary schools are good and the transfer of pupils goes smoothly.
- There is a good partnership with colleges and 16+ providers.

## Commentary

33. Whilst parents feel that the school is now moving forward in a positive way, they still have a number of concerns about the work of the school. The general information that parents receive is satisfactory overall but parents feel they should not have to wait until the end of the academic year to receive a report on their children's progress. The report gives an indication of pupils' effort and achievement in subjects but it does not tell parents what pupils need to do to improve. Parents consider rightly that there is no consistency in the amount of homework which pupils get. They are concerned about pupils' behaviour and bullying but this is judged as satisfactory overall. Pupils say that when bullying occurs, the school deals well with it when pupils and parents report it. There is now a "problem box" for pupils to share their concerns with staff. The newly formed Parents', Teachers' and Friends' Association is improving parental involvement in the work of the school.
34. Links with primary schools are good. Primary pupils visit the school and high school tutors conduct sample lessons in the primary schools. Pupils start a transition project for English and mathematics in two of the primary schools. The school has a good partnership with colleges and post 16 providers. The colleges welcome pupils from the school's alternative curriculum courses as well as providing taster days and presentations from college lecturers. Work experience brings pupils into contact with local employers and this improves their knowledge of the choices available after Year 11.
35. There are satisfactory links with the community and the school sees this as an area for development. There are good sporting links with some local soccer and rugby clubs. Their coaches come into school and pupils visit the home grounds. The Chaplaincy Team based in the school provide a calm, tranquil place for prayer and reflection. Pupils visit theatres, museums and historical sites. Their art work has been on display in a city centre gallery. Some pupils' knowledge of the wider community is deepened through visits abroad, for example, to the trenches of the First World War and through participating in a football tournament in Bologna. There are good links with external health agencies on behalf of pupils.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall.** The leadership of the headteacher and of other key staff is now **satisfactory**. Governance is much improved and is **satisfactory** overall. The effectiveness of management remains **unsatisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new leadership team is beginning to turn the school around; morale is much improved.
- Governors' awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses is much improved, and they now challenge the school more.
- Longstanding weaknesses in the effectiveness of management are yet to be resolved.

## Commentary

36. **Leadership is satisfactory** overall. After a period in the doldrums in the years leading up to the previous inspection, the school's decline was halted by a very experienced headteacher appointed on a temporary contract in 2002-03. A completely new leadership team of experienced headteacher plus two deputy heads, all from outside the school, began in September 2003 and brought a completely new approach to the school's problems. The signs of regeneration are now apparent. Behaviour is well controlled around the school and in the large majority of classrooms. Systems are straightforward and expectations are clear and unambiguous. Pupils know what is expected of them. Staff morale is much improved. Decisions can be relied upon. The strengths of the new senior team complement each other well and its members are all pulling in the same direction. The high profile of the extended senior management team around the school, including at every break and lunchtime, is a key factor in the school's increasingly good order. Refurbishment of parts of the school's accommodation is almost complete. The new headteacher's vision is down-to-earth and his approach to problems such as poor attendance is practical. Parents were told, for instance, in a recent newsletter, that they were expected to "get their children up and get them out to school, and the school would do the rest".
37. **Management remains unsatisfactory**, for there is still much to do. Improving the management of subjects, is now the most urgent task. There are signs that subject department heads are willingly to take more responsibility for the day-to-day management of their areas of responsibility and they should be encouraged to do this. Fewer troublesome pupils are now sent straight to the senior staff without the department trying first to remedy its own problems. Subject managers know that they are the most important quality control agents in their departments. Pupils are underachieving because teaching and learning are not yet good enough but the main attack on that issue has to come from within the departments themselves. Professional development went into hibernation during the last academic year as the school reacted to the inspection's diagnosis of serious weaknesses. The school did not encourage the local education authority to provide as much help and support as it could have given. The behaviour management skills of many of the staff are badly in need of improvement. Lesson planning is at a rudimentary level. An effective and manageable whole-school assessment and monitoring system is at an early stage of development. Support for pupils with special educational needs is now better co-ordinated than it was, but there isn't enough of it within the classrooms. Higher-attaining pupils are being challenged more in most subjects, but there is much to do still with the large bulk of pupils in the middle ranks of average ability. This is partly because the ability setting system is not working as well as it was intended to. The present timetabling arrangements are unsatisfactory and a consequence of this is that departmental teams are denied the flexibility they need to reorganise groupings to meet better the individual needs of particular pupils.
38. **Governance is satisfactory** overall. Governors were partly at fault in allowing the school to decline so far. The present governing body took effective action after the previous inspection in employing, one after the other, two experienced headteachers to turn the school around. With their current awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, governors are now in a much better position to challenge as well as to support the school and have begun to do so. The school is yet to ensure the provision for all pupils of their full ICT entitlement, or that the development of pupils' ICT skills in other subjects of the curriculum is adequate, but the school's new ICT rooms will make that possible at last.
39. Barriers to raising achievement include the poor library facilities and the lack of an effectively networked ICT system in the school. The library facilities have improved slightly since the last inspection. The ICT networking has improved a great deal but at the time of inspecting was still not working fully. Aids to raising achievement include the increasing support from the local education action zone, and from the local educational authority's advisers and consultants.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,601,457
Total expenditure	3,546,628
Expenditure per pupil	3,725

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	274,660
Balance carried forward to the next	54,828

40. There is now sound financial management in place. The audit report issued in February 2003 identified 27 areas for improvement. A recent follow-up audit found that action had been taken to improve controls for most of the areas mentioned and the few outstanding ones are now being dealt with. The use of information technology is proving invaluable in recording and monitoring income and expenditure and the systems work well.

# **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 **satisfactory**.

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

- The leadership of the head of department is good; there is a shared desire to improve the English team.
- Teaching is well paced, tackling challenging material and fostering independent learning.
- Teaching and learning are not monitored effectively enough in order to raise standards.
- The department's contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.
- Standards of middle to lower-attaining pupils, especially boys, are too low.
- The current organisation of pupil grouping and insufficient support teaching time to increase progress and manage behaviour are barriers to improvement.
- Access to ICT is inadequate.

#### **Commentary**

41. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were below average. The proportion of pupils attaining higher grades has improved but a smaller proportion of the year group gained a grade in both English and English Literature. Results in Year 9 are well below average and have declined over the last three years. Girls performed better than boys did overall.

#### **Standards and achievement**

42. Standards are below average in Year 9 and below average in Year 11. Pupils achieve satisfactorily up to Year 9 and satisfactorily up to Year 11 in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Higher-attaining pupils make the greatest progress, whilst middle to lower-attainers progress less satisfactorily. The higher-attainers show good skills in developing ideas orally, attending to the views of others and sustaining writing or analysis with flair. Middle to lower-attaining pupils, especially boys, are less engaged with their learning, more inclined to be inattentive and disruptive which results in slower progress. They also have less well-developed ideas plus a very limited capability to sustain written work.

#### **Teaching and learning**

43. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. At its most effective, teaching demonstrates careful planning, recognition and celebration of pupil work, pace, challenging tasks and high expectations. Consequently learning shows independence, co-operative group work and a readiness to value and attend to the contributions of one another. These features were evident in both high attaining and mixed attainment classes across the years. The role of the teaching assistant is invaluable in both focusing pupils on work and motivating them. Standards in English would benefit greatly from more teaching assistant time. At its least effective, teaching has low expectations, lacks pace and the structures to help pupils to frame and develop their ideas or responses. As a result teaching activity is mainly to manage challenging behaviour, mostly from boys who are disaffected and disengaged in their

education. Many English lessons effectively enable pupils to tackle sensitive issues, address their own values and assumptions and consider situations from the point of view of other people. Lower-attaining pupils are often clustered together and in some cases without teaching assistants or adequate teaching strategies to engage pupils. Marking and assessment is satisfactory. Good features include half-termly assessment tasks with marking which help pupils to improve and encourages pupils in Years 7 to critically evaluate their work. At present these initiatives are only sporadically evident. In Years 7 to 9 the targets set for pupils are not sufficiently ambitious. Marking in Years 10 and 11 is more focused on improving pupil performance at GCSE but in all years too much marking is concerned with correcting drafts. Throughout there is insufficient opportunity to use ICT as a drafting and research tool.

### **Leadership and management**

44. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Leadership is good. Members of the English department have a shared vision and values and the head of department's presence and expectations are evident throughout the department. Management is satisfactory. To improve the consistency of standards in the department, the head of department should monitor teaching and assessment more thoroughly.

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

45. Pupils enter the school with low levels of literacy. Standards in extended writing across subjects are low; pupils achieve below the average in written examinations. English, history and science are using strategies to help pupils to structure their ideas on paper. Although technical terms are displayed in classrooms there is inconsistency in pupils' use and understanding of key words. Spelling is rarely corrected by subject teachers. The school plans training to improve standards in spelling and to monitor rigorously the quality of literacy in all subjects through sampling pupils' work.
46. Pupils need to be encouraged by many subject teachers to speak at greater length and to value the contributions of one another. A significant minority do not listen with sufficient attention to other speakers. However, in drama, pupils demonstrate well the capacity to develop their ideas through group work and performance and appreciate the contributions of others.

### **English as an additional language**

47. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is satisfactory. A register of pupils is kept by the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Since the start of this academic year pupils have been assessed on entry, and resources and support for these pupils has helped their integration. An after-school club has been established to develop speaking and listening skills. Through the club it has been identified that more work needs to be done to meet the needs of pupils who are at more advanced levels in their use of English. Pupils with EAL make similar progress to other pupils. There is satisfactory liaison between the SENCO and the local education authority's multi-lingual service.

### **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in French and Italian in GCSE are very low. Standards have declined since the previous inspection.
- Only those pupils who attend regularly achieve satisfactorily.
- Many pupils lack oral confidence. Teachers' assessment of this in lessons should be more helpful.
- Staffing issues and poor attendance have affected continuity and progress adversely.
- Teachers have a range of innovative strategies to motivate pupils. They use the foreign language well in classes and mark pupils' written classwork and homework effectively.

## **Commentary**

48. Results in the GCSE examinations in French and Italian in 2002 and in 2003 were well below average. Staffing issues over a considerable period have adversely affected the continuity of pupils' progress and performance.

## **Standards and achievement**

49. Standards in French, which is now the main language, are below average in Year 9. Standards are well below average in Year 11 in both French and Italian. Pupils who attend regularly achieve satisfactorily but irregular attendance impedes many pupils' progress and achievement overall is therefore unsatisfactory. No class was observed with all the pupils on roll present. Pupils with special educational needs make less progress than others in the class for there is very little in-class support for these pupils.
50. Pupils' understanding of spoken and written French is satisfactory. Over time, they acquire a sound knowledge of topic vocabulary. Their written work is pertinent to the lesson and is used to consolidate what has been taught. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 know the past tense, but they are not always secure, because accents are omitted in their writing. Two classes begin Italian in Year 8, and rapidly develop their writing, for example, to include giving directions in town. In Year 9, pupils write accurately about their likes and dislikes, or compose short conversations about their town. Emphasis in the work of higher-attaining pupils in French and Italian in Year 11 is on using different tenses accurately. Writing also supports oral tasks well. However, many pupils lack confidence in speaking and their responses are generally short except when they use prompts. Pronunciation is often too anglicised. In a number of lessons, the teachers should assess the oral competence of individual pupils more to help raise standards?

## **Teaching and learning**

51. Teaching and learning in French and Italian are satisfactory overall. Teachers challenge pupils consistently in class with the foreign language: this helps pupils to develop their understanding. They use resources well to introduce or to consolidate vocabulary or constructions. Homework is marked regularly, often with targets and comments. Teachers tell pupils what the objectives are for the lesson, so that they can focus on what they have to learn. They have a range of innovative strategies to motivate pupils. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are satisfactory overall: they are good when the teacher engages their interest, and pupils respond well and learn well. Some lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for individual pupils to develop confidence and competence in speaking. For example, in an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 9, the teacher spent too long on one activity, some pupils lost their concentration and productivity was limited.

## **Leadership and management**

52. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because there is insufficient improvement since the previous inspection. However, there are signs of hope. The department is now stable again after a considerable period of disruption in staffing. Plans for future development are clear, and these objectives are shared by all the teachers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory; monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet improved quality throughout the department.
- Pupils are underachieving in Years 7 - 9.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, particularly in Years 7 - 9; some teachers are not coping well with unsatisfactory pupil behaviour, which is limiting learning.
- Work is not matched sufficiently carefully to pupils' prior attainment.
- The use of ICT is insufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

53. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well below average. Results in the national tests in Year 9 in 2003 are well below average. Results in Year 9 and Year 11 have been a little better each year over recent years.

### **Standards and achievement**

54. Current standards are well below average by Year 9, and are below average in Year 11. Poor attendance adversely affects standards because of the lack of continuity of learning. The performance of those boys who do take the exams is similar to that of girls, and overall boys' performance in the exams is similar to that of girls. Standards of numeracy are below average but improving and some pupils are beginning to discuss how to do calculations. The recall of number facts is generally satisfactory. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is well below average, and standards in Year 7 lessons seen reflected this. Pupils in top sets reach the national average but other pupils are generally working at below or well below the national average. The achievement of all pupils is unsatisfactory overall although satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There is particular under-achievement among middle and higher-attaining pupils when the work set involves too much repetition of work that they can already do. Some extension and support activities are used to improve the match of work to prior attainment but this is not regularly done. All pupils are developing skills and understanding of number and algebra, shape and space, and data handling. They have enough opportunities to use and apply what they have learned in games, problem solving activities and GCSE coursework.

### **Teaching and learning**

55. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. They are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Most pupils behave well and co-operate fully, but a significant minority are not sufficiently interested in their work. Their poor behaviour, which some teachers find difficult to manage, limits the learning for all the class. In many lessons there is effective questioning, use of practical resources and number activities that pupils find motivating, but in others the pace of work is too slow, and teachers' expectations too low to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress. The teachers have made a good start in

implementing ideas from the National Numeracy Strategy, but should improve the range and pace of questioning in oral and mental starter activities and the use of plenary sessions to assess whether lesson objectives have been achieved. Insufficient use is made of ICT, and coverage of this aspect of the National Curriculum is inadequate. Marking of pupils' work is good, conscientiously done with grading and supportive comment, but assessment is unsatisfactory overall as the procedures for tracking pupil progress, setting targets and developing pupils' awareness of how to improve are not effective.

### **Leadership and management**

56. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection has been insufficient. There have been only modest improvements in test and examination results, and these remain too low, particularly in Year 9. Effective action has been taken in producing some helpful documentation, there is a programme of monitoring teaching and learning, and valued in-class support is provided for some low attaining pupils. But there is insufficient use of ICT in mathematics, although computers have now been purchased. Approaches to assessment and tracking progress do not enable the curriculum to build on pupils' prior attainment and the challenge for middle and higher-attaining pupils requires further improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

57. There has been some improvement in numeracy since the previous inspection although standards are still below average. Pupils are beginning to discuss strategies for calculating and the recall of number facts such as multiplication tables is generally satisfactory. The mathematics department is implementing ideas from the National Numeracy Strategy in order to raise standards of numeracy, although these approaches are not yet sufficiently embedded in the work of the department to have a major effect on standards. A whole-school training day focused on developing numeracy across the curriculum but as yet other departments are still not making a significant contribution to it. Pupils handle numerical data in several subjects, such as maps and population data in geography, a project on buying and selling stocks and shares in history, scoring in physical education, spreadsheets in ICT, and a range of calculations in science. Pupils are generally competent in such work although it is not usually very demanding and does not require much additional help from the teachers in those subjects.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are steadily improving, particularly in Year 9.
- Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 but younger pupils are not always provided with a sufficiently stimulating and varied range of activities.
- Leadership is good and management is satisfactory.
- Insufficient use is made of computers in teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

58. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were below the national average but above average in comparison with similar schools and a slight improvement on the 2002 results. Boys performed better than girls. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 the results were well below average but were better than the 2002 results. Boys and girls performed equally well.



## Standards and achievement

59. Standards are below average in Year 9, but slightly better than indicated by the national test results. This reflects the continuing improvement in standards over recent years. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9. They acquire sound skills in carrying out simple investigations and process data well. Graphs of various forms are generally satisfactorily constructed and interpreted. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good, and standards in Year 11 have risen although still below average. Investigative skills are generally satisfactory, and higher-attaining pupils are reaching at least average standards in all their work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.

## Teaching and learning

60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Teachers structure lessons well to meet the needs of most pupils, although younger pupils are not always provided with a sufficiently stimulating and varied range of activities to develop good learning patterns. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is generally good and expectations of pupils are often high, particularly of pupils in the top sets. Teachers know their subject well and use questions effectively to assess learning in lessons. The challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils is not always effectively tackled and this occasionally leads to learning being reduced for all pupils in the class. Pupils studying the new Applied Science GCSE course are responding very well to it, and it is clearly meeting the identified needs of under-achieving girls in particular.

## Leadership and management

61. The department is well led and satisfactorily managed. There is clear vision of what needs to be done to raise standards. Particular teachers are responsible for Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11, and for assessment. The department runs smoothly. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and pupils are well aware of the individual targets set for them. However, monitoring of teaching is still in the early stages of development and there has not been sufficient sharing of good practice to develop the quality of teaching. The implementation of the national strategy for Years 7 to 9 has not yet been fully achieved. The new laboratories offer high quality accommodation and, together with the attractive displays, generate a good ethos for learning. There has been satisfactory improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Increased teaching time has led to an improvement in standards in Years 7 to 9.
- A variety of examination courses provide well for pupils in years 10 and 11; results in the GNVQ examination are above average.
- Lack of books, insufficient ICT equipment and inadequate accommodation limit pupils' achievements.
- The ICT National Curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is not taught fully.
- Unsatisfactory teaching leads to pupils' learning less than they should.
- Pupils' work is rarely marked, little advice about how to improve is provided, and records of marks are incomplete.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because pupils' achievements have not improved enough since the previous inspection.

## **Commentary**

62. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were well below average and they declined in 2003. The 2002 GCSE examination results were well below average and boys did better than girls. The 2003 results in the GNVQ examination were above average.

## **Standards and achievement**

63. Standards are below average in Years 9 and 11. Boys and girls do equally. However, a minority of boys misbehaves and underachieves as a result. Standards are beginning to improve in Years 7 to 9 because teaching time has been increased but higher and lower-attaining pupils underachieve because teachers do not adapt their methods to meet the needs of these pupils. Standards in lessons for the GCSE course are well below average and for the GNVQ course about average.
64. The achievement of pupils is unsatisfactory overall. Sometimes problems with computers slow lessons and pupils do not learn enough. Pupils are unable to use a computer to improve their skills, for example, by searching databases and creating reports. The slow pace of lessons and undemanding nature of teaching limits pupils' achievements. Achievement is better in lessons in which writing tasks are demanding and teachers set deadlines and encourage pupils regularly, particularly in the GNVQ course.

## **Teaching and learning**

65. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 but satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Good planning and relationships motivate pupils who work hard and learn well in GNVQ lessons. When teachers have high expectations and set deadlines pupils learn very well. Sometimes pupils' skills are poor, teaching is undemanding and pupils make slow progress and are uninterested. Pupils are not controlled effectively when behaviour is poor; as a result the learning of other pupils is hindered. Although the marking of examination questions is thorough, other marking is not done and this is unsatisfactory. Except in coursework, pupils have few opportunities to write evaluations or comparisons of their work, which could improve their learning. Records of pupils' work are incomplete and in Years 7 to 9 some have no records at all. These features of teaching are the chief reasons why teaching is unsatisfactory.

## **Leadership and management**

66. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. However, recent appointments are bringing about improvements. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because there are too few ICT rooms for the teaching of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Planning and methods to monitor and improve teaching are unsatisfactory. New courses ensure that all pupils study ICT in Years 10 and 11. There are very few textbooks, no digital cameras or scanners and the computer network is unreliable. Improvement is unsatisfactory because standards and these features of management have not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection.

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

67. The application of ICT in other subjects is unsatisfactory. It is hardly used in most other subjects including English, mathematics and science. Graphics calculators are rarely used in mathematics and data loggers are not used in science. By contrast, in music, very good use is made of computers and keyboards.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

The provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently, and pupils with special educational needs do not have their needs fully met.
- Poor attendance adversely affects pupils' overall achievement.
- The lack of fieldwork limits pupils' achievement.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in the teaching of geography.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

68. Although GCSE examination results have risen marginally over the past three years, they are still well below the national average. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 show pupils to be below average.

#### **Standards and achievement**

69. Standards are below average in Year 9 and well below in Year 11. Achievement is unsatisfactory throughout the school. This is partly due to persistent absence by some pupils and the minimal curriculum time allotted. Girls achieve better than boys and this is evident in the quality of their written work. The highest attaining pupils are underachieving because expectations of them are not high enough. Analytical skills and concepts need to be developed further, for example, through ICT, independent learning and fieldwork. When given the opportunity, pupils show that they can produce good extended writing to explore and explain reasons for geographical phenomena.

#### **Teaching and learning**

70. Teaching and learning are barely satisfactory. Much of the teaching is dull and there is not enough attention to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils with consequent effects on their learning. There is too much teaching targeted at the average attaining pupils to the detriment of upper and lower-attaining pupils. Pupils experience too little practical work and have too few opportunities to develop their problem solving and analytical skills. There is an interactive white board in the department but the teachers' ICT skills are not well enough developed to make good use of it and of the wide range of stimulating resources which are attainable through the effective use of class-based computers. These would help to provide evidence-based case studies which would in turn make the lessons more meaningful and authentic for pupils.

#### **Leadership and management**

71. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The new schemes of work, improved assessments and new textbooks indicate that the department is beginning to make progress but the curriculum is still too text-book based and not practical enough. ICT is hardly used. There is insufficient improvement since the previous inspection.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of good teaching and high expectations, pupils learn well and their achievement is good.
- Teachers manage pupils well and ensure that they are fully involved in lessons.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and give them careful guidance about their work.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in the teaching of history.

### Commentary

72. In 2003, GCSE results were better than those of 2002 but are still well below average. In 2002, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 were close to the national average but are well below average in 2003.

### Standards and achievement

73. Standards seen during the inspection are average in Year 9 and in Year 11 both for boys and girls. Given the well below average attainment of most pupils when they join the school, the average standards reached by Year 11 represent good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the extra help and the appropriate materials provided by teachers. Higher-attaining pupils also make good progress across the year groups. The department is well aware of the link between good literacy skills and achievement in history, which is why an element of reading and writing is included in every lesson. Pupils are learning historical skills well, such as the analysis and use of evidence. Higher-attaining pupils are quick to make connections. For example, Year 10 pupils studying the New Deal understand well the conflict between Federal power and the individual States and explain why critics believed that Roosevelt was undermining the Constitution.

### Teaching and learning

74. Good achievement is the result of good teaching and learning in all year groups. As a result of clear confident teaching, pupils' interest is sustained and their attention held. Teachers are adept at involving all pupils in the lessons, for instance, by the effective questioning at the beginning of lessons which consolidates previous learning. Learning is reinforced at intervals throughout lessons. Teaching is energetic. Extra help is always available for individual pupils. Insufficient use of ICT is made in history teaching, a significant weakness. Good guidance and encouragement gives pupils the confidence to contribute to lessons. Their opinions are welcomed, especially when supported by evidence. Explanations and instructions are precise. Teachers give a clear lead but also ensure that pupils are given opportunities to show what they can do and think for themselves. Classes are very well managed so that learning is very rarely interrupted. Pupils feel secure and respond well to the high expectations of their teachers.

### Leadership and management

75. Leadership is satisfactory but there is room for improvement in the clarity of vision and sense of purpose of the department. Management of the department on the other hand is good. Documentation is meticulous. Portfolios of pupils' work are being built up for the sharing of good practice. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. A stable teaching team has been re-established. Extra revision lessons and a strong concentration on examination techniques are designed to raise GCSE results. The department is committed to raising achievement and ensuring pupils' enjoyment of the subject. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- The main concern is non-completion of GCSE coursework.
- The achievement of both boys and girls is improving, particularly in graphic products and electronics.
- All pupils are included well in lesson activities and their positive attitudes to their work and good behaviour helps learning and achievement.
- Good teamwork by staff leads to a clear direction for the department.
- There is insufficient use of ICT, especially computer-aided design and manufacture.

#### **Commentary**

76. Results for the 2002 GCSE examination were well below average. 2003 results were better, with particularly good improvement in graphic products and electronics. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 indicated that standards were below average.

#### **Standards and achievement**

77. Current standards are below average in Year 9 and below average in Year 11. Pupils achieve satisfactorily up to Year 9 and satisfactorily up to Year 11. By Year 9, both boys and girls are adept in manipulating machine and hand tools to cut, join, mix and modify materials. Higher-attainers' annotation of drawings to explain the detail is good. Pupils with special needs achieve satisfactorily; they are well known to teachers and are integrated well into lessons. On occasions, some boys with behavioural difficulties exhibit challenging behaviour and their achievement is affected by lack of specialist support in lessons. Technical vocabulary is used correctly by the majority of pupils. Mathematical skills are used satisfactorily, for example, to measure accurately. By Year 11, most pupils' coursework shows satisfactory understanding of the design process. The main concern, however, is the non-completion of coursework due to poor attendance. Computers are effectively used for some aspects of pupils' work, but no computer aided design or making takes place; this restricts pupils' learning and achievement.

#### **Teaching and learning**

78. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good and occasionally very good teaching seen throughout the department. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. In the good and very good lessons, teachers' enthusiasm is infectious and their good subject knowledge wins pupils' confidence. Lessons are structured well; a good range of activities captures the interest and involvement of all pupils. In the majority of lessons, challenging work is presented to pupils who respond well and learn quickly. Use of time in most lessons is good. The pace of work in a small number of lessons is slow and this has an adverse affect on pupils' achievement. Assessment is satisfactory although there are some inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9.

#### **Leadership and management**

79. The department is satisfactorily led and managed. Sound organisation and good, enthusiastic teamwork are raising the profile of the subject. There is a clear focus on improving attainment. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection in, for example, improving the quality of teaching and learning.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

Art and design was inspected in depth and drama and media studies were sampled.

### **Drama**

In the two drama lessons observed (Year 7 and Year 11) the teaching and learning was good in the former and satisfactory in the latter. The head of department has raised the profile of the subject in the school and the new drama studio is helping to improve standards. Drama makes a significant contribution to extra-curricular activities, has high expectations for group work and actively promotes pupils' appreciation for one another's work and pupil self-esteem.

### **Media studies**

Media Studies is a good innovation in the curriculum. In the Year 10 lesson observed, pupils made satisfactory progress, demonstrating an understanding of technical terms and detailed knowledge of recent work. The teaching provided helpful structures to enable pupils to produce extended writing.

### **Art and design**

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The department is well led, and management is satisfactory.
- The curriculum and extra-curricular activities offer a good range of activities.
- Standards are rising but they are not yet high enough.
- The teaching of drawing needs further development; sketchbooks are not well enough used for experimentation and investigation.
- Pupils find it difficult to explain or to judge the quality of their work; their knowledge of art and artists is not good enough.
- Their failure to use computers and specialist software is a breach of the National Curriculum.

### **Commentary**

80. GCSE results, while improving, are well below average. Girls clearly outperform boys. Poor attendance prevents one in ten of the pupils completing the course. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 are too generous.

### **Standards and achievement**

81. Standards are below average throughout the school. Pupils join Year 7 with limited experiences of art and design but achievement by Year 9 and Year 11 is satisfactory. The girls' work is better than boys'; it is more thoughtfully researched and presented. Year 7 pupils develop strong and colourful compositions. Their design skills are close to average. Drawing is too often taken from photographs. Few pupils vary line to show space or texture and shading often contradicts rather than accentuates form. Year 9 drawings of groups of natural objects are of average standard. Drawing is another way of making a picture rather than a means of recording particular information. Similarly, sketchbooks contain highly finished work rather than ideas to help refine work. Pupils have a clear view of how their work is going to look and pay little regard to the discovery or development of ideas. They do not use computers to generate artwork. A sunflower constructed from dyed silk effectively captured the light in the way typified by van Gogh's painting. Pupils have insufficient knowledge of famous artists and find it difficult to discuss the artists' or their own work. Their writing describes rather than judges, which is a necessary skill if there is to be improvement.

The poor attendance and unsatisfactory attitudes to learning of a significant minority of boys lowers their achievement. The higher-attaining pupils achieved well enough for almost half of the GCSE passes to be A\* or A grades. Although the lower-attaining pupils do not benefit from classroom support assistants, they make satisfactory progress because their teachers offer sensitive encouragement and guidance.

### **Teaching and learning**

82. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are sometimes good and occasionally very good. Lessons are well planned; they build on previous learning, and begin with a clear explanation of the teacher's expectations, yet the ends of lessons seldom provide any useful assessment of achievement. Teachers promote good relationships and productivity in their pupils, who enjoy art. Year 7 pupils make very good progress, for example, cutting and elongating photocopies of their portraits in the style of Modigliani. In doing this, they are engaged and extended, reflecting their own and their teacher's high expectations. Drawing is not well enough taught to promote independent learning. In the only unsatisfactory lesson seen, the teacher failed to manage the behaviour of a significant minority of boys who interfered with the learning of others. Marking gives GCSE pupils helpful guidance on how they might improve, although surprisingly few know their current performance levels. There are art clubs and good opportunities to work with artists-in-residence. The time allowed for teaching art is considerably less than the national average while the lack of access to computers makes full delivery of the National Curriculum impossible.

### **Leadership and management**

83. Leadership is good. Management is satisfactory. The head of department is ambitious for her department, which has the capacity to improve. Teaching and learning are monitored to a reasonable effect. Assessment and planning require further work. Displayed work around the school adds to the spiritual and cultural ethos. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and provision and achievement are now satisfactory. Standards remain below average but behaviour and the curriculum have improved.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new accommodation and resources provide a very good basis for teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Boys achieve particularly well and better than girls.
- Teachers' assessments show that the overall standards at the end of Year 9 are too low.
- ICT is used well in the department, but some of the keyboard resources are sub-standard and need to be replaced.

### **Commentary**

84. GCSE results are well below average. Although the number of pupils achieving A\*-C passes in 2003 was the same as the previous year the number of pupils choosing to take GCSE music doubled. Over the past two years there have been successes over the whole range and the successes are significantly linked to the instrumental interests and abilities of the pupils. Teacher assessments of standards in music at the end of Year 9 show a marked improvement in 2002 from the previous year when they were particularly low. In 2003, there was a noticeable falling away in standards; the rebuilding of the music department, and the subsequent disruption, was a contributory factor in this decline.

## Standards and achievement

85. Current standards are below average in the work seen in Year 11. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There is a core of pupils who are making satisfactory progress but also a number, mainly instrumentalists, who are working very well indeed, with great confidence and technical assurance, and are making very good progress. There are a very small number of pupils who are in some difficulty, with little keyboard competence and who find composition difficult. Overall standards in Year 9 are below average but examples of average work were seen. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily, but boys are presently achieving particularly well and better than girls.

## Teaching and learning

86. Teaching and learning are good overall, but satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In the lessons seen, teaching was never less than satisfactory and there was much good and very good teaching. Where teaching was good there were good 'starting' activities and imaginative use of question and answer, which involved the pupils, raising their enthusiasm and immediately challenging them to think. Teachers' expectations are high; they show excellent subject knowledge and a strong commitment to the teaching. In much of the activity the teacher becomes an enabler and this is done very effectively, so that pupils develop a more purposeful access to the technological equipment. Pupils' learning was most effective when the lessons were well structured, with frequent refocusing on the activity. The pupils' attitudes are good and rarely is there any negative undercurrent, although in one Year 9 class the behaviour of three pupils had an inhibiting effect upon the success of the lesson.

## Leadership and management

87. Leadership and management are good. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The Head of Department has responded constructively to the previous report and has now put into place an effective system for assessing and recording pupils' progress. Newly acquired software is already being used to enhance knowledge of individual pupil progress. He has led the department well into the very good new accommodation, into which he has contributed much planning. He has also been successful in enthusing the pupils and raising their perception of music in school and hence their willingness to learn and make the effort to progress. The new accommodation makes a welcome contribution to the facilities for instrumental teaching, which attracts a significantly high number of pupils.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education (PE) is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are improving because of good teaching in the practical aspects of the course although written work remains poor and the marking of it is unsatisfactory.
- A strong extra-curricular sport programme offers good opportunities for all pupils, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel.
- The monitoring and development of teaching is not yet effective enough to ensure the best practice.
- A significant number of pupils do not wear appropriate PE kit and this has an adverse effect on performance.
- Pupils are not taught the full curriculum in Years 7 to 9.



## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

88. The 2003 GCSE results were below average but improved since the previous inspection. There was no significant difference between the boys' and girls' results. Teachers' Year 9 assessments show attainment consistently well below average.

### **Standards and achievement**

89. By Year 9, standards are below average but reflect satisfactory achievement considering pupils' standards on joining the school. Boys and girls of all abilities achieve satisfactorily, for example, in table tennis; boys attain average standards in football, and a significant minority achieves above average levels. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated, making satisfactory progress alongside their classmates.
90. By Year 11, standards in the GCSE course are below average overall. In practical aspects, standards are average, representing good achievement. Girls and boys achieve well, for example, in table tennis. Written coursework indicates below average overall, and often well below average standards in theoretical aspects of the GCSE course. Boys' written work tends to be poorly organised, and the 'limited written work', reported in the previous inspection, still prevails. Standards are below average in Year 10 basketball, which was the only lesson observed in the non-GCSE course. Nevertheless, this lesson and other evidence indicated that pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards in extra-curricular sport are above average reflected in the pupils' many achievements in netball, football, athletics and cross-country running.

### **Teaching and learning**

91. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all years. Good relationships create a positive climate for learning, and most pupils have satisfactory, and often good, attitudes to the subject. However, a significant number of pupils, mostly girls, show little awareness of the need for basic hygiene by failing to bring a change of clothes for physical activity. Performing in everyday dress has an adverse effect on attainment and progress, as well as implications for health and safety. Teachers insist on good behaviour and, on occasion, more time than should be necessary has to be spent on encouraging participation and keeping pupils on task, because of the immature attitudes of a significant minority. The best learning takes place when teaching has pace, high expectations and challenge, as seen in girls' and boys' GCSE table tennis. Good planning and clear objectives were well illustrated in a well-paced and challenging gymnastics lesson in which pupils achieved well. However, as found at the time of the previous inspection, planning does not always match tasks to pupils' needs. This led to unsatisfactory learning in one lesson, where a high proportion of pupils made insufficient progress and many of them underachieved. Marking of GCSE written work is unsatisfactory, because not all pupils benefit from it. There is too little guidance on how pupils can improve, and no indication of how they are progressing against targets set.

### **Leadership and management**

92. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Documentation of the department's work, particularly in assessment procedures, has improved. Development planning requires a clearer focus on raising standards overall. The monitoring and development of teaching is in place, but it has not yet had sufficient impact to raise the quality of teaching. Pupils are not taught the full curriculum in Years 7 to 9: girls do not have outdoor and adventurous activities, and boys are not involved in dance. Outdoor accommodation has been improved, but a lack of appropriate indoor accommodation still restricts opportunities for pupils to achieve high standards. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. GCSE results have improved significantly.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

Vocational courses are at a relatively early level of development in the school. Two lessons in each of leisure and tourism and ICT were observed.

The teaching, learning and achievement in the two lessons seen in leisure and tourism were all satisfactory. Good planning and relationships motivated the pupils to work hard and learn well in the ICT lessons.

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

Citizenship was inspected in depth, and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons were thoroughly sampled.

In the eight PSHE lessons seen, teaching, learning and achievement were all satisfactory overall. Some very strong lessons were seen where very good teaching and high expectations resulted in very good learning. Careers education and essential information regarding sex education and the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse are dealt with in a useful and effective way.

### **Citizenship**

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A carefully planned programme is in place for Years 7,8 and 9.
- A deputy headteacher, who has a clear understanding of the nature of citizenship, has taken responsibility for its future development, and is rapidly improving its delivery.
- Opportunities are provided to make citizenship a living, active experience.
- The newly devised programme is well integrated into the PSHE programme in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment procedures, however, are not yet fully developed.

### **Commentary**

93. Since the previous inspection the provision for citizenship has been reorganised. In Years 7,8 and 9 it is taught in separate topics of 8 -10 weeks duration. In Years 10 and 11 it is well integrated into the personal, social and health education programme and is delivered through weekly tutorial periods which replace a different lesson on the timetable each week.

### **Standards and achievement**

94. Teachers' assessments in 2003 of Year 9 show pupils' attainment as below average. The standard of work seen in both key stages is below average and represents satisfactory achievement. Attitudes to the subject are generally positive and pupils see the usefulness of topics studied. Lower-attaining Year 8 pupils have some difficulty in identifying political parties and their leaders. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are increasing their knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of issues and are well aware of their relevance. They learn about personal budgeting, insurance and credit as well as global issues such as the refugee problem, which is firmly linked to local circumstances. Boys and girls make equal progress.

### **Teaching and learning**

95. In Years 7, 8 and 9, teaching is satisfactory which results in satisfactory learning. Sometimes too much information is provided for pupils with special educational needs to manage. Pupils learn well from up to date, well set out textbooks. They are beginning to build up portfolios of

work to be used for their Records of Achievement in Years 10 and 11. In Years 10 and 11, citizenship is an important element in the personal, social and health education course. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some good teaching and learning was also seen. The teaching of citizenship is implicit in other academic subjects. The importance of active citizenship is stressed. For example, Year 10 and 11 pupils learn about negotiation and accept responsibility in running the school council and by arranging formal elections to send representatives to the Manchester Youth Council.

### **Leadership and management**

96. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Teachers are provided with a clear framework and good teaching materials. Since the previous inspection the status of the subject has grown and improvement is satisfactory. The school is playing its part in producing socially and politically aware young people. But the course is not fully established in Years 10 and 11 for there is no statutory assessment as yet.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	5

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	5

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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

