

INSPECTION REPORT

SUNDORNE SCHOOL

Shrewsbury

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123569

Headteacher: Mr M Dunning

Lead inspector: Mr J Ashton

Dates of inspection: 22 – 24 March 2004

Inspection number: 258794

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	516
School address:	Corndon Crescent Shrewsbury Shropshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W Walton
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sundorne School is a much smaller than average 11-16 community comprehensive school, with 516 pupils compared to the national average for secondary schools of 1013 pupils. There are slightly more boys than girls on roll overall, though girls are in the majority in Year 9. Very few pupils are of minority ethnic backgrounds, and only three pupils have a home language other than English. Overall standards of attainment on entry to the school are well below average. An above average one pupil in every four is on the school's special educational needs register. A larger than average proportion of pupils has statements of special educational need, the most common of which are for either severe or moderate learning and emotional and behavioural needs. A broadly average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals, but other indicators point to above average levels of social disadvantage in the area. There are no refugees or traveller children in the school, but it does have a significant number of 'looked after' children. The school aspires to both Sports College and Teacher Training School status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4492	Mr J Ashton	Lead inspector	
9874	Mr M Milwain	Lay inspector	
5910	Mr P Fletcher	Team inspector	Mathematics
10361	Mr F Evans	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
20380	Mr N Pinkney	Team inspector	Science
33169	Mr B Beal	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
32672	Mr S Hammond-Evans	Team inspector	Art and design
10340	Mr J Lockett	Team inspector	Design and technology
32147	Mrs A Wallis	Team inspector	Geography
30794	Mrs G Murray	Team inspector	History
28178	Mr J Connor	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
23499	Mr H Seymour	Team inspector	Music
32157	Mrs P Stringer	Team inspector	Physical education
31008	Mrs P Rourke	Team inspector	Religious education
32229	Mrs M Comer	Team inspector	Citizenship
28882	Mrs B Jones	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Sundorne is an **effective** school. Current academic standards are close to the national average. Test and examination results are well above average compared to similar schools. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and over half of it is good. Pupils' achievements are good because pupils make good progress throughout their time in school. The school is well led and managed and gives **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- Inclusiveness is a major strength. Pupils from different social and academic backgrounds thrive at Sundorne, including some who have not done so elsewhere.
- Overall test and GCSE results match national averages and are well above average compared to those of similar schools. Pupils achieve well by making good progress through the school.
- The school is well led and well governed. The headteacher's vision is clear and principled, the governance supportive and suitably challenging.
- Provision for religious education is unsatisfactory and not enough attention is devoted to citizenship.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Teaching and learning are good overall in art and design, science, design and technology and physical education.
- The challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils disturbs other pupils' learning in some lessons.
- The monitoring of teaching in order to share good practice is not systematic or formal enough.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is underdeveloped in many subjects.

Improvement since the last inspection has been **satisfactory**. For example, standards of attainment are higher than they were in ICT, art and design, geography and science, though not yet in religious education. Attendance has improved but there is room for further improvement. Pupils now receive their basic ICT entitlement, although it has yet to be used sufficiently to raise standards in subjects across the curriculum. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are better than they were. This said, however, the active support of parents is still too limited and the role of middle managers is still in a few cases less strong than it needs to be if the quality of teaching is to rise above satisfactory levels in some subjects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Current academic standards are **close to the national average** overall, just above average in Year 9 and just below average in Year 11. Pupils' achievement in terms of progress compared to their prior attainment is **good** overall. Standards in the school are highest in science and design and technology in Years 10 and 11 and in physical education throughout the school. They are lowest in the humanities (geography, history and religious education), citizenship and ICT. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

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

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

The behaviour of pupils in and around school is **satisfactory** overall, although some pupils severely test the skills of their teachers. Pupils show an interest in school life and have a **good** attitude towards the school. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory** overall but spiritual development is a weakness. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection but is still **unsatisfactory**. Punctuality is **satisfactory**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall but with one great strength – the persistence and tenacity of the teaching. It is good in art and design, science, design and technology and physical education but unsatisfactory in religious education. Assessment of pupils' learning is **good** overall. The curriculum and extra-curricular and enrichment activities are **satisfactory**. The match of accommodation and learning resources to the needs of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. Pupils receive **good** guidance and support. Pastoral arrangements in the school ensure that pupils are **safe and well cared for**. The school has a **satisfactory** relationship with parents. Links with the community are **good**. The **good** partnerships which the school has with other schools and colleges are very beneficial to pupils as they transfer between the stages of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is **good**. It is principled, determined and clearly identifies a vision of good pupil attitudes and achievement that is evident in all of the school's work. Management is **satisfactory** and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The work of the governors is **good**.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the school, on the whole, although some have concerns about pupils' behaviour and that too little information on their children's progress comes home. Pupils like the friendliness and helpfulness of their teachers, physical education teachers in particular. They appreciate the extra-curricular provision, the good working atmosphere in school and teaching that keeps their classes under control.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- the monitoring of teaching in order to share good practice and improve the amount of good and very good teaching;
- the use of ICT in many subjects in order to raise standards further;
- provision for religious education;
- the challenging behaviour of some pupils so that it does not disturb the learning of others;

and to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that pupils experience a daily act of collective worship;
- and that citizenship is given its full place in the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Current academic standards are **close to the national average** overall, just above average in Year 9 and just below average in Year 11.

Pupils` achievement in terms of progress compared to their prior attainment is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The end of Year 9 national test results in 2003 matched the national average for all schools and were well above average for similar schools.
- Overall GCSE results almost matched the national average for all schools in the last two years but have been well above average, compared to similar schools, for the past three years.
- Standards in the school are highest in science and design and technology in Years 10 and 11 and in physical education throughout the school.
- They are lowest in the humanities (geography, history and religious education), citizenship and ICT.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. Results in the National Tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 matched the national average in mathematics, fell just short of average in science, and exceeded the average in English. Overall, across all three subjects, they matched those of pupils in all schools nationally, having moved steadily closer to the average for the past five years. Compared to the results of similar schools, results are well above average in both English and mathematics and below average in science. At this stage, the trend in overall results is above the national trend for the five years leading up to 2003 with boys performing better overall than girls, and better than boys nationally over the past three years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.1 (30.6)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	35.0 (32.9)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	31.9 (31.9)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 96 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. GCSE results overall fell a little short of the national average in 2003, as they also did in 2002. On the other hand, compared to similar schools, GCSE results have been well above average for the past three years. The trend in overall GCSE results matched the national trend over the past five years, dipping from 1999 through to 2001 and then climbing back up again from 2001 through to 2003. The school is presently top of the county league table for 'value added' at GCSE level. Boys` results at this key stage were close to the national average last year, and over the past three years. Girls` results at this key stage were close to the national average last year, but below this over the past three years. In other words, after national differences are allowed for, boys, unusually outperform girls at Sundorne in overall GCSE results.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	46 (41)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (88)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	33.0 (30.9)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 106 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 generally mirror the national test and GCSE results, being presently just below average overall. The relative strengths are in physical education throughout the school, and in science and design and technology in Years 10 and 11. The relative weaknesses are in the humanities (geography, history and religious education), citizenship and ICT. In every subject the quality of teaching is the most significant factor affecting the standards seen.
- The school in 2003 exceeded its targets for GCSE A* to C grades and met its targets for both A* to G grades and average point scores. Pupils' achievement is good, in terms of their results in tests and examinations compared to their prior attainment, particularly in art and design, science, design and technology and physical education. Pupils at Sundorne make faster progress than might be expected from their starting points. Reasons for this include the high expectations of senior leadership that pupils, of whatever academic background, will succeed at Sundorne. The persistence and tenacity of the staff is another significant factor.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory overall in religious education and citizenship. In religious education because of unsatisfactory teaching, and in citizenship because the subject is not yet given sufficient time or taken sufficiently seriously in the curriculum.
- The relative achievement of boys is better than in many schools elsewhere. However, girls' achievement at the highest levels in GCSE in 2003 was much better than that of boys. Girls attained eight of the nine A* grades awarded and 38 of the 47 A grades awarded. The achievement of higher attaining and gifted or talented pupils is satisfactory. The most able pupils attained good standards in most GCSE subjects in 2003. The highest grades, A*A, were awarded in all subjects except resistant materials, French, religious studies, sports studies and GNVQ ICT. The three pupils with a home language other than English are achieving as well as other pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs show good achievement in their work, especially in small group or individual work. Older pupils achieve well on accredited link courses with local colleges, and when undertaking work experience in the community. They grow immensely in self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are given opportunities to experience success in a personal sense as well as academic. The school places a strong emphasis on personal development. Pupils try hard to achieve targets and build strong relationships with staff. Pupils with special educational needs are included very well in class and are fully accepted. Over time, and especially by the end of Year 11, some individual pupil's achievements are often very good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The behaviour of pupils in and around school is **satisfactory** overall, although some pupils severely test the skills of their teachers. Pupils show an interest in school life and have a **good** attitude towards the school. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes are positive towards the school.
- Behaviour, though satisfactory overall, severely tests teachers' management skills on occasion.
- The school works hard to promote regular attendance by pupils – and this has resulted in improvement, although it is still unsatisfactory overall.
- Although pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, their spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

8. Pupils enter fully into the life of the school. They take advantage of the range of extra-curricular activities on offer, especially sport, and participate with enthusiasm. On entry into the school at Year 7 they quickly settle down in their new surroundings. Discussions with pupils from all year groups show that pupils have a positive attitude towards their school. They clearly know what they like about it and what they would want to change.
9. Overall the behaviour of pupils is satisfactory. In some lessons, however, where the teacher does not have a suitable range of control strategies behaviour is lively and testing of teachers' management skills. In these lessons the learning is often adversely affected. Outside lessons, behaviour is often boisterous. This is very evident at breaktimes when pupils have free access to the school building which, in some areas, has narrow stairs and corridors.

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	506	91	3
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

10. The headteacher and his staff take very seriously the question of bullying of any kind. Pupils are encouraged to report any instances through the 'bully box' system. There are effective strategies for dealing with it when it occurs, although during the period of the inspection there was no evidence of such behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups are well integrated into the school.
11. Although the overall attendance rate for the school is below the national average, and therefore unsatisfactory overall, it has improved significantly over the past 18 months. This is largely due to the rigorous monitoring of attendance by the school and the dedicated work of the education welfare officer. He works closely with the pastoral team to persuade parents and carers of the importance of education and to encourage regular attendance. Punctuality is satisfactory. Most pupils arrive on time for lessons. There was a relatively high number of exclusions, both fixed and permanent, during the school year prior to the inspection. Procedures followed were appropriate and justified. Generally, however, permanent exclusions are rare and, on balance, the school accepts many more pupils excluded from other schools than it excludes itself – and integrates them into the school successfully.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.3
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.8
National data	1.1

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

12. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory although spiritual development is unsatisfactory and unplanned. Assemblies contribute to the development of the school ethos. They frequently refer to compassion, respect and concern for others, and have an appropriate moral and social content. However, they do not contain an act of collective worship and form tutors do not carry out collective worship with pupils. The school does not therefore comply with its statutory obligations. In some subjects, pupils have opportunities to reflect on spiritual matters – they consider slavery through writing poetry about it, they consider the work of great scientists and they study the Holocaust. In many other subjects, though, opportunities for spiritual development are missed. Provision for spiritual development and daily worship has not improved since the last inspection.
13. The school's behaviour policy provides a clear moral code and pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. They generally show respect for each other, for their teachers and for the school environment. Moral concepts and values are actively promoted across the curriculum and are particularly well developed in physical education, where fair play is insisted upon. Some subjects, in particular modern languages and physical education, offer good opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively in teams and groups. The school council supports school life and promotes well the concept of service to the community. Day and residential visits enhance opportunities for pupils' social development as well as their cultural development. Pupils develop a strong sense of the culture of France and Germany through their study of the languages and of more distant cultures in geography. Their awareness of their own culture is developed satisfactorily through a range of visits to theatres, museums and historic sites.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

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

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall but with one great strength – the persistence and tenacity of the teaching. Assessment of pupils' learning is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning across the school are satisfactory overall, and good in art and design, science, design and technology and physical education.
- A small amount of very good teaching and learning takes place in English, German, ICT, mathematics, physical education, personal, social and health education (PSHE), science and sociology.
- The teaching and learning in religious education are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils with special educational needs learn well and achieve well as a result of good teaching and good support in class.
- Assessment of pupils' learning is good overall. It is strong in science and design technology but unsatisfactory in religious education and citizenship.

Commentary

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	11 (11.3 %)	43 (44.3 %)	37 (38.1 %)	6 (6.2 %)	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.

14. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall as well as in every year group. It is strongest in Year 9 where the largest proportion of good and very good teaching was seen, and weakest in Year 7, where there was no very good teaching. Teaching is good overall in art and design, science, design and technology and physical education, and achievement in all four of these subjects is, in consequence, also good. Achievement overall is good in terms of progress compared to prior attainment because the teaching, even that which is less than good, is so tenacious. The teaching lacks sparkle at times but it is persistent and patient. Teaching is unsatisfactory in religious education and there is not enough of it in citizenship.
15. The more successful teaching is also notable:
- in science for the very good support for developing pupils' literacy, especially their skills in extended and creative writing;
 - in design and technology for the good range of activities, which captures the interest, and involvement of all the pupils, and for the good use made of support teachers and the technician;
 - in art and design for its good planning, for projects that suit and motivate pupils, and for its short-term goals which particularly foster the achievement of boys;
 - and in physical education for the positive behaviour management strategies, the very good working relationships based on mutual respect, and the insistence on high standards of behaviour and challenging tasks which extend pupils' learning.
16. The result of this stronger teaching is better learning and better achievement, lessons in which productivity is high, and gains in knowledge, skills or understanding are noticeable.
17. On the other hand, the unsatisfactory teaching seen, for instance, in the occasional lesson in each of English, ICT, mathematics, music, and in more than one religious education lesson, suffers:
- from some teachers' lack of sufficient classroom management skills to deal effectively with challenging pupil behaviour;
 - from some non-specialist teachers' insecure command of their subjects;
 - from some unsatisfactory planning and inappropriate activities;
 - from the need to restructure in some lessons for more variety of work;
 - and especially in religious education from the use of the same unstimulating strategy in most lessons which leads to quiet but unmistakable disengagement from the lesson and disrespect for the content of the subject.
18. The result of this weaker teaching is unsatisfactory learning and unsatisfactory achievement in which productivity is too low, gains in knowledge, skills or understanding are relatively weak, and the level of challenge for pupils is not good enough.
19. Pupils with special educational needs are learning and achieving well as a result of the good teaching and good support they receive. The quality of teaching observed in small group work was consistently good, with a strong emphasis on literacy. Lessons are stimulating and pupils

strongly motivated to learn. The teacher, though new to the groups, shows a natural affinity with pupils who have special educational needs and relationships are very good. Objectives are clear and pupils respond positively to set challenges, wanting to learn. Assessment is ongoing and pupils are involved in their own learning. Pupils supported by learning assistants do well against targets. Support assistants give strong back-up to teachers. Mainstream teaching and learning vary according to the skills of different teachers. Some of the work is not appropriate for pupils with special educational needs. It does not always address their specific difficulties.

20. Appropriately challenging tasks are set for talented pupils in art, physical education and mathematics to maximise their achievement. However, in most lessons, the demands which are made of the most able pupils are often no greater than those of their peers so their learning and achievement are satisfactory rather than good.

Assessment

21. Assessment of pupils' learning is good overall. There are particular strengths in science and design technology, but assessment is unsatisfactory in religious education and citizenship. Pupils' work is marked regularly in most subjects, with much supportive comment and, in some cases, advice to pupils about how to improve the standard of their work. National Curriculum levels are reported regularly and the information is used effectively to track pupils' progress and set targets. This enables senior managers to compare departmental performance and to identify under-achievement.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **satisfactory** overall, and there are **satisfactory** opportunities for extra-curricular enrichment. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good curricular provision in science, design and technology and physical education.
- Budget restrictions have restricted alternative curriculum and vocational provision.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The curriculum for religious education and citizenship is unsatisfactory, whilst that for PSHE is good.
- Recent key staffing appointments are having a very positive impact on standards.

Commentary

22. Given that Sundorne is a much smaller than average school, the curriculum it provides is satisfactory overall in terms of breadth and balance. The curriculum is good in science, where the Key Stage 3 Strategy is well embedded in Years 7 to 9. There is good coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in design and technology, and games are a particular strength in physical education.
23. Budget restrictions in Years 10 and 11 until relatively recently have reduced flexibility and limited opportunities to introduce alternative curriculum provision and vocational education. There is some GNVQ provision in performing arts and some links with Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology to provide some courses at NVQ Level 1 in areas such as construction and hairdressing. With increased flexibility due to modern foreign languages and design and technology ceasing to be compulsory subjects in Years 10 and 11, the number of options has increased from two to three this year, and there are plans in place to improve vocational provision and to introduce triple award science.

24. The curriculum is satisfactory, although there are some concerns at the frequency of shared classes between more than one teacher in Years 7 to 9, particularly in religious education. This arrangement has a negative influence on continuity and progression, and ultimately affects standards. The curriculum is unsatisfactory in citizenship because its various strands are not organised. Citizenship happens in an opportunistic manner. There is no assessment or reporting of it and no monitoring of its provision. On the other hand, the school's personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme is a good one. It fulfils statutory requirements for careers, drugs and sex education, the latter being taught by staff professionally trained in this area. The department makes full use of its good links with outside agencies, for example, the police, the fire service and local magistrates.
25. Learning support is well funded by the local education authority. One hundred and twenty-eight pupils are currently on the special educational needs roll, accounting for a quarter of the school population. Of these, 27 have statements of educational need. All have full access to the curriculum. Specialist staff comprise a Head of Learning Support, three teaching assistants and nine learning support assistants. A further Inclusion Support Assistant is in charge of the Study Support Centre, which offers study support to pupils with special educational needs when necessary. Accommodation for pupils with special educational needs includes a spacious and well-resourced central base, with access to other withdrawal spaces as needed.
26. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory overall and there is some good enrichment for gifted and talented pupils and extra support for older pupils before examinations. There are booster classes in mathematics and science run booster classes for higher attaining pupils and for some lower attaining pupils to improve their achievement in the end of Year 9 national tests. ICT, art, music and design technology make their facilities available at lunch-times and after school. Physical education offers a range of activities to all year groups well in excess of that which would be expected of a small department. The history, geography and music curricula are enriched by field work visits and some pupils visit France and Germany. Once every two years a major school production is mounted, and there are full Christmas and summer concerts every year.
27. There are sufficient teachers to teach the National Curriculum courses but enforced staff reductions in recent years have resulted in re-deployment of some teachers to teach outside their specialism and this affects standards, for instance, in ICT. Staff turnover rates are low and many teachers are long serving. Recent key appointments to subject areas have brought an infusion of new ideas, and are having a very positive impact on standards. Procedures for supporting newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school are good.
28. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. Mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and geography are well resourced to deliver the National Curriculum and the planned introduction of interactive whiteboards will further enhance teaching and learning, particularly in modern languages. Design and technology has good resources except in food technology where resources are more limited and fall short of that needed for the size of groups. In art and design the good provision for pottery has contributed to the improvements in boys' learning. The ratio of computers to pupils is at the national average and improving, and the school plans to extend access to the computer network further. However, the stock of books available for loan in the library is limited and is only just adequate to support pupils' learning in a range of curriculum subjects.
29. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, with many subjects able to work within a group of adjacent rooms. A dedicated room for pupils with special educational needs is of a very good quality. However, accommodation is currently unsatisfactory in science, although it is soon to be refurbished. The dimpled floor covering in art and design is not effective as a dust-reducing surface and the whole area needs a specialist health and safety review. Progress

in some physical education activities is hampered by inadequate playing areas. The range of options available for Year 10 and 11 pupils is limited by the indoor facilities. The off-site lessons at the local sports complex does enhance provision, but the travelling time significantly shortens lesson times.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils receive **good** guidance and support and there are **good** arrangements for seeking their views. Pastoral arrangements in the school ensure that pupils are safe and **well** cared for.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic and personal development are good.
- Careers advice and mentoring are of good quality.
- There are good induction arrangements for pupils entering Year 7.

Commentary

30. The school has access to a wide range of advisers and external support agencies, all of which make a good contribution to the work of the pastoral support team in the school. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic and personal development is good. Because of this the pastoral team is able to direct the right kind of guidance and support, both behavioural and learning, to where it is most needed. The study support centre is used effectively to provide short term one-to-one support for pupils with learning or behavioural problems.
31. There are suitable systems for child protection in place. All staff are aware of what to do in the event of any reported concerns. Staff are kept up to date with current procedures and legislation through in-service training.
32. The induction arrangements at Year 7 are well organised. Visits by both pupils and staff from the partner primary schools are a strong and well-established part of the transfer process. Pupils from Year 8 are trained to act as mentors to the Year 7 pupils and, as a result, pupils entering Year 7 are made to feel welcome and quickly settle down in their new surroundings.
33. The careers advice and guidance provided for pupils is good. The careers programme forms a part of the curriculum from Year 7 when pupils are taught how to present themselves through simple curriculum vitae. Work experience is organised for pupils in Year 10 by Connexions as a part of the school's well developed careers programme. This ranges from local shops and motor engineering works to national organisations such as The National Trust. There is a good externally funded mentoring system run by Connexions. Through this, pupils in Year 11 are supported by students from the sixth form college during the period before they transfer to further education or work. There are good arrangements for seeking pupils' views, for instance through the medium of carefully designed and well analysed questionnaires.
34. Health and safety procedures are well documented with clearly defined responsibilities. Inspections take place at regular intervals and involve governors, staff and the local education authority. Risk assessments are carried out for all potentially hazardous activities both on and off the school premises. The control of dust in art and design is a continuing problem and needs to be resolved.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **satisfactory** relationship with parents. Links with the community are **good**. The **good** partnerships which the school has with other schools and colleges are very beneficial to pupils as they transfer between the stages of their education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Partnerships with parents are satisfactory, although more needs to be done to increase the number of parents who attend parents' evenings.
- Some parents would like more information about their pupils' progress.
- Partnerships with other schools and colleges are strong and becoming increasingly productive.
- Community links are good, they help to establish the school as a focal point in the area.

Commentary

35. The results of the pre inspection questionnaire to parents, together with the comments made at the parents meeting, indicate that a large majority of parents who responded, strongly support the work of the school but one third of them disagree that they receive sufficient information about their children's progress. The family support worker is an important part of the pastoral team in the school and provides a valuable link between the school and parents. Through the school prospectus, regular newsletters and the school's community magazine, *The Vine*, parents are kept well informed of events in school.
36. There is a parent's evening towards the end of the summer term that gives parents an opportunity to talk to the staff about their child's progress. Annual reports on pupils' progress are issued before the parents' evening. The annual reports provide parents with useful information on their child's academic and personal progress. In these reports pupils are also able to make comments on their own progress, which gives them an opportunity to reflect on how they need to improve. The reports are better at describing what the pupils are studying than they are at identifying what they need to do to improve. The change over to 'electronic reporting' has brought about some teething problems which the school is working to improve.
37. The good relationship, which Sundorne School has with its partner primary schools, ensures that pupils settle well into school life when they enter Year 7. The school is a member of the Shrewsbury Partnership for Training and Education that provides an opportunity for schools to share experiences and to develop good practice. Through the Partnership for Progression scheme the school is able to provide some experience of university life for Year 9 pupils.
38. The school provides accommodation for a wide range of community groups and clubs including yoga, archery, dance, martial arts and the local community church. Daytime and evening classes for adults are also held in the school. These include foreign languages, computing and photography. The school hosts a Christmas party for senior citizens from the local community, and pupils take part in fund raising events for local and national charities which helps to raise their awareness of the needs of other sections of society.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The leadership of the school is **good**. It is principled, determined and clearly identifies a vision of good pupil attitudes and achievement that is evident in all of the school's work. Management is **satisfactory** and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The work of the governors is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is good and he is well supported by the senior management team.
- Systems for the formal monitoring of teaching and learning are insufficiently rigorous to ensure consistency across subject departments.
- There is a strong focus on ensuring that all pupils achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good in science, but unsatisfactory in religious education.
- Governors both support and challenge the school well.

Commentary

39. The principled and committed leadership of the headteacher is good. His very clear vision for the school is firmly centred on raising standards and maximising the achievement of every pupil. At Sundorne School all individuals, both pupils and teachers, are well cared for and their strengths are valued and developed. As a result, the school successfully ensures that pupils, whose standards are often below and well below average when they enter the school, reach much closer to average standards at GCSE.
40. The headteacher is well supported by experienced senior managers whose complementary strengths make them an effective team. The school and departmental development plans clearly identify appropriate priorities for improvement and are reviewed regularly. This is a thoroughly inclusive school where all pupils, including those with challenging behaviour, and those who failed to thrive elsewhere, achieve at least satisfactorily.
41. The management of the school is satisfactory. The school collects much useful data and uses it to bring about school improvement. The day-to-day support given to departments is good. Procedures for performance management are satisfactory and the process is used well, together with departmental reviews, to identify effectively opportunities for the continuing professional development of staff to meet whole school needs. The school makes good use of the programme of courses offered by the local authority and of its own professional development days. Systems for the formal monitoring of teaching and learning, however, are insufficiently robust. In this small school, where many long-serving staff know each other well, much informal monitoring takes place but this is not rigorous enough to ensure consistency of practice across departments.
42. Leadership and management are good in English, design and technology, physical education and special educational needs, very good in science but unsatisfactory in religious education.
43. The learning support department is well managed and effectively led. The experienced and skilled co-ordinator is strongly supported by the head teacher and managers with the full co-operation of the mainstream staff, together with much valued back-up from local authority education departments and all outside agencies. The organisation of the team of well-trained teaching and learning support assistants is good. The special educational needs timetable is complex, appropriate and flexible. Documentation is thorough and Individual Education Plans meticulously written. The co-ordinator maintains a comprehensive and very detailed range of information on all aspects of this provision, which is very useful.
44. Governance is good. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the school. They have secure knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and both support and challenge the school's leadership where necessary. All their legal requirements are fulfilled except for ensuring that pupils experience a daily act of collective worship and that citizenship is given its proper place in the curriculum.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,493,636
Total expenditure	1,530,973
Expenditure per pupil	3,189

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-37,336
Balance carried forward to the next	22,368

45. The school has good financial monitoring procedures. The principles of 'best value' are well understood and practised. An increase in the number of pupils in the last two years has helped the school to turn round a significant deficit, the result of a falling pupil roll in previous years. The headteacher and the governors have taken the bold step of taking on additional staff to take advantage of the improved financial situation. The result has been the strengthening of some subject areas.

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 for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National test results in Year 9 rose dramatically in 2003 to become above average and much better than those in 2002.
- Teaching, although persistently challenging pupils to achieve better, is more successful in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11 in respect to improving learning and achievement.
- The National Literacy Strategy is well embedded in English and contributes to the improvement in standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Leadership and management of the department are both good.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

46. Results in the Year 9 National Tests in 2003 were above average and significantly better than those of 2002. They were well above average compared to similar schools. Boys and girls performed equally well. The trend over the last three years is an improving one. This represents good achievement compared to pupils' prior attainment three years earlier.
47. Overall GCSE results in English language in 2003 were not significantly different from the national average (in terms of average point scores). Girls outperformed boys. This represents good achievement compared to these pupils' prior attainment when they were in Year 9.
48. Current standards in work and lessons seen confirms the impression that standards are improving and are much improved on previous years, just above average in Year 9 and just below average in Year 11. This is explained by the growing impact of the national literacy strategy on teaching and learning, especially in Years 7 to 9, where persistent and demanding teaching is improving pupils' skills and providing a good basis for learning, particularly in writing.
49. Pupils read competently and are encouraged to read widely and to think about what they read. Their writing skills have improved significantly since the last inspection, thanks to the very focused teaching in all years and to the support given by the learning support and special educational needs assistants. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in English because the structured and targeted teaching encourages learning. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good.

Teaching and learning

50. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but in Years 7 to 9 it is good. Pupils enter the school with well below average levels of attainment in English. This means that the teachers face a greater challenge to raise standards in this school than in some other schools. They are doing this by teaching with persistence and tenacity. Teachers drive each lesson forward,

creating an effective climate for learning, establishing a work ethic and involving pupils actively in their learning. This, together with the push to improve literacy, is raising standards steadily in all years. The results are to be seen in the greatly improved national test results at the end of Year 9 and in signs of improvement in Years 10 and 11, where the GCSE results at grades A*-G show that all pupils can achieve a pass grade.

Leadership and management

51. Leadership and management of the department are both good. Standards are rising and there is a clear and determined vision to raise standards further. Teachers are experienced and qualified English specialists who work themselves and their pupils hard. The integration of the national literacy strategy into the English curriculum is very good and a strength of the department. There is a close and consistent focus on developing pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. The assessment, monitoring and target setting procedures are good. Marking is good and pupils are advised how they can improve their work. Assessment and data are used well to inform teaching. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the school

52. Overall standards of language and literacy match the national average. Following training for the National Literacy Strategy, most subject departments have developed good literacy programmes within their curriculum areas. In English the teaching of writing is good and underpins the accuracy and range of pupils' writing seen in the work of pupils of all levels of attainment. What is particularly impressive is the way in which departments other than English have taken the responsibility to build on the pupils' good writing skills. Pupils are taught the specific vocabulary of the subject and also how to develop their writing in a particular subject. For example in science, the development of the pupils' scientific literacy is especially imaginative and effective. Pupils are encouraged to write in a range of styles and for different audiences. This ranges from the story of 'Rachel, the red blood cell' to letters written to famous scientists in the past explaining how their discoveries have affected the present. These exercises are linked to demanding assessment tasks, which encourage high standards of writing and information. In modern foreign languages, literacy development is integrated into the schemes of work for Years 7 and 8. Pupils are encouraged to look at comparisons between French and German word order and to improve their writing through tasks of increasing complexity. In history and geography, pupils are developing extended writing skills to a greater extent than is usually seen.
53. Standards of speaking and listening are generally competent across the curriculum. In English, pupils are encouraged to give clear answers and to give additional information when necessary. In physical education, pupils are experienced in the use of advanced technical vocabulary because teachers use them frequently in situations where they challenge pupils to think and explain.
54. Standards of reading are good in English, where pupils have regularly structured reading lessons. These lessons encourage pupils to widen their reading and individual reading records show that this is successful with some pupils. This increased awareness of the importance of reading is not so obvious in the silent reading sessions that take place within most form periods. When silence is insisted on, pupils do read quietly but on other occasions it can be a pointless exercise. Silent reading was introduced some years ago to promote the importance of reading and to help pupils develop an interest in reading. Although this remains a worthy aim the present practice in many form periods is not helpful enough and needs improvement.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well below average.
- There is a good level of challenge in lessons: teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of work and behaviour.
- The use of assessment to inform planning is not fully developed.
- Teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what criteria they are using to mark their work.
- Teaching is sometimes less effective than it could be because of challenging behaviour from a minority of pupils.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

55. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 in modern foreign languages were below average, although the girls' results were well above those obtained by girls nationally. Standards of work seen during the inspection were broadly average. Most higher-attaining pupils can refer to the past and the future and express personal responses with reasonable accuracy. Some can produce extended writing using more complex sentences. This is because the department has introduced the modern languages Strategy and Framework, and this is bringing about improvements in teaching and learning.
56. GCSE results in **French** in 2003 were well below average. The proportion of pupils who failed to get a graded result was the same as that found nationally. Girls performed better than boys. Results in **German** were also well below average, but better than in French because more lower-attaining pupils took French. All pupils entered gained a graded result. Girls performed better than boys. Standards seen during the inspection were average overall. This improvement is the result of the department's increased focus on improving examination performance. Pupils are able to refer to past experiences and future plans confidently, and they can link structures together to make their writing more complex. They lack confidence in oral work, and find it difficult to speak without support.
57. Given low prior attainment, achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory overall in all years, although girls achieve better than boys.

Teaching and learning

58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and there are some good and very good features. In both languages the better lessons are well planned and structured, such that there is challenge in the subject content and teachers push pupils to produce more extended responses. Teachers make good use of visual aids to support meaning. On the occasions when teaching is less effective, it is often the result of lively and sometimes challenging behaviour from a minority of pupils who show negative attitudes to the subject. This means that teachers' energies are directed more to managing behaviour than teaching. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, but they do not always inform pupils about the criteria they use for the marking, and feedback to pupils does not always tell them how to improve.

Leadership and management

59. The leadership by the head of department is good. She has a good vision for the development of the subject and has been forward-looking in implementing the new languages framework. Management is satisfactory. There are procedures in place for assessing pupils and gathering information on their progress, but these are not used to best effect in informing planning. Monitoring of teaching quality is done on an informal basis, and as such lacks rigour. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There are more detailed systems in place for tracking pupils and there is a greater emphasis on literacy in planning and teaching.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in Years 7 to 9 have improved consistently over recent years.
- Results in Years 10 and 11 have not improved overall since the last inspection.
- Approaches to teaching and learning are developing but there is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching.
- The very good display of pupils' work throughout the department shows a range of interesting and effective learning activities.
- Some teachers are more skilled than others at dealing with pupils' challenging behaviour.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

60. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were around the national average, above the average for similar schools, and have improved steadily over recent years.
61. GCSE results in 2003 were not significantly different from the national average and a little lower than the average for all subjects for the same pupils. Results have varied considerably over recent years and have not improved overall since the last inspection.
62. Work seen in lessons and in exercise books generally matches the test and examination results. Work covers all areas of the mathematics curriculum. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory. The achievement of all pupils is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Attainment on entry is below average and pupils make steady progress. Higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged and can take extra lessons in Years 9 and 11 to lead to higher-level work.

Teaching and learning

63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Most pupils respond well and are cooperative, but the immature behaviour of a small number affects learning and adversely affects the teachers' relationship with the rest of the class. Teachers work hard and willingly offer extra help in after-school classes. Teaching strategies are developing, and include problem solving and games to enrich learning and increase motivation, at best enabling pupils to make hypotheses and find algebraic relationships. The good display throughout the department demonstrates a range of interesting and challenging activities. There has been good progress in implementing the Key Stage 3 Strategy in Years 7 to 9, evident in the three-part lesson and some effective oral and mental introductory sessions. In more effective lessons, practical materials such as mini-

whiteboards are used to enable all the class to respond to questioning, and pupils are encouraged to do difficult calculations mentally. Learning objectives, however, are not generally shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson or revisited in the plenary session. Planning is unsatisfactory in some lessons and it limits the learning because of lack of resources and inappropriate activities. The use of ICT is satisfactory and includes work in shape and space, algebra, geometry and the use of graphical calculators. The department has benefited considerably from the support of a classroom assistant who helps pupils with learning difficulties and ensures they achieve well.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management in the department are both satisfactory. The head of department has encouraged developments in teaching and periodically monitors the quality of teaching and learning. This has not yet, however, ensured consistent approaches across the whole department. The scheme of work provides helpful guidance about teaching activities. Assessment of pupils' learning is satisfactory. Work is well marked with supportive comment and effort grades, and some pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and to write comment in their exercise books. Department performance is analysed but the conclusions are not built into the development plan. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the school

65. Standards of numeracy are average. Most pupils have a good recall of number facts and some are beginning to discuss strategies for mental calculation. Pupils have relevant experience in other subjects, such as data handling in science and geography, measurement in design technology and physical education, and they generally cope well with the mathematical demands of such work. The mathematics department is implementing ideas from the Key Stage 3 Strategy in Years 7 to 9 although these approaches are not yet sufficiently embedded in the work of the department to have had a major effect on standards of numeracy. The whole-school numeracy policy invites all departments to consider how they can contribute to numeracy development, but there is little planned provision in subjects other than mathematics at present.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good and all pupils achieve well through the school.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory but due for refurbishment soon.
- The subject's support for pupils' literacy development is very good.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

66. Although national tests results at the end of Year 9 the results were below the national average and below average in comparison with similar schools, the results have risen steadily over the last five years. Current standards in Year 9 are broadly average. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9. They enter the school with below average standards in science and acquire a sound general knowledge of the topics covered. Higher attaining pupils are able to discuss their work with clarity. Lower attaining pupils achieve well as a result of the good support they receive.

67. In the 2003 GCSE examination the results in double award science were well above the national average. The results have improved dramatically in the last three years. Boys performed better than girls, but the girls' results were in line with the national average for girls. A small proportion of pupils entered for the single award and all were awarded a grade. Current standards at the end of Year 11 are above average. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, respond well to high expectations in a positive manner and higher attaining pupils are reaching much higher levels of work. Most pupils have a secure understanding of their science topics and have particularly good skills in investigative work. They link theory well to their predictions about investigations and interpret their results well. Pupils handle quite confidently challenging concepts, such as the electromagnetic spectrum.

Teaching and learning

68. The quality of teaching is good overall. In some lessons it is very good. The National Strategy for Years 7 to 9 is securely embedded in the teaching and there is very good support for developing pupils' literacy through science, with regular key assessment tasks producing imaginative creative writing. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils and teachers generally use questions well to engage pupils fully in the learning. However, in some lessons the lively and challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils thoroughly stretches teachers' management skills.

Leadership and management

69. The subject is very well led and managed. The head of department has done much in a short time to raise standards, particularly by revising the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and raising pupils' aspirations. Assessment procedures are good, and there is very good support for pupils in Years 9 and 11 through booster and revision classes which assists pupils to achieve their full potential. The work of the department is well reviewed and there is a shared vision to achieve high standards. The accommodation is unsatisfactory but is soon to be refurbished. Resources are well maintained by the technician who gives good support to the teaching. The use of ICT is good. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Standards have improved dramatically, monitoring of pupils' progress is very effective and the quality of teaching is much improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new leadership is raising standards and having a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory.
- Non-specialist teaching on the Applied GCSE course does not provide sufficient challenge for pupils to reach higher grades.
- Cross-curricular use of ICT is not systematically planned and monitored to ensure breadth and rigour for all pupils.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

70. Teachers' assessments of Year 9 pupils in 2003 were that standards were at least average. Standards observed during this inspection, however, indicate that actual standards in Year 9 are below average, but improving.

71. GCSE results in 2003 were below average. Current standards observed in Year 11 are also below average. However, the introduction of the Applied ICT GCSE is beginning to lift standards, particularly for pupils in Year 10.
72. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are already attaining higher standards than those seen in Year 9. Achievement is now satisfactory and improving in both Years 7 to 9 and also in Years 10 and 11, due to the increased challenges provided by the new syllabuses and the improved teaching materials introduced across every year.

Teaching and learning

73. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory overall. Some lessons are at least good as specialist teaching extends the learning of all pupils by thorough preparation, the setting of high expectations and the engagement of all pupils through skilful questioning and timely interventions to lift their achievements. Good use of support assistants ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in these lessons. Teaching and learning are less successful where teachers' insecure command of the subject limits flexibility of response to the varied needs of pupils and does not stretch the achievements of higher attaining pupils. This can lead to some challenging behaviour in these year groups.
74. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is also satisfactory overall. In Year 11, teachers have prioritised the completion of the pupils' GCSE coursework missed during prolonged staff absences last year. The expected extension of these pupils' learning was, therefore, not observed during the inspection. However, the teacher's secure understanding of the GCSE syllabus and of pupils' needs is providing effective support for, and consolidation of their learning. As with younger year groups, non-specialist teaching in Year 10 results in task-led teaching which develops pupils' command of ICT techniques but fails to develop their ICT capabilities sufficiently to meet the requirements of higher GCSE grades. Although non-specialist teachers motivate and support their pupils well, basic errors in pupils' spreadsheets and database systems have been left unchallenged throughout the course.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory, though with areas for improvement. The recently appointed subject leader is already having a positive effect on standards and achievement through modelling and supporting good teaching, and understanding where the subject needs further development. In Years 7 to 9 there have been rapid improvements owing to the introduction and development of nationally produced materials. However, in Years 10 and 11 the planning and support for non-specialist ICT teaching is less effective because other subject and leadership priorities limit opportunities for joint planning and development work. Timetable constraints further limit the planned monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons led by non-specialists and therefore the sharing of specialist knowledge is less effective.
76. Despite this, progress since the last inspection is satisfactory since resource levels are now roughly in line with national targets and continue to improve with the planned introduction of interactive whiteboards and more networked computers in science. The improvements in the ICT capabilities of teachers are now sufficient for the effective teaching of the curriculum. Planned extensions to the computer network will further promote the use of ICT in more remote areas of the school that currently lack access to the internet. The school now meets the statutory requirements for ICT at both key stages.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. The use of ICT across the broader curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. Even though it is good and improving in science and art, where it is used in a creative manner to enhance learning, it is unsatisfactory in religious education and music and underused in history and geography. Very good teaching and learning were observed in a PSHE lesson where ICT was used by pupils in Year 9 to prepare their curriculum vitae. Pupils use the internet in a range of subjects to research their project work, but the use of ICT in these subjects needs to be planned and monitored more systematically to ensure that pupils' experience of ICT has both breadth and challenge.

HUMANITIES

Sociology was sampled and geography and history and religious education were inspected in depth. Two sociology lessons were seen, one in Year 10 and one Year 11. GCSE results in Sociology in 2003 were at the national average. Far fewer boys than girls followed the course but boys' results were above average. Current standards in Year 10 in work seen are average. Standards in work seen in Year 11 are below average. The teaching seen in Year 10 was very good so that pupils learned and achieved very well. The teaching seen in Year 11 was unstimulating and too dominated by teacher talk. Pupils did not show much interest and attendance was unsatisfactory. Learning was barely satisfactory and achievement less than it should be.

Geography

Provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results, although improving, are not good enough.
- Lessons are well planned and structured so that pupils are productive and their achievement is satisfactory.
- Tests are not yet being used to assess accurately pupils' National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 9.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- The use of ICT to support learning is too limited.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their enquiry skills through fieldwork.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

78. In 2003, teachers assessed pupils' work at the end of Year 9 as well above national averages. This contrasted markedly with work seen during the inspection where pupils' standards were just below national averages. This is because tests are not yet being used accurately to assess pupils' levels at the end of Year 9.
79. GCSE results have improved steadily over the last four years but are still below the national average. Pupils do less well in geography than in other subjects they take.
80. Currently, standards are below average at the end of Years 9 and 11 but this represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, compared to their attainment when they enter the school. In Year 9, all pupils can use local, national and world maps competently to locate places and identify geographical patterns. In Year 11, higher attaining pupils can research information and use specialist terminology well to arrive at sound answers to geographical questions, for example, in their coursework enquiries into planning issues affecting Shrewsbury.

Teaching and learning

81. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Teachers plan and structure their lessons well so that most pupils work productively. However, some of the tasks set are not sufficiently challenging to engage the interest of all pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and lessons take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Teachers use a range of attractive resources and provide good fieldwork opportunities to motivate pupils although the use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning is too limited. Behaviour is mainly good but some pupils lack motivation and have a short attention span so the pace of learning slows down.

Leadership and management

82. The leadership and management of the department are both satisfactory. The current head of department has many other responsibilities and hence less time to devote to geography. During a period of staff absence classes have been taught by temporary teachers. However, suitable priorities have now been identified for development, schemes of work revised, new assessments introduced and new resources bought so improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. With the recent appointment of new staff, the department now has both the capacity and commitment to improve further.

History

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weakness

- Teachers manage pupils well and ensure that all are fully involved in lessons.
- The strong emphasis on literacy is raising achievement.
- Relationships are good.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to enhance pupils' learning.
- There is not enough emphasis by pupils on the use of evidence to support their arguments.

Commentary

Standards and achievements

83. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 are well below average. In 2003 the GCSE results were significantly below the national average. At both stages girls do better than boys. Standards seen during the Inspection are below average at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11. Given the significantly below average attainment of pupils when they enter the school this represents satisfactory achievement for most pupils, although those with special educational needs achieve well due to the good support they receive.

Teaching and learning

84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and this results in satisfactory achievement. Pupils' interest is sustained and their attention held. Teachers are particularly adept at involving all pupils in lessons so that, prompted by appropriately differing worksheets they tackle the same exercise at different levels at the same time. The organisation of lessons is good. A brisk pace is set so that pupils are fully occupied but not put under undue pressure. Every exercise is checked. No pupils are left behind. This good guidance and encouragement gives pupils the confidence to initiate class discussion, as when Year 10 pupils talk about the religious divisions in Northern Ireland. Succinct worksheets clarify topics

and provide a very good focus for learning. Pupils are also required to think for themselves and to make their own decisions about their work. Teachers do not always emphasise enough the importance of producing evidence to support statements. Otherwise pupils are learning good historical skills which are transferable to other situations. For example, Year 7 pupils considering the quarrel between Henry II and Becket are learning there are two sides to every argument. Year 11 pupils benefit from and appreciate the careful teaching of examination techniques. Classroom displays of model castles indicate Year 7's enthusiasm for the subject. Letters home from the "besieged soldiers" indicate the departmental emphasis on literacy. The department is well aware of the link between literacy skills and good achievement in history. All pupils are expected to write paragraphs and some are producing, even as early as in Years 8 and 9, well-structured short essays. Relationships are good. In classes there is a very pleasant hardworking atmosphere. Teachers use ICT but opportunities for pupils to do so are not fully exploited.

Leadership and management

85. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. Two teachers whose main responsibilities are in other areas are fully supported by the head of department, but no time is available for formal departmental meetings or the monitoring of classes. The departmental development plan is tailored to what is practical and achievable. Assessment procedures, already used effectively, are being further sharpened but, so far, have been applied only in Year 7. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Recruitment into the subject has improved. Extra revision classes and a concentration on examination techniques are designed to raise GCSE results. Many pupils appreciate the skills they are learning in history particularly the ability to present a reasoned argument.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are unsatisfactory overall although some better teaching challenges pupils, engages their interest and leads on to good achievement.
- Standards are well below the national average in Year 11 and below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 9.
- There is no scheme of work and assessment is unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

86. Standards overall are below average. Achievement overall is unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 7 to 11. Standards in work seen in Year 9 are below those of the locally agreed syllabus and in Year 11 are below average. Short course GCSE results in 2003 were well below average and B was the highest grade awarded. The attainment of boys was particularly weak. Nearly one fifth of the pupils, mostly boys, who followed the course, were not entered for the examination.

Teaching and learning

87. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall leading on to unsatisfactory achievement. They are better in Years 7 to 9, where there is some good teaching, than they are in Years 10 to 11. For example, a lesson in Year 9 in which pupils began to write a letter to a friend

describing events they witnessed in Jerusalem from Palm Sunday through to Easter Sunday, 2,000 years ago, illustrated the qualities of good teaching. The task required pupils to think hard about what they had been learning and to make a personal response to the events of Holy Week. The task was well prepared for and well resourced with materials appropriate for all pupils. It was to be completed for homework with some additional research from a website. Pupils were interested in the task, knew what was required of them, worked hard and learnt well. Their imaginative and empathetic writing were good and close to national standards.

88. In most lessons, however, learning and achievement are satisfactory at best, as a result of unstimulating teaching. The same strategy is used in every lesson, very lengthy teacher talk, and question and answer sessions with a small number of pupils. During this, pupils periodically copy from the board, and then sometimes write notes from a textbook. This leads to much quiet but unmistakable disengagement from the lesson by many pupils. By Year 11, it shows itself further in poor attendance and disrespect for the content of the subject. It is also not challenging enough for higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are not achieving sufficiently.

Leadership and management

89. Leadership and management are both unsatisfactory. There is not a clear vision for the development of the subject so appropriate plans cannot be made for the future. There is no scheme of work so there is no framework for lesson planning or the development of either literacy or ICT. The department does not monitor or evaluate its performance. The full time and part time specialist teachers mainly work independently of each other.
90. Assessment is unsatisfactory. When pupils' work is formally assessed it is over-rewarded and the marking does not indicate how credit has been achieved. Much work in pupils' exercise books is barely marked. There are no visits to faith communities other than to the local church. Seven classes are split between two teachers, which causes difficulties in continuity of learning.
91. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Although there is now sufficient time for the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus to be met, assessment procedures have not improved and weaknesses remain in teaching, resources, standards, contact with faith communities and challenge to the higher attainers.

TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils reach an above average standard of attainment by the end of Year 11.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, although there is room for improvement in the use of ICT.
- Assessment, especially its effective use to inform pupils of what they need to do to improve, is very good.
- The department is well led and managed – the monitoring and assessment of teaching and learning is thorough.
- Oversize classes, especially in Years 8 and 9, put extra pressure on teachers and inhibit standards of both teaching and learning.
- The food studies room is under resourced and there is not a proper programme of repair/maintenance/replacement.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

92. Pupils come into the school with well below average abilities in craft and manipulative skills. Current standards in Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement over the Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9, pupils have an average grasp of almost all the areas of design and technology. Their presentational and sketching skills have improved considerably but their skills in using drawing instruments are not as good. A good amount of hand skills and techniques are learnt but pupils lack the opportunities to do enough practical work in food studies. Too few control technology, electronics and metalworking skills are taught. On the other hand, good use is made of technical vocabulary.
93. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above average and continue a rising trend. Pupils' achievement overall in Years 10 and 11 was good, especially in the case of the boys. The standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 11 are above those expected nationally. Boys' standards have increased considerably, mainly due to some very good practical projects in resistant materials. Folder work is of good quality in food studies and there are some very impressive designs in textiles. Pupils are not good at retaining knowledge for exams.

Teaching and learning

94. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and it results in good achievement overall. In Years 7 to 9, pupils benefit from knowledgeable teachers who structure lessons well. There is a good range of activities, which captures the interest, and involvement of all pupils. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are actively engaged in a variety of interesting and challenging activities because teachers plan lessons very well. Good use is made of the support teachers and the technician. Class sizes are too big in Years 7 to 9. There is insufficient equipment and space and classes have to be split, with some doing a practical and some a theory lesson. This makes teaching more difficult and hinders learning to some extent. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. Teachers are well informed about the requirements of the courses they teach. The pace of learning is always brisk and clear teaching and learning objectives are met. There is a very good marking and assessment scheme used and all pupils know their standard in either National Curriculum or GCSE terms. Pupils with special educational need and those who are talented are well challenged by appropriate material. The use of ICT has improved but its use as a design tool is still unsatisfactory. The teachers' timetables are too full to cope with the required workload.

Leadership and management

95. The department is well led and managed and includes effective monitoring of teaching and learning. There is good cooperation and a sharing of responsibility amongst the teachers. There is very clear vision and direction and good progress has been made since the last inspection. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards are much higher and the quality of teaching is much improved. However, the resources in the food studies area are insufficient and there has been some lack of planning to provide a systematic programme of repair and replacement of resources.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in all year groups.
- Boys out perform girls in GCSE examinations.
- Technician support is good across the department.
- Painting, drawing and printmaking need a larger share of the curriculum time to provide more opportunities for girls.
- Sketchbooks are underused as a way of developing drawing skills.
- Homework is insufficiently used as a learning opportunity for all pupils.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

96. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with well below average standards and make rapid progress in Years 7 to 9. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are broadly accurate and show standards to be average. In Years 7 to 9, pupils develop a wide range of two and three-dimensional skills. They begin to understand the work of important artists and designers and how it can influence art and design in general, and their own work in particular. This progress represents good achievement for all pupils as a result of good focused teaching and the promotion of high standards.
97. Overall GCSE results in the range of A* to C were broadly average and are similar to the two previous years. The standard of boys' work is above average, helped by the majority of coursework being three-dimensional and suiting the preferred learning style of boys. Girls' work, however, is below average, as the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 does not provide enough opportunity for drawing, painting and printmaking; a style of working and media mix better suited to promoting higher standards with girls. Achievement is also good in Years 10 and 11.

Teaching and learning

98. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good in all year groups. Teaching is characterised by good planning and projects that suit and motivate pupils. Short-term goals linked directly to targets, foster boy's higher achievement. The work of pupils in all years is displayed around the school, with high relief three-dimensional compositions and pottery forms creating great impact in the entrance foyer. The technician support is very good and helps support the good achievement of the pottery area and the displays around the school. Sketchbooks are underused, particularly for developing drawing and thinking skills. Homework requires development. The use of ICT is satisfactory but the provision of a larger format printer and the provision of larger screens for the computers would have a positive impact on standards of work and would widen the range of media available to all pupils.

Leadership and management

99. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The department is well organised in terms of its good systems for assessment. The monitoring and evaluation of staff needs greater emphasis at a formal level to enable a greater understanding of coverage of the curriculum by individual staff. The department makes a significant contribution to the enrichment of the pupils with visits plus an annual arts festival. The department has huge spaces to display the connections between drawing, thinking, artefacts, artists and pupils' work; this opportunity has not been grasped and needs development. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have improved in Year 10 and 11. The pottery area continues to have a problem with dust. The dimpled floor covering is not effective as a dust reducing surface and the whole area needs a specialist health and safety review.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good level of participation and achievement at GCSE level.
- Opportunities for musical enrichment outside the classroom are good.
- The use of ICT is under developed in Years 7 to 9.
- The attitude and behaviour of some pupils is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

100. Teacher assessments for Year 9 pupils in 2003 indicate standards broadly in line with national expectations for this age group, and the standard of most of the work seen during the inspection matched this expectation. Because pupils' attainment on entry to the school is lower than average, and recent GCSE results are above average this represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils overall.

Teaching and learning

101. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils are treated in a pleasant supportive manner even though their behaviour and attitudes are not as good as they should be and this hinders their learning and achievement. Schemes of work are broadly in line with National Curriculum requirements. There is an appropriate emphasis on practical work. Keyboards and tuned percussion instruments are well used to enable pupils to perform simple pieces and to shape their own musical ideas. However, some restructuring of lessons could be made to permit more variety of work and to bring about greater continuity and progression in learning through the regular development of subject knowledge and skills in Years 7 to 9. This approach would enhance skills in singing, listening and the handling of musical notation. The possibilities for using ICT to extend teaching strategies and to enrich pupils' learning have yet to be developed.

Leadership and management

102. Leadership and management are satisfactory, positive, committed, and are bringing about a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in the provision for music. The most notable effects of this are the successful re-introduction of GCSE music and the development of extra-curricular opportunities. These activities benefit not only the pupils and the school but also extend into the wider community. There is a good range of instrumental tuition available, but as yet the take-up by pupils is relatively low. The department is now in a strong position to move forward by building on its achievements and developing new ideas.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers establish very good relationships with pupils and insist on high standards of behaviour and performance.
- The pupils have a very positive attitude and apply themselves fully in lessons.

- There are very high levels of participation in lessons and good provision for non-participants.
- Accommodation needs to be improved to support further pupils' progress.
- Assessment is not used sufficiently to diagnose areas of weakness and to set subsequent targets to secure higher levels of achievement.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

103. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate standards which are above average for all pupils. Results in GCSE physical education over the past three years are average in terms of A* to C grades. However, all candidates successfully gain grades within the A* to G range, which for some, represents good levels of achievement. Standards seen matched the teacher assessment and examination results. Achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good throughout Years 7 to 11.
104. Participation levels are high with pupils keen and enthusiastic to give of their best at all times. Provision for non-participants is good with opportunities to officiate sports given. Progress in some activities is hampered by inadequate playing areas. The range of options available for Year 10 and 11 pupils is limited by indoor facilities. The off-site lessons at the local sports complex enhance provision, but the travelling time significantly shortens lesson times.

Teaching and learning

105. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The main strengths include the positive behaviour management strategies, which result in teachers and pupils establishing very good working relationships based on mutual respect. Staff manage pupils very effectively, insisting on high standards of behaviour and of individual performance in every lesson. The tasks set are challenging and extend pupils' learning. Pupils respond positively to the good level of encouragement and engage themselves fully in every lesson.
106. The pace of activities in lessons is very good, ensuring pupils remain focussed. Pupils respond well to the consistently high expectations of behaviour and performance and it is this constant reinforcement of expectation which secures good levels of progress. Teachers have good knowledge of each activity and establish clear learning objectives. Whilst assessment criteria are shared with pupils, an area for improvement is the need to use assessment to diagnose areas of weakness and involve the pupils in setting subsequent targets to secure improved performance.

Leadership and Management

107. Leadership and Management of the department are both good with some very good features. Expectations of the pupils in terms of behaviour and performance are very high. The department makes a significant contribution to the moral and social development of all pupils. The dedicated and caring attitude demonstrated by the staff enables all pupils to develop their full potential. The department offers a comprehensive extra-curricular programme. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The department has sustained the high standards previously reported. Support for the literacy initiative is obvious in every lesson with consistent use of specialist key terms which pupils are clearly familiar with.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

There are no business and few other vocational courses in this small school, apart from the applied ICT course described above, which is beginning to lift standards, particularly for pupils in Year 10, and the leisure and tourism course which is planned to begin in September 2004.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The school provides programmes in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Citizenship was inspected in depth. Because PSHE and citizenship lessons share the same timetable, only one PSHE lesson, which was very well taught, was seen during the inspection. In that lesson, very good use was made of ICT as a learning tool by the Year 9 pupils, and teaching assistants ably assisted the seven pupils with special educational needs. Other inspection evidence, including a discussion with pupils, and an examination of the work of pupils from Years 7 to 11, strongly indicates that the PSHE programme is a good one, which is well led and effectively managed, and that pupils reach average standards by Year 9 and Year 11. Very good, close consultation with pupils, parents and governors takes place in planning the programme, which fulfils statutory requirements for careers, drugs and sex education, the latter being taught by staff professionally trained in this area. The department makes full use of its good links with outside agencies, for example, the police, the fire service and local magistrates. The pupils' very positive, mature attitudes and courteous behaviour suggest that the subject makes a very good contribution to their personal and social development.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the leadership of the subject is committed to implementing the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, planning is inadequate and the full National Curriculum is not covered.
- Pupils' work in citizenship is not properly assessed and their progress measured.
- The school's caring ethos and proud tradition of community service both offer excellent potential for National Curriculum citizenship.
- Standards are below those expected and pupils are underachieving because they do not learn the full subject.
- Management is unsatisfactory because standards achieved, teaching and learning and the curriculum are not monitored, and time for teaching is insufficient.

Commentary

108. Citizenship is taught partly in some specific lessons through personal, social and health education (PSHE), with which it shares a timetable, and partly through other subjects. All Year 10 and 11 pupils follow a GCSE short course in Citizenship Studies, which was chosen to give structure and focus to pupils' study of the subject, and does so most effectively. It also offers the opportunity for accreditation, and pupils are being entered for the first time this year. However, coverage of the first two elements of citizenship, knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens, and skills of communication and enquiry, is partial and incomplete in Years 7 to 9 in PSHE, and in the supporting subjects it is as yet largely implicit, pupils being unaware that they are studying a distinct subject. For the third element, there is no planned programme that ensures that all pupils have opportunities to develop their skills of participation and responsible action; though one is being devised, drawing on the school's existing rich agenda of school and community service. This includes the work of the school council, of which its representatives are proud, impressive work for a wide range of charities, Christmas parties for the elderly and the mentoring of younger pupils by older pupils.

Standards and achievement

109. Standards are below those expected, and all pupils are underachieving by Year 9 and Year 11. The weak results of the mock examination taken by Year 11 reflect the insufficient time given for teaching the subject through PSHE, and the lack of explicit citizenship in supporting

subjects. Although no extended writing was available for Years 7 and 8, some thoughtful letters have been produced by Year 9 pupils applying to become mentors. Year 11 pupils have also written some fluent, well-researched and well-reasoned essays, for example, on abortion and fox-hunting, in which they are making a sound start in using contrasting sources of information.

Teaching and learning

110. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because of the patchy, superficial coverage and recording of the first two elements, the failure to accommodate this new National Curriculum subject in other areas of the curriculum, and the inadequate linking of the three elements in the programmes of study. There is no overall scheme of assessment, at present, which would enable teachers to report to parents on their children's progress by Year 9. However, one is planned, and there is evidence of some accurate assessment in Years 10 and 11 which has been used to set target grades. In the lessons seen, all in Years 10 and 11, the teacher was effective in meeting the more academic demands of National Curriculum citizenship; and some imaginative teaching methods have been employed. For example, a local bench of magistrates come into school and work with pupils on a case study scenario, leading to a highly instructive role-play exercise.

Leadership and management

111. The subject benefits from clear and satisfactory leadership. Management, however, is unsatisfactory. The school is not managing the introduction of citizenship satisfactorily because insufficient time is given for teaching it and for monitoring standards and the quality of provision.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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