

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ROSELAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Tregony

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 112056

Headteacher: Mr D Parker

Lead inspector: Bob Allan

Dates of inspection: 1st - 4th March 2004

Inspection number: 258825

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 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	590
School address:	Tregony Truro Cornwall
Postcode:	TR2 5SE
Telephone number:	(01872) 530 675
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Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Nicola Houghton
Date of previous inspection:	16 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Roseland is a much smaller than average mixed 11-16 comprehensive school with beacon status. It serves an extensive rural area that includes both low and high income communities on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall. In 2003, it received Artsmark, Investors in People and Healthy School awards. Pupils are almost exclusively of white British background with very few for whom English is not their mother tongue. Their attainment on entry is broadly average, as are the numbers who leave or join the school at other than normal times. The school has an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, but an above average proportion with statements. Most numerous are those with specific learning difficulties, or social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Roseland Community School is a **very effective** school that provides very good value for money. Teaching is very good so pupils learn and achieve very well. School leadership is very good, providing clear direction and ensuring steady improvement. The school has a very good climate for learning in which pupils develop very well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school has a very healthy climate for learning in which all groups of pupils flourish.
- A highly productive combination of very good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to their learning results in their achieving GCSE results that are very high in comparison with those of similar schools.
- Staff provide very good care for pupils, who hold the school in high regard, so that they mature well.
- The headteacher and other key staff provide very good leadership that has led to significant recent improvements.
- Unsatisfactory management of information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education has resulted in elements of the curriculum in those subjects not meeting statutory requirements.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school has installed a new computer suite, significantly increased recruitment to the GCSE art course and replaced its formerly unsatisfactory science accommodation with new laboratories. The school's size renders it particularly vulnerable to the unexpected absence of key staff. This has contributed to recent weaknesses in provision for information and communication technology.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is very good in all year groups. Standards on entry are broadly average and rise to above national expectations by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment are above national expectations and the GCSE results are above the national average. Results match the school's targets and are very high in comparison with those of similar schools, indicated by A* in the table, below.

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

Key: A - very high; 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.*

In Years 9 and 11, standards are well above average in English and mathematics, and in science, they are above average. In these core subjects, pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Overall, standards in art and design, and music, are well above average. Achievement in music is outstanding. It is very good in English, mathematics, science, history, art and design, and drama. Standards generally are below national expectations in ICT in Year 11. In so far as pupils are sufficiently competent in ICT skills to support their learning in other subjects, their achievement is satisfactory but this year group has not been taught the full programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Those who are following the vocational GCSE course in ICT are achieving very well and making up for missed work. Boys do not do as well as girls but the gap is closing, especially in English. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. These help teachers to promote **pupils' very good personal development**, as well as their very good achievement and high results in public examinations. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils behave well around the school and very well in lessons, where they are keen to take full advantage of their teachers' expertise. The rate of attendance is above the national average and pupils are very punctual to lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good standard of education for its pupils. Teaching is very good. Pupils learn very well because teachers plan challenging lessons with high expectations that pupils will concentrate and work hard throughout lessons. Teachers stimulate in pupils an outstanding desire to learn so they become increasingly independent as they mature. The curriculum is good, with several very good features, but it does not meet the full requirements for ICT and physical education. Staff provide high levels of care for pupils so that, whatever their personal circumstances, they achieve very well. They provide very good guidance and support so pupils come to understand very well exactly what they must do to improve. The school has good links with parents and with the community. Teachers make good contributions to the work of local primary schools. The school has good links with local colleges, which contribute to its provision for vocational and work-related learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Leadership by the headteacher and key staff is very good and provides the school with a very clear direction and sense of common purpose. Leaders have established very effective teams of teachers and support staff, committed to providing high quality programmes for all groups of pupils. The leadership of some subjects is outstanding. Management is good. Monitoring is carried out well but has yet to secure highly consistent practice, for example, in the use of performance data. Governance is good and plays an important role in school developments, although effective action to maintain a fully compliant curriculum was not taken early enough to prevent non-compliance in ICT and physical education.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents generally consider that the school provides well for their children and they value the lengths to which staff go to ensure pupils make the best progress possible. They are pleased with the effective ways that the school handles the rare instances of harassment that occur and the way it helps pupils with special educational needs to do well. Many parents feel that the arrangements for parents' evenings and communications in general are not efficient but recognise that the school deals with individual enquiries well when matters are raised with them. Pupils generally enjoy school. They recognise the very good teaching and personal care they receive and appreciate how well they are progressing as a result.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To raise standards of ICT in Years 10 and 11 by establishing a programme of teaching that makes full provision for all pupils in those years.
- To provide better leadership and management for physical education and ICT.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Comply fully with the National Curriculum for ICT and physical education.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

All groups of pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Standards are **above average overall**. They are well above average in English and mathematics, at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. Standards of information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 11 are below national expectations, although pupils' levels of skill are sufficient for them to meet the demands made in other subjects so that their overall achievement remains high.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2003 were outstanding in comparison with results of pupils in similar schools.
- Test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the average for pupils in similar schools.
- Achievement in English, mathematics and science is very good.
- Achievement in music is outstanding.
- Standards in English, mathematics, art and design and music are well above average overall.
- Standards in ICT at the end of Year 11 are below national expectations.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.2 (33.5)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	37.7 (34.9)	35.4 (34.7)
science	34.9 (33.3)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 121 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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	58 (67)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94 (96)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	37.2 (40.5)	34.7 (n/a)

There were 119 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In 2003, test results at the end of Year 9 were above the national average overall, an improvement on the two preceding years. Overall, girls did better than boys by a greater margin than is seen nationally. The performance of girls in English was well above the national average for girls. They did better than boys by a slightly greater margin than nationally owing to relatively low boys' results in the writing test. Considering their attainment levels when they entered the school, pupils' rate of improvement was well above that of similar pupils nationally in English and mathematics, and above the expected rate of improvement in science. Overall, the school's results have risen at a similar rate to the national trend in recent years. Teachers' assessments show that the levels reached in ICT in 2003 rose to marginally above national expectations overall, with girls doing better than boys and pupils generally achieving well.

2. GCSE results in 2003 were above the national average, both in the proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades of A* to C and in pupils' average point scores. They matched the school's targets well. Pupils' results were very high in comparison with those of pupils in similar schools. GCSE results in 2003 were not as high as they had been in 2002, when they were well above the national average. However, relative to their prior attainment, pupils did better in 2003. Girls' results are generally higher than those of boys, most clearly in English, mathematics, French, history, and art and design. However, improvements in boys' achievement have been closing the gap in English, and to a lesser extent, in mathematics and French. Boys do not achieve as well as girls in physical education because they are offered a more limited range of activities.
3. Standards of work are above national expectations by the end of Year 9 and match recent test results closely. Standards in English and mathematics are well above national expectations and, in music, they are very high by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11, standards are above national expectations. In English, mathematics, design and technology, art and design, music and drama, they are well above expectations. Standards in religious education, and in work-related courses, correspond closely with national expectations. In ICT in Year 11, they are below expectations. In all other subjects, they are above.
4. Very effective teaching and pupils' very good attitudes to learning combine to ensure that achievement is very good. This is particularly so in English, mathematics, science and history, where leadership is excellent. In music, excellent leadership and teaching result in pupils' outstanding achievement. Additionally, in Years 10 and 11, achievement in art and design and design and technology, is also very good. As a result of the unpredictable staffing difficulties, the management of ICT has not been adequate to ensure that all pupils currently in Year 11 have been taught the full National Curriculum programmes of study. Consequently, pupils' achievement is barely satisfactory. Very good provision for ICT this year is resulting in marked improvements. For example, pupils following the vocational GCSE course are achieving very well and are rapidly making up for missed work from last year. Other pupils in Years 10 and 11 are sufficiently competent in ICT to achieve very well in other subjects.
5. Standards of literacy are well above expectations with very good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills in English, history, religious education and music. Science, and art and design place a strong emphasis on developing writing skills. Competence in mathematics is good overall, particularly so in science, history, geography and music but, generally, contributions by other subjects to pupils' numeracy are less useful. Computers are used very well in science and music, and well in English, but few subjects have ready access to computer facilities, which are mainly used for specialist teaching.
6. The school identifies pupils' individual learning needs very well. Most of the pupils with special educational needs who enter the school with low reading ages make very good progress during their first year, with some pupils making double the expected rate of progress. By the end of Year 9, most of these pupils have progressed by at least one National Curriculum level, with some gaining two levels in English, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 11, they typically achieve several GCSE grades of A* to G, with many pupils achieving higher grades of A* to C. Pupils who are gifted or talented achieve very well. Pupils are entered for National Curriculum tests a year early so that they can progress very rapidly onto GCSE courses.
7. The standards of Year 11 pupils attending Cornwall College St. Austell vary. They are average in the *Construction*, *Engineering* and *Hairdressing and Beauty Care* options, but just below in the *Motor Vehicle Engineering* and *Information and Communication Technology* courses. Progress has been unsatisfactory in *Information and Communication Technology*, where teachers have changed too often. Achievement is satisfactory in *Motor Vehicle Engineering*, but much better in the other three options. Pupils appreciate the practical work on some of the options but have been generally frustrated by the lack of time they have for any sustained work of this nature.

8. Nearly all pupils on the Flexible Learning Programme at Truro College are working to a satisfactory standard and many are producing good work. Progress in the three option subjects is good overall. In *Sport and Recreation*, most students are working at pass grade level, with the most able pupils working at merit level. The pupils in the *Public Services* option have nearly all made good progress and are close to merit level. The *Hairdressing* pupils show good levels of understanding, but their limited facility in English is currently holding them back from moving beyond pass level.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils are very punctual throughout the school day and attendance is good. They have very good attitudes toward school activities. Behaviour is good and overall provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is highly successful in motivating pupils to learn.
- Pupils of all abilities show high levels of enthusiasm for school activities.
- Pupils are very punctual at the start of the day and in arriving at lessons during the day.
- Relationships between pupils are very good and pupils have high levels of confidence and self-esteem.
- Behaviour in lessons is very good and sometimes excellent.
- Pupils' understanding of the range of cultural traditions within the United Kingdom is shallow.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.3	School data	0.0
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

9. The school's very good ethos encourages pupils to want to learn. Staff expect high standards of behaviour in lessons and there is a clear expectation that pupils will work hard and strive to achieve their best. Teachers work hard to develop pupils' independent learning skills.
10. Pupils in all years, including those with special educational needs or those who have a particular gift or talent, are very positive about the school and the way in which it helps them to learn. They understand their individual targets very well and find these helpful. The school has a number of very good strategies to prevent disaffection and avoid exclusions. Specific programmes, such as the *Foundation for Work* award, provided by the Education Business Partnership, generate high levels of commitment from the pupils involved. Large numbers participate in school productions and pupils support sports teams well.
11. The very short morning registration period, followed immediately by the first lesson, encourages pupils to be punctual. As most pupils are dependent on school transport, lateness is mainly caused by transport problems. During the day, lessons start very promptly.
12. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils in all year groups comment on the very good relationships they have with teachers. Pupils co-operate with each other very well in lessons and develop very good collaborative skills. By the end of Year 11, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are confident and show high levels of self-esteem.

13. Very good, and sometimes excellent, behaviour in lessons makes a significant contribution to pupils' very good progress. Whilst behaviour around the school is good overall, pupils are sometimes too boisterous in corridors and outside. However, pupils are confident that instances of bullying or harassment are effectively tackled. Teachers and staff from the *Individual Needs* team manage the behaviour of those pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties very well so they also develop well and grow in self-esteem.
14. Spiritual development is satisfactory. English, religious studies and music make good provision and, in religious studies, teachers use imaginative activities to provide many good opportunities for reflection. In English, teachers often highlight the spiritual aspects of written texts, whilst in music, pupils come to appreciate the capacity for different types of music to move the spirit in different ways. They also develop a sensitivity and responsiveness to others. However, similar opportunities in other subjects are rarely exploited.
15. Pupils develop a very good sense of right and wrong and show respect for each other. Moral issues are explored in many subjects. In science, for example, the dilemmas presented by genetic engineering and care for the environment are explored and, in geography, issues surrounding fair trade and the environment are effectively addressed. Staff present very good examples to pupils, very effectively setting the tone that results in pupils conforming closely to the expected codes of conduct throughout the school.
16. The social development of the pupils is very good across all subject areas. Collaborative work is a strong feature of the pupils' learning, with paired and group work a particularly strong feature in lessons.
17. Work in modern languages improves pupils' understanding of other European cultures. In art and design, and music, projects on Aboriginal and African art and World Music enable students to appreciate different cultural traditions. The school also pays regard to the local traditions and culture of Cornwall, but insufficient attention is paid to preparing pupils for life in a multi-cultural United Kingdom.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	582	47	1
White - any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed - White and Asian	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **very good** quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is very good. The curriculum is good, although it has weaknesses in physical education and ICT. The school provides for pupils' care and welfare very well so that pupils are happy and enthusiastic. The school and its departments are very well led and their management is good, but governance, although generally good, has not ensured that full statutory requirements are met.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Assessment is good. In Years 7 to 9, very effective teaching enables pupils to achieve very well in National Curriculum tests. This continues through Years 10 and 11 so that, overall, pupils achieve very high standards in GCSE examinations in comparison with pupils in similar schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent teaching is evident in many subjects.
- Teachers have highly challenging expectations of pupils' concentration and pace of work that result in very effective learning.
- Teachers have excellent knowledge of their subjects that they apply very well to explain difficult concepts successfully.
- Teachers structure lessons very well and incorporate stimulating activities that capture the interest and imagination of pupils.
- Pupils apply themselves exceptionally well to learning and they readily develop the capacity to learn independently.
- Generally very good assessment procedures are not consistently applied in all subjects

Commentary

18. In the course of the inspection, excellent teaching was seen in English, mathematics, science, art, music, history and religious education. Very good teaching is widespread and is the most significant reason for very good learning and achievement, overall. Teaching was good, or better, in four out of five of the lessons seen.
19. Features common to the most successful teaching are high yet realistic expectations of what pupils can achieve and very stimulating introductions that capture pupils' interest or imagination. Consequently, pupils learn very well, sustaining concentration and working highly productively throughout the lesson. Teachers' very good anticipation of waning concentration by those pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties enables them to intervene in time to re-kindle interest with deft, thoughtful questioning. This was evident in the practice of several teachers in different subjects and circumstances. For example, by engaging a pupil in discussion about the alternative techniques used by different sculptors, the teacher drew a distracted pupil back to productive work in a studio environment. On another occasion, in a group taught by two teachers, not only did the dialogue between the teachers produce outstanding insights into the interpretation of historical evidence for pupils, it provided an excellent example for the trainee teacher who was present. Even within this very large group, the teachers were ever sensitive to the needs of pupils with particular talent as well as those who found learning and prolonged concentration difficult.
20. In many lessons, teachers place a strong emphasis on personal research and independent learning while setting challenging tasks for pupils. For example, using *Powerpoint* in an English lesson, pupils presented their critical analysis of poems to the whole class for evaluation. The teacher gave very strong emphasis to the assessment criteria so that pupils were able to apply them properly when evaluating each other's work. As a result, they came to a very clear understanding of the elements contributing to the high standards for which they were striving. In less structured circumstances, in art and design and music, for example, teachers' probing questioning of individual pupils promotes very effective learning of techniques. Pupils gain good insights into the work of professional artists and performers without this inhibiting individuals' creative ideas. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to develop hypotheses in science or produce their own lines of reasoning in mathematics. These approaches are very successful in giving pupils confidence in their abilities so that they can express their views or explain their thinking very articulately.
21. Teachers apply their excellent knowledge of subjects to explain difficult concepts very well. For example, in a music lesson, the teacher's explanations used precise and elegant descriptions whilst introducing mental calculations. In this way, the teacher deepened pupils'

understanding of tempo and improved their competence with music technology so pupils were able to refine their compositions to a very high level.

22. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the same very good teaching that permeates the school. Teachers are aware of the needs and abilities of the pupils and work very effectively with well-deployed teaching assistants to ensure that a wide and effective range of strategies is used to enable the pupils to learn very well and to develop their understanding. As a result, pupils concentrate on the tasks set by teachers or assistants. However, pupils' individual education plans are not as sharply focused as they could be so that, whilst teaching is never less than satisfactory, pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. The management of the pupils and the support for teaching and learning provided by the teaching assistants are very good and contribute significantly to pupils' very good achievement. With careful planning, teachers and assistants build on pupils' strengths and help them to be independent learners and to work together collaboratively. As a result, pupils show a keen awareness of each other's strengths and weaknesses and support each other well.
23. Teachers generally assess work accurately and pupils are well aware of their levels of performance in relation to National Curriculum levels and target GCSE grades. However, very good procedures are not consistently followed by all departments. There are very good systems in English, mathematics and science that enable pupils to assess their own levels and set their own targets for improvement. In history, geography, music, and art and design, teachers provide pupils with very accurate assessments that help them to improve. Pupils effectively use self-assessment in ICT. They evaluate one another's work to good effect in English, history and ICT. Drama teachers have devised their own useful criteria for pupils in Years 7 to 9, which they use well. Assessment is satisfactory in religious education and citizenship. It is unsatisfactory in physical education, where it is not sufficiently accurate to provide a good basis for improving standards. Marking, often supplemented with oral feedback in lessons, is good, regular, frequent and diagnostic, and this helps pupils improve their work. It is very good in English, mathematics and science.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 95 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
8 (8.4%)	39 (41.1%)	36 (37.9%)	11 (11.6%)	1 (1%)	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.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good, with several very good features but some weaknesses. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- For its size, the school offers a very good range of opportunities for pupils of all ages and levels of attainment.
- The curriculum includes some very good, innovative features that take account of pupils' needs very well.
- The curriculum in almost all subjects is well planned.
- The use of ICT to support learning is not well planned or satisfactorily co-ordinated.
- Statutory requirements are not met in boys' physical education and ICT. The school does not conduct a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

Commentary

24. The school provides a broad and generally well-balanced curriculum for pupils of all ages. Time is distributed efficiently so that limitations often found in small schools are not present. The curriculum is constantly reviewed to take account of pupils' needs and there is good provision to ensure that learning programmes are well matched to pupils' aspirations and levels of attainment. A number of initiatives have been taken in the subjects of the curriculum in order to address the differences in attainment between boys and girls. In English, the performance of single-gender teaching groups is compared with that of mixed groups. In history, English and science, the use of ICT has been increased to retain the interest and commitment of boys. However, ICT is not effectively planned to meet needs in all subjects. Positive links with local primary schools and with post-16 institutions ensure that there is good continuity of pupils' learning.
25. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' personal development. The well-planned programme of personal, health and social education covers sex and health education and alcohol and drugs misuse. There are very good programmes of study for pupils whose self-esteem and application to learning are not high. Careers advice for older pupils is good and the provision for vocational education is wider than in most schools. There are good links with local colleges for vocational courses and, where necessary, the needs of individual pupils are well met through a more flexible balance between education in the workplace and at school.
26. The planning for younger boys in physical education does not offer the full range of activities required by the National Curriculum. Statutory requirements are not met in ICT in Year 11, where there is at present no common provision, although this is planned for next year. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
27. The school provides good curricular opportunities for pupils with special educational needs, particularly in Years 10 and 11. When pupils are taken out of lessons for special teaching, teaching assistants work closely with subject teachers to lessen the impact this has on pupils' broader curriculum. However, the system does occasionally impinge on the pupils' statutory curriculum entitlement. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, the *life skills* option is particularly effective for pupils with special educational needs and contributes well to their very good achievement overall.
28. There is very good provision for the arts through drama, music and dance. The main focus for this is a major musical production which includes pupils from all years. A large number of pupils take part in arts-based activities, although there are no boys taking part in dance. Provision for sport is good and many pupils expressed satisfaction with this provision. The range offered is narrow and focuses on traditional team games which are most popular with boys. Girls feel the range does not meet their needs. A girls' football club has recently been started to address this concern. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities which cater well for the interests and needs of all pupils. The provision in science is very good, with a good range of fieldwork and visits, a science day, booster lessons and the opportunity to take a triple-science GCSE course after school. Additional GCSE opportunities are also provided after school in religious education and physical education. School visits to the theatre and to other places of interest, and visits abroad, extend and support the curriculum, particularly in English and art and design. The Year 7 camp provides an excellent induction opportunity for pupils. The annual activities week sees pupils engage in a wide variety of interesting and adventurous activities, ranging from cycling in Brittany to sailing.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very good levels of care, welfare, health and safety, and very good support, advice and guidance, to all pupils. The school seeks pupils' views, takes them seriously and acts on them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very high degree of trust in staff.
- The school provides a very safe, secure and friendly environment, with very good support for all pupils.
- The school provides a high level of care for pupils with special educational needs.
- There are very good induction arrangements for pupils entering Year 7.
- Pupils value the school council but do not feel well informed about its effectiveness.

Commentary

29. A significant feature of the school is the outstanding degree to which pupils feel they have a trusting relationship with adults. Pupils in all year groups speak very warmly of how much they appreciate this. This has a positive impact on behaviour, pupils' motivation to learn, and their willingness to risk making mistakes as part of their learning.
30. The school has very good procedures and policies to ensure pupils' health and safety. Arrangements for child protection are clear and well thought through. Pupils are highly confident that there are adults in the school to whom they could turn for advice, support and guidance. Pupils are clear about their individual targets and understand how they need to improve their work to achieve these. The programme of careers studies provides older pupils with good guidance and information about the range of post-16 opportunities which is available.
31. Pupils entering the school in Year 7 are well prepared for the transfer to secondary school. The school hosts a number of events, such as a sports day, which enable pupils to become familiar with the site. Staff also visit the primary schools to talk to pupils and there is good transfer of information. Some good curricular links are developing, for example, in mathematics. Pupils and parents appreciate the special day and evening spent in and around the school during the summer term.
32. Most pupils are enthusiastic about the school council and are able to cite a number of changes resulting from its work. For example, there is now a greater selection of healthy food in the canteen and a 'healthy food' day once a week. However, pupils were also concerned that there is often very little choice of food for those not at the front of the queue. Not all pupils feel that they are kept informed of the outcome of suggestions and discussions.
33. The *Individual Needs* team, who make provision for pupils with special educational needs, has particularly good knowledge and understanding of pupils. Staff place great emphasis on ensuring that any personal or social difficulties encountered by pupils are overcome, so enabling them to achieve very well. Teachers and teaching assistants provide a very high level of support for pupils on the *life skills* option in Years 10 and 11, contributing very significantly to its overall effectiveness. Emotionally vulnerable pupils and those in danger of being excluded receive very effective support from the *Individual Needs* and pastoral teams working effectively together. Subject teachers and year team leaders are very well informed about pupils' needs and work together to ensure pupils learn very well. Individual education plans are adequate but staff and parents need to be more closely involved in their preparation for them to be fully effective. Teaching assistants make significant contributions to reviews of progress made by pupils with statements of special educational need, so these are effective. However, reviews of progress towards individual targets of pupils are not as thoroughly recorded.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents. Links with the wider community, including other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes good account of parents' views, using questionnaires very well.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and of their children's education.

- There are very good links with primary feeder schools and increasingly good links with Truro College.
- Parents are not satisfied with the practical arrangements for parents' evenings.

Commentary

34. The school actively seeks parents' views over a number of issues. These include the proposed changes to school uniform and the redesigning of the school day. The school has commissioned an external poll of parents' views of the school which it plans to repeat at intervals. The school welcomes parents' views and has a weekly drop-in session where parents can meet senior staff to discuss their concerns. This provides an additional route for parents who feel that they are unable to resolve a problem through the normal channels.
35. Parents actively support school events and many enable their children to participate in after-school activities by providing transport. Many pupils are actively supported in their studies at home through access to a computer and the Internet. There is a good response from parents to parents' evenings at the school. However, many parents are unhappy about the organisation of these events, as they have to wait for long periods and only manage to meet a few teachers. Some parents feel that communications from the school are not sufficiently reliable, depending in the main upon letters conveyed by pupils.
36. The links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good and very close links are maintained with parents of pupils who have the most acute need. There is a significant amount of informal contact, as well as the regular review meetings. However, the parents of pupils who have been identified for school-based support are not sufficiently involved. The school liaises effectively with the primary sector in respect of pupils with special educational needs and the induction of pupils in Year 7 with special educational needs is very successful as a result of this. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has established very good links with external agencies.
37. The school has good links with feeder primary schools. Work is continuing across a number of curriculum areas. There are good links with Truro College for work-related learning which occurs at the college. The College system for feeding back information on students' progress, both to the school and to parents, is very effective. There are very good links with the Cornwall Business Partnership, who make significant contributions to the careers teaching and provide the *Foundation for Work* award for some Year 11 pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. Leadership is very good because it gives high priority to raising standards and engenders high achievement. The school is small and faces barriers to improvement as it is vulnerable to unpredictable staffing difficulties. Governance and management are good because they generally succeed in overcoming these barriers well. However, the governing body has not secured full compliance with the requirements of the National Curriculum or with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very well thought-through, realistic ambitions for the school that are conveyed very well to other leaders and promoted through effective delegation.
- The headteacher and other senior managers are well regarded and fully in touch with staff so they can anticipate and react effectively to emerging issues.
- Leadership in English, mathematics, science, history and music is outstanding.
- The governing body plays an important strategic role in the school's development and is well informed about its strengths and weaknesses.

- The governing body has not ensured full compliance with the requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT and physical education.
- Performance measurements and other data are generally well used but practice is not consistent in all departments.
- The use of tutorial time is not effectively monitored to identify and address inconsistencies in practice.

Commentary

38. The headteacher, other senior leaders and managers, and the governing body share the same high ambitions for the school. This common purpose is responsible for the sustained high standards of achievement and of individual care for pupils.
39. In the period since his appointment, the headteacher has wrought several important changes in the management structure and patterns of delegated responsibility that have had significant beneficial effect in the school. Subject leaders have considerable confidence in the headteacher and other senior staff so they work closely together towards whole-school improvements. For example, curriculum leaders have worked together to draw up and implement strategies for raising the achievement of boys, based on the most effective practice. Improved arrangements for managing the care of pupils are not entirely successful, as individual tutors are not sufficiently co-ordinated to exercise their responsibilities equally effectively.
40. Recently, the governing body has worked very closely with senior managers to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision. For example, after a thorough review of ICT in 2002, a good plan was prepared and is being effectively put into practice. The priorities that were identified were most appropriate, successive objectives have been met and provision in the subject is developing well, with considerable improvements for younger pupils generally and confident application of ICT in most subjects.
41. Very good leadership has established very effective teams that are committed to raising standards for all groups of pupils, to sustaining high achievement and to helping pupils overcome individual barriers to learning that they encounter. Leadership in English, mathematics, science, history and music is first rate. Practices that are routine in these subjects are well worth disseminating to other schools. This already happens in English and music, as teachers work very effectively in partner schools. Leadership in physical education and ICT is unsatisfactory. In ICT, although the main key issue has now been addressed, improvements since the last inspection have not been satisfactory. Lengthy and unpredictable staff absences have had serious consequences for teaching of ICT to most pupils in Years 10 and 11, although this is now being remedied. In physical education, leadership has not ensured that the sound practice and curriculum offered to girls is extended to boys. As a result, boys do not enjoy the range of activities expected. With this exception, leaders take very effective steps to ensure that all groups of pupils are able to take full advantage of the school's provision.
42. Passionate and committed leadership provides the very effective special educational needs team with a very clear sense of purpose and direction. Part of the success of the team lies in the way they are encouraged to work to their strengths, talents and interests. As a result, assistants are deployed very effectively in subjects so that pupils and teaching staff are ably supported. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. A recent very thorough review of identification and assessment procedures has improved the efficiency of the whole team. Provision is carefully matched to identified needs. The system for writing and reviewing individual education plans involves staff, parents and pupils, and dovetails with most existing school systems. Although data are collected to check the achievement and progress of individual pupils, they are not analysed in sufficient depth to identify strengths and weaknesses in overall provision so efforts can be productively focused on maximising achievement.

43. The governors and headteacher integrate development planning and financial planning well so that many of the disadvantages of a small school are overcome. The higher than usual figure unspent by March 2003 arose because of funds made available to the school shortly before the end of the financial year.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,030,143
Total expenditure	2,018,184
Expenditure per pupil	3,392

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	132,309
Balance carried forward to the next	144,268

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in response to very good teaching.
- Standards of pupils, especially girls, are well above average in Years 9 and 11.
- There is excellent leadership and management of a forward-looking department.
- There is a strong emphasis on the development of pupils as active and independent learners.
- There is very good use of assessment to assist progress.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership of the subject	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Commentary

Test and examination results

44. The National Curriculum test results for Year 9 pupils in 2003 were well above the national average and well above those of similar schools. A significant number of pupils, more girls than boys, attained results above the expected level for their age. The GCSE results for Year 11 pupils in 2003, in both language and literature, were also well above the national average. The impressive results for pupils in both Year 9 and Year 11 were part of a strong upward trend, although the standard of boys' writing was a relative weakness.

Standards and achievement

45. Standards are particularly strong in speaking and listening, with pupils able to speak clearly and confidently in direct response to teachers, in making class presentations, when acting out role-plays and when taking part in debate. Pupils also read fluently, accurately and with expression. Throughout their time in school, pupils write well, both creatively and in more formal situations. They compose some sparkling poetry. By Years 10 and 11, pupils build on the high quality of writing lower down the school to produce good analytical work, particularly on the literature course, although some lower-attaining pupils, especially boys, make frequent errors. In producing such good quality of work overall, pupils are responding to very good teaching, characterised by high expectations, and the work reflects pupils' very good attitudes. Pupils join the school with standards in English which are marginally above average. Throughout their time in school, they achieve very well. This applies to both the most able, gifted and talented, and also to lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs. Boys in particular are now improving at a faster rate than previously, whilst girls continue to achieve very well, so that the gap between them has narrowed.

Teaching and learning

46. The teachers are experienced and have high expectations of pupils, challenge them well and maintain a strong work ethos throughout lessons. The best lessons fully engage pupils in a range of activities that develop their skills as independent and collaborative learners. For example, Year 11 pupils were seen giving very effective presentations based upon their poetry anthologies, using ICT and role-play activities to add colour. Other pupils in the class assessed their contributions well. Such activities, skilfully managed by teachers, give pupils a strong insight into effective practice and develop their understanding of how to improve their examination grades and the standard of their work generally. A similarly effective active approach was seen in a Year 9 lesson in which dramatic performances of a scene from *Macbeth* helped pupils unpick the nuances of a demanding text and significantly increased their understanding of character. Teachers' marking is very detailed and shows pupils how to improve their work. Teachers use ICT, particularly interactive facilities, very imaginatively to enhance the quality of their own presentations.

Leadership and management

47. The leadership is constantly looking for ways to improve provision. Teachers, and their able assistants, work very effectively as a team. The subject leader has rigorously analysed strengths and areas for development in the subject. In consequence, there have been some significant changes. For example, pupils are now grouped to improve the historically lower rate of boys' achievement compared to that of girls. The assessment system is a particular strength, with pupils fully involved in the assessment of learning, helping them to set meaningful targets for themselves. English makes a strong contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision, particularly in the area of personal development through independent learning. The teaching of English also provides an excellent model for developing literacy skills across the whole curriculum. Results in English literature are now better and the overall rate of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The school makes very good provision for improving the already high standards of literacy still further. All staff have been trained in good practice and the results are very evident in several subject areas. The development of speaking and listening skills is given a high priority in several subjects, such as English, history, religious studies and music. In modern foreign languages, there is an emphasis on precision in language. However, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to develop good speaking and listening skills in physical education. Different subject areas also give attention to improving writing. For example, in science, pupils write freely but are given structure when they need it. In art and design, pupils keep journals to chart their creative development. Several subjects give due emphasis to developing pupils' research skills. There are still inconsistencies in approaches to the marking of pupils' work. Overall, however, well-developed literacy skills are a major contributory factor to the high standards that many pupils attain.

Modern foreign languages

French was inspected in full. German and Spanish were sampled. In German, which is studied by the more able pupils, GCSE results in 2003 were well above the national average. As they do nationally, girls perform better than boys. The achievement of older pupils in German varies because their learning was severely disrupted through staff absence last year but, nonetheless, some achieve well. Year 10 pupils who have become disaffected with French have made a fresh start with Spanish and are making very good progress, achieving high standards for the stage of the course which they have reached.

French

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall.
- Pupils of all levels of prior attainment achieve well and some achieve very well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive.
- Results in external examinations are above average overall, and girls' results are well above average.
- Departmental leadership is very good and the department is well managed.
- Very good account is taken of pupils' needs.
- Boys' attainment in examinations is well below average.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities in lessons to speak the language they are learning.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership of the subject	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Commentary

Test and examination results

49. In 2003, teachers assessed pupils' attainment at age 14 as slightly above national expectations, with the expected proportion of pupils reaching higher levels. However, whilst girls' attainment was above the average for girls at this stage, that of boys fell below the national average for boys. In GCSE examinations, results in French have shown a rising trend since the last inspection and, in 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades was slightly above the national average. However, the overall figures mask the fact that, whereas girls' attainment in the GCSE examinations was well above the national average, boys' attainment was well below that standard.

Standards and achievement

50. Pupils respond very well to the very good teaching and achieve high standards relative to their prior attainment. Lower attainers often achieve very well. In the work seen, the differences between boys' and girls' achievement are not as marked as in their examination performance. Lower attainers in Year 8 learn to understand and manipulate the past tense. In Years 10 and 11, the most capable pupils reach very high standards and can understand and use complex language patterns. Lower attainers in Year 11 recently achieved above-average grades in some parts of their practice GCSE examination. Standards of speaking across the board are not as high as in other areas of language learning because pupils have fewer opportunities to rehearse and use the language in conversational mode than they do to practise language structures.

Teaching and learning

51. Most of the teaching seen during the inspection was very good. Pupils learn very well because relationships are very good and teachers plan their lessons for pace and variety. They expect high levels of application from all pupils irrespective of their capabilities. Effective use is made of a range of media to support learning and to focus attention, and teachers use some very inventive strategies to develop listening skills. Pupils respond very positively and attitudes enable them to learn well. Pupils' work is regularly and helpfully marked. They know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Too little planned use is made of ICT to support learning because of access problems.

Leadership and management

52. This is a strong department. It is well led and teachers work very well as a team. Strategic planning is very good and there is a clear vision for the future. Data are used well to evaluate the work of the department and to plan teaching, and developments have been put in place to try to improve the standards reached by boys. A good curriculum is offered in modern languages, designed to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their linguistic capabilities, can achieve well. Examination results and the attitudes of pupils towards learning languages have improved considerably since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of mathematics is excellent, and management is very good.
- Standards of attainment are rising, especially by the end of Year 9, and girls' standards in all years are rising rapidly.
- Teaching is very good, with some excellent features.
- Assessment procedures are very good. Pupils know their levels and targets, and how to achieve them, although the quality of marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good. They show interest and enthusiasm, and work hard.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership of the subject	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Commentary

Test and examination results

53. In 2003, Year 9 pupils' national test results rose to well above the national average and they were well above those of similar schools. Although girls' results have been better than boys' in the last three years, the gap has narrowed noticeably. The GCSE results at the end of Year 11 were only just above the national average in 2003. They were lower than in 2002, when the percentage of A* to C grades was well above the national average. Bearing in mind their lower attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2001, these pupils achieved as well as those in the previous year. Limited access to computers led to relative weakness in data handling. As they had been at the end of Year 9, girls' results were higher than boys'. The proportion of A* to G grades was above the national average.

Standards and achievement

54. Pupils enter the school with average standards in mathematics. They make rapid progress in very well structured and challenging lessons and extra 'booster' sessions that raise the standards of weaker pupils. As a result, the most capable pupils in Year 8 are to be entered for national tests normally taken at the end of Year 9. Year 10 pupils now follow a modular GCSE course, introduced this year, to help pupils achieve better. Work on the first module, data-handling, shows high standards. The coursework of Year 11 pupils shows promise of better results than last year. In discussions, pupils show enthusiasm and ability, with no significant differences between girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs or very low attainment are catered for very well. They are taught in small groups with extra individual attention from the specialist teaching assistant. Teachers from the science department also teach these pupils, in rooms with plentiful ICT facilities.

Teaching and learning

55. All teaching seen was good or better, with some excellent features. Teachers plan very well, using an effective three-part structure in lessons and a variety of learning activities, although the lack of easy access to computers limits pupils' use of ICT in lessons. Teachers introduce lessons very successfully, using games and competitions to revise mental calculation or recall knowledge. They use excellent questioning techniques to assess how well pupils are learning so that they can adapt their plans accordingly. Most teachers end their lessons well with either summaries of learning, related puzzles or problems, for example. Teachers have high expectations, challenging the more able and confident, while supporting vulnerable pupils with individual help, care and guidance. Teachers use very good assessment procedures to give precise National Curriculum levels so pupils can record their progress and what they must do to achieve their next target. As a result, pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very good. They work very hard and many show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. On the whole, the standard of marking varies too much. Pupils' marking of their own work stimulates independence but teachers do not follow this up consistently to ensure that it is accurate. Some marking shows detailed corrections, with very constructive comments to guide pupils, but not all work is so well corrected.

Leadership and management

56. Excellent leadership has established a very effective and supportive team of full-time specialists who work very well together. They share enthusiasm for new initiatives, such as the early entry to tests and examinations, and new assessment arrangements. The head of department provides very good guidance and support for non-specialists and temporary teachers. Schemes of work do not include explicit references to citizenship or to the spiritual and cultural dimensions of mathematics, so these aspects are not consistently included in lessons. The three mathematics rooms are large and well resourced, apart from the lack of computers, but cannot cater for all mathematics lessons. Management of the department is very good and has brought about good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Competence in mathematics is good overall. Number skills are taught well in mathematics lessons. Whole-school training took place two years ago but little has happened since, so many staff do not teach numeracy effectively in their own subject. Music includes numeracy well, when mathematics skills are needed, for example, with use of line and scatter graphs, or work on time and sequences. History teachers plan for numeracy well. For example, they use statistics when studying the Treaty of Versailles in Year 11. The geography department uses the data-handling skills and a wider variety of graphical techniques than normally seen. Science teachers revise the manipulation of formulae and graph work, so that pupils

competently label axes and use correct units and sensible scales. Some subject areas, such as art and design, physical education and religious education, do not plan for numeracy in their schemes of work.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils enjoy science and work hard.
- The leadership of the department is excellent.
- There are excellent, well-resourced laboratories.
- By the end of their first three years in school, too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership of the subject	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Test and examination results

58. The standards of pupils when they start at the school are average. In 2003, the end of Year 9 tests show that standards had risen to above average and, when compared with schools where pupils are of similar ability, they are well above average. However, test results also show that the number of pupils reaching the highest levels is average rather than above average. Boys and girls reached similar standards. At the end of Year 11, GCSE examination results were above average and for girls, they were well above average, reflecting the higher standard of girls when they started at the school.

Standards and achievement

59. The above-average test results and standard of work in lessons and books show that the pupils' achievements from Year 7 to the end of Year 9 and from Years 10 to 11 are very good. In Years 7 to 9, pupils gain confidence and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across the full range of National Curriculum topics. They enjoy experimenting and carry out investigations with confidence. They work safely and sensibly alone or in groups and they learn scientific methods of recording. All students in Years 10 and 11 follow the GCSE double-award science course. Two classes of students are studying at the higher level and some of these pupils attend lessons after school to study for the triple-award examination. Year 10 pupils have made a good start on the course and Year 11 pupils are well prepared for the GCSE examination this year. In both years, there is a good balance of theory and practical work. In lessons, the pupils display a sincere interest in science and they confidently plan and organise their own investigations, giving careful consideration to correct scientific procedures and methods of recording.

Teaching and learning

60. Teachers explain new topics very well. They use questions very skilfully to draw out pupils' ideas and to develop their thinking skills. They have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Teachers set clear learning objectives and refer back to them during lessons to ensure that pupils have really understood the work. Most lessons have a good mix of oral, written and practical work and pupils have opportunities for whole-class, group or independent work. The variety of teaching styles matches the wide range of learning styles so that pupils of all abilities enjoy their lessons, work hard and make very good progress. Pupils are taught in ability groups, which allows higher-attaining pupils to work at a faster rate and to tackle more challenging tasks. By being taught in smaller groups, and with the additional support of teaching assistants, the lower-attaining pupils also make very good progress. Assessment, including marking, is good but not all teachers write comments that encourage or advise the pupils on what they should do to improve. As they move on through the school, most teachers encourage pupils to take increasing responsibility for their own learning through self-assessment and target setting. Literacy is well developed because pupils are encouraged to explain their ideas. Teachers insist that pupils use key words in discussions and in writing, so they increase their confident use of scientific vocabulary. Teachers use ICT exceptionally well and pupils use it for recording results, data logging and research. Teachers raise ethical issues well and are excellent role models for the pupils.

Leadership and management

61. The head of department has established a strong team of dedicated teachers to whom she gives very clear direction. She analyses data very well to use for development planning, which focuses sharply on raising standards. The recent improvement in standards and in teaching stems from good teamwork, good staff development and very good management. To raise the number of higher-attaining pupils, the head of department has changed the way pupils are grouped. As a result, more pupils in the current Year 9 are now reaching higher levels. Ambition for the department is encapsulated in an excellent policy statement. The need to address the inconsistencies in the assessment processes is a priority of the development plan. The laboratories and resources are of a very high standard and are well organised by the department's technician.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils in Year 11 do not make sufficient progress as they are not all taught the full programme specified in the National Curriculum.
- Very good recent progress has been made under the direction of the acting subject leader and the school's new curriculum manager.
- The very good teaching seen during the inspection embodies outstanding commitment to raising achievement.
- Recent improvements in provision for pupils from Years 7 to 9 are raising standards.
- Insufficient use of ICT in some subjects, owing to limited access to computers and appropriate software, is hampering progress.
- Insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of teaching and learning	Very Good	Very Good

Leadership of the subject	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Commentary

Assessments and examination results

62. In teachers' assessments in 2003, standards achieved by 14-year-olds were barely above average. Girls' results were above national expectations but higher-attaining pupils and boys achieved lower levels than expected nationally. Arrangements for pupils to be taught GCSE at a local college in 2003 were not satisfactory and they were unable to complete the necessary coursework. This contrasts with the satisfactory standards achieved by GCSE candidates at the time of the last inspection. The school has now changed its arrangements so that current GCSE candidates are achieving very well.

Standards and achievement

63. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have benefited from a new ICT course this year. They are now making good progress and are already attaining above the expected standards in aspects of the subject. Pupils in Year 9 combine information from a range of sources to create and refine documents and presentations for particular audiences. They also use, modify and check the validity of ICT systems they have created. However, there are aspects of the subject that are less well developed, such as computer control. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below expectations, as these pupils have not benefited from a full programme in Years 7 to 9 and have had a limited programme in Year 10. The majority of these students have some opportunities to use ICT in other subjects. However, experience varies between subjects and teachers and rarely provides opportunities to achieve the standards in ICT expected by the end of Year 11.

Teaching and learning

64. The quality of teaching and learning is always satisfactory and, in most instances, it is very good. Lessons are mainly taught by the acting subject leader, who has very good knowledge and skills, and has brought very good, well-focused teaching to ICT lessons. Lessons are characterised by introductions that clearly identify what needs to be done and how this builds on previous learning. New skills are demonstrated well. Self-assessment and examples of good practice are used well to help pupils reach good standards. This also enables the pupils to provide guidance to their fellow students on how to improve their work, which is a good feature of lessons. Teaching has good pace and, in many instances, successful catch-up strategies are used to compensate for the limited opportunities provided in previous years.

Leadership and management

65. The governing body has a well-conceived development plan to improve the subject over the next three years. However, insufficient progress was made in the years directly after the last inspection, which has been to the detriment of those currently in Years 9, 10 and 11. The subject is currently well led and managed. However, these are temporary arrangements owing to the absence of the subject leader, through ill health. A new computer network has been

installed to provide common access to files and data throughout the school and this is a good improvement. More computers have been recently purchased, which has had a significant impact in those subjects where they are provided in the classrooms. However, in many subjects, access is poor with few resources in classrooms. There are also few opportunities to use the one full ICT suite, which is mainly used for ICT courses, or the small suite in the Learning Resources Centre, where the need for pupils to share computers limits their progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. Basic skills in ICT are generally sound and, where computers are accessible, pupils are able to use them effectively to support their work in other subjects. Opportunities to do so vary significantly between subjects and teachers but very good use is made of computers in science, and in music to support the development of composition and performance. Good use is also made of computers in English, to create and refine publications and presentations. However, there is limited access to specialist ICT resources for art and design and design and technology, or for the specific use of pupils with special educational needs. Interactive whiteboards are particularly well used, for example, in science, history and personal, social and health education, and make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and to the pace of the pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding leadership provides clear purpose and direction to ensure very good teaching for all pupils.
- In 2003, GCSE results were well above national and local averages.
- Pupils respond very well to challenging and interesting activities and make very good progress.
- Very good teamwork within the department fully involves teaching assistants in the planning and teaching of lessons.
- Teachers make very effective use of resources, particularly the interactive whiteboard.
- Lower-attaining pupils find some of the activities too challenging and do not fully participate in group work.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership of the subject	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Commentary

Assessments and examination results

67. In 2003, assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 9 were above national expectations and significantly so for the higher achievers, many of whom were girls. Results showed a very good improvement in relation to the pupils' prior attainment. As they had been in

recent years, GCSE results in 2003 were well above the national and local averages. The number of pupils gaining the higher grades was well above average. Both girls and boys made very good progress but the girls' attainment was significantly higher than that of the boys.

Standards and achievement

68. By the end of Year 9, pupils respond well to the strong emphasis placed by their teachers on using specialist terminology and understand the range and diversity of historical evidence. They are good at explaining the reasons for such events as the Industrial Revolution in England or the growth of the British Empire. However, some pupils, predominantly boys, find writing at length difficult, even though their knowledge and understanding are sound. In Year 11, most pupils can assess the reliability of sources of evidence and use them effectively to underpin views on Nazi Germany or the USA before the Second World War. Many make good use of independent research in their work. They make well-informed contributions to class discussion and listen carefully to what others have to say. In the current Year 10, some pupils show great maturity in their understanding of historical trends. There are, however, some Year 11 pupils who occasionally find the pace and challenge of lessons too great. Hence, they make few contributions to class discussion and they lack sureness of touch or subtlety in handling historical evidence. Generally speaking, the attainment of boys is often behind that of the girls, despite their keenness and diligence in producing coursework. Most pupils make very good progress relative to their prior attainment. Many lower-attaining pupils are commendably persistent in their efforts to improve their standards.

Teaching and learning

69. Lessons are very well planned to provide a variety of ways in which pupils can learn. Excellent source materials retain pupils' interest and engagement, and encourage them to develop the skills of independent learning. The teaching assistants make a full and very effective contribution to planning and to supporting students in lessons, although some students struggle to keep up with the pace. The interactive whiteboard is used very well to combine teachers' presentations and extracts from video with opportunities for pupils to make written comments and use *Powerpoint* presentations. However, pupils have little access to computer-based history packages. Pupils' work is marked accurately and they are strongly encouraged to comment on one another's work. They receive helpful feedback on their written work and contributions in class and are generally told what to do to improve the quality of their work. The teachers make very good use of national guidance for Years 7 to 9 to broaden the students' thinking skills and provide stimulating activities to begin lessons and review learning at the end.

Example of outstanding practice

Two teachers and their assistants combined two groups of Year 9 pupils so as to exploit the interplay between professionals to provide outstanding insights into the reliability of historical evidence.

By conducting an impassioned debate about their opposing views of a football match, the two teachers aroused the curiosity and captured the interest of a very large group of pupils. This successfully stimulated a very lively debate about the reliability of different sources of evidence which teachers then related very well to different historical perspectives. Consequently, pupils made exceptional progress, learning about the lives of the nobility in former centuries and interpreting what they knew of the troubles in Northern Ireland and about the restructuring of Germany by applying principles of historical enquiry. The well-informed teaching assistants very ably supported those pupils who found the task very demanding or had emotional or behavioural difficulties. Groups of pupils, carefully selected to take account of gender and capability, were given different source materials and required to prepare an argument, from different viewpoints, in preparation for a class-wide debate. These activities, and the unremitting pace at which the lesson was conducted, resulted in pupils developing a much deeper understanding of the nature and reliability of different historical evidence.

Leadership and management

70. The team of teachers and their assistants work exceptionally well together. The subject leader constantly, and successfully, seeks to improve teaching. The pupils highly praise the quality of the teaching they receive. Many move on to study history at college but links with college providers are tenuous. The department has improved resources since the last inspection so that they serve the needs of students across the ability range. However, individual computer-based learning packages are not used. Classroom display and visual aids are very good. There is now more history fieldwork in each year group.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of pupils' work are above national expectations.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods.
- Assessment is effectively used to raise standards.
- There is good preparation for GCSE examinations.
- The use of ICT remains inconsistent at present.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership of the subject	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Commentary

Assessments and examination results

71. In 2003, assessments at the end of Year 9 were slightly above national expectations, with girls doing considerably better than boys. GCSE results in 2003 were close to the national average, lower than they had been in 2002, but the percentage of pupils achieving the highest grades was much higher than nationally. Boys' results were above the national average.

Standards and achievement

72. Pupils in Year 7 become very proficient in map work. Most are able to measure distance using a scale. They can estimate directions, use six-figure grid references to locate features and identify the common symbols used on Ordnance Survey maps. A few can draw accurate cross-sections using contour lines. Year 8 pupils have a good level of knowledge and understanding of river features and the processes that create them. They develop a good geographical vocabulary and the ability to carry out geographical investigations, such as their work based on a visit to the Eden Project. By Year 9, pupils can construct a range of graphs to illustrate aspects of population growth and physical processes, and can draw conclusions based on data and statistics. In Year 11, pupils are able to discuss different ways of measuring development and can analyse examples of development from around the world. Overall, pupils develop the ability to write extended pieces of work well, using their own independent research. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported by teaching assistants.

Teaching and learning

73. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods and resources to motivate pupils and engage their interest. They encourage pupils to present information in different ways and research information for themselves. This develops the pupils' ability to carry out geographical enquiries and reach the higher levels in Years 7, 8 and 9 and in GCSE coursework. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the process of learning as well as on the content of their learning. Teachers prepare pupils well for assessments and final examinations. Teachers have very good relationships and rapport with pupils. They take an interest in pupils and show concern for their wellbeing. They raise the self-esteem of pupils and are quick to acknowledge pupils' efforts. Pupils begin work promptly and continue to work conscientiously on the tasks set. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to explanations and instructions. Pupils invariably respond positively to the range of activities provided by the teacher. Pupils are developing good research skills and the ability to work independently. Pupils respond well to the praise and encouragement of teachers.

Leadership and management

74. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader is making every attempt to introduce new ideas and techniques into the teaching of geography. Teachers and pupils make the most of very helpful marking that effectively identifies areas of weakness in order to set targets and track their progress towards meeting them. The use of ICT is not consistent across classes within the same year group because of the problems with access to the ICT room. Unsuitable accommodation also limits the use of the latest technology, from which the department would benefit.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good progress has been made since the last inspection, especially in provision for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Good teaching, some of which is excellent.
- A large number of pupils are entered for the short-course GCSE.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning.
- Some non-specialist teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is having an effect on the quality of pupils' learning.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership of the subject	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Examination results

75. In 2003, the standards of attainment in the short-course GCSE were in line with national averages. Considering that almost all pupils were entered for the examination, this represents very good achievement.

Standards and achievement

76. By the end of Year 11, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of many aspects of Christianity and Judaism and can see how the beliefs and teaching of these two traditions have a bearing on many contemporary issues, such as wealth and poverty, and social harmony. Overall, pupils' written skills are good, as is their ability in verbal expression. At the end of Year 9, standards of attainment are broadly in line with the standards indicated in the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils are familiar with many aspects of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, and they can write meaningfully about them. Most pupils are familiar with specialist religious language and can use it well to discuss many concepts which are common to many religions, such as festivals and special places of worship. Higher-attaining pupils can make clear connections between their learning and their own lives and experiences. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils who have special educational needs are making good progress.

Teaching and learning

77. A limited amount of teaching was seen during the inspection. One lesson seen was excellent. Preparation for the lesson was extremely thorough and the teacher used a wide range of imaginative activities to put across the subject matter. The content, drawn from world religions, was very powerful, and there were clear and successful attempts to make the learning relevant to pupils' own lives and experiences. As a consequence, pupils committed extensive efforts, concentrated and responded very well, and so learned highly effectively. Work in pupils' books and in discussions with them indicate teaching and learning range from satisfactory to very good. The amount of work completed in the time available also varies widely and the marking of pupils' work is not always consistent. Whilst pupils learn about religions, teaching does not place sufficient emphasis on learning from religions. Generally, high demands are made on the pupils and so their achievement is good. Thorough marking and assessment help pupils see how they can improve. Teaching makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as to their literacy skills. The teaching also makes a good contribution to learning about citizenship.

Leadership and management

78. The leadership of the subject is very good and has wrought very significant recent improvements. The staffing is satisfactory. A high percentage of the teaching is done by non-specialist teachers, which is less effective in Years 7, 8 and 9. Progress since the last inspection is very good, as there is now more time for the subject. The newly appointed specialist teacher is ensuring that the programmes for Years 7 to 9 meet the statutory requirements in all years through a scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus. The accommodation and resources are good.

TECHNOLOGY

The course in resistant materials was inspected in full and design and technology was sampled. Teacher's assessments for design and technology at end of Year 9 in 2003 indicated that standards were below national expectations. However, performance in lessons indicates that standards are currently in line with expectations. Standards in manufacturing are generally higher than for designing in Years 7 to 9 and standards in food and textiles are higher than those achieved in resistant materials. Teaching was good in the Year 8 food lesson seen. Here, the teacher provided a rich learning environment and stretched pupils of all abilities well. In a Year 7 textile lesson, teaching was very good. The teacher had high expectations and the pupils had developed good designing and making skills, and used computer-aided design and manufacture well. GCSE results for design and

technology in 2003 were well above average in all courses. They had improved over those of the previous year to maintain the very good standards seen at the time of last inspection.

Design and technology: resistant materials

Provision in resistant materials is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results were well above average in 2003.
- The standard of manufacturing in Year 11 is high.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are very well taught so those in Year 11 achieve well above expected standards in the generation and development of their designs.
- Teaching is less effective in Years 7 to 9 as there is insufficient emphasis on developing design skills.
- Computers are not used sufficiently to aid design and manufacture, especially the use of systems and control in Years 7 to 9.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Well above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Very good
Quality of teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Very good

Leadership of the subject	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

79. In 2003, the pupils achieved standards in their GCSE examinations which were well above the national average. They made very good progress in Years 10 and 11, and many achieved higher grades than they did in most of their other GCSE subjects.

Standards and achievement

80. By the end of Year 9, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They are confident in using tools and equipment and make products that are of above-average standards. However, their ability to design products that use these materials is below expectations and, whilst they make products which use electronics and mechanisms, they have insufficient opportunities to develop their own ideas. Overall, they make sound progress, but do not do as well as in food or textiles. In Years 10 and 11, the pupils further develop their knowledge and skills in manufacturing, which they use well to make very good quality products. Design skills are much better developed and are often of a good standard. Pupils of all ages have limited experience of computer-aided design and manufacture, and their ability in this aspect of the subject is below national expectations.

Teaching and learning

81. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is always sound, and sometimes good. Teachers enjoy the subject and share their enthusiasm with the pupils. Lessons are orderly and well organised, and pupils enjoy their work and are clear about teacher's expectations. Lesson planning lacks effective strategies to develop and apply the pupils' design skills or to build on experience gained in food or textiles. Projects are often too controlled, with

few opportunities for creative thinking. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Here, the examination syllabus is successfully used as a focus for course planning and the teacher has a clear understanding of the standards expected. The teacher's expectations are high and he provides good guidance and encouragement to pupils. This, together with the pupils' enjoyment of the subject and desire to do well, contributes to the high standards in Year 11.

Leadership and management

82. Good provision has been sustained since the last inspection. Steady progress has led to an extension of the range of materials and processes used for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and the quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11. However, further developments are required to improve designing. Pupils' work is regularly assessed in Year 11 to indicate the grade the pupils are achieving and how they can improve. Similar assessments are provided at the end of courses in Years 7 to 9, but insufficient reference is made to indications of levels of attainment set out in the National Curriculum to help raise the standards of pupils in earlier years. The very good GCSE results last year were achieved when the time provided for the subject was typical of that in most schools. However, some pupils are struggling to make the progress they should, now time for the subject has been reduced.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

83. Art and design, and music, were inspected in detail and drama was sampled. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, pupils attained standards well above the national average in drama, with a particularly high percentage attaining the highest A* and A grades. Current Year 11 pupils' standards are well above expectations. Pupils show very good levels of knowledge and understanding, as well as confidence and skill in performance. Drama for all pupils is new to the school. Despite their relative inexperience, pupils are making rapid progress. Achievement is good for pupils of all levels of ability by the age of 14 and very good for pupils by the age of 16. Pupils respond well to the knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching, which gives full scope for pupils to develop a range of performance skills. The subject leader provides very good leadership and management. For example, she has devised an effective assessment system for younger pupils. The drama curriculum is enriched by theatre visits and the opportunity to take part in major school productions. Drama is attracting increasing numbers of pupils at GCSE level, whilst giving a secure foundation to pupils lower down the school as it becomes embedded in the core curriculum. Drama is an important factor in the strong personal development of pupils.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above the national average.
- Standards are high because of good teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 and very good teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It includes well-developed strands of critical studies as well as a good range of two and three-dimensional studies.
- Pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes contribute significantly to their learning.
- Marking of work in Years 7 to 9 provides insufficient feedback on what action pupils might take to improve their work.
- Resources for ICT are unsatisfactory. There is insufficient opportunity for creative work using ICT.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Quality of teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership of the subject	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Assessments and examination results

84. In 2003, assessments at the end of Year 9 were above national expectations. As with results nationally, girls reached higher levels than boys, but the difference between their results was much smaller than nationally. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 and 2002 were well above the national average.

Standards and achievement

85. Work seen during the inspection is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9. This represents good achievement over time, given the inconsistencies in subject knowledge, skills and understanding pupils have at the beginning of Year 7. Pupils develop competency in a broad range of media and processes. Drawing and colour work of satisfactory quality is evident in Year 9. Designs for mirrors and frames, based on art styles, show competent research and carefully applied drawing techniques. Pupils' sketches of African pottery show competent colour blending and tonal modelling. Pupils with special educational needs or those who do not attain highly engage fruitfully with the subject so their achievement is also good. By Year 11, pupils' work is of a very high standard, well above national expectations. Their sustained investigations cover a broad range of media and approaches. A particular strength is three-dimensional work. Sketchbook journals are well developed, with extensive sketches and designs. The reflective writing shows a mature and articulate approach and reveals the pupils' high level of interest in the subject. Pupils' own creative work is informed by the in-depth study of the work of relevant artists. Pupils achieve very well. They acquire a very good range of practical skills and understanding, and develop a very good knowledge of the subject.

Teaching and learning

86. Pupils achieve well in the subject because of good teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 and achieve very well in Years 10 and 11 because of very good teaching on the examination course. The teaching engages the pupils' interest and addresses the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. Very good knowledge of the subject and careful planning underpin the teaching. Clear teaching and learning objectives are shared with the pupils. Pupils respond well. They have a very positive attitude to learning and show a high level of interest in the subject. Behaviour is generally good and, in the examination classes, it is very good. Assessment is thorough and this enables pupils to have a clear idea of their progress. The marking of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9, however, does not provide enough specific written feedback to enable pupils to improve work in their sketchbook journals.

Leadership and management

87. Very good leadership has consolidated very good GCSE results over several years. Foresight and ambition for the subject have led to its profile being raised within the school and this has been reflected in increased numbers taking the subject and a broader range of courses. The schemes of work have been improved since the previous inspection, particularly with the establishment of a strong strand of three-dimensional study. Extra-curricular opportunities enable pupils to enjoy the subject in workshops and programmes of visits. Assessment systems provide accurate and detailed information on the progress of individual pupils. There is still, however, a significant difference in the relative performance of boys and girls. Further work needs to be done to narrow this gap. Although the art area provides an attractive, interesting environment, the accommodation is too cramped, particularly for examination classes involved in three-dimensional studies. The facilities for storage of work are poor, leading to pupils' work being damaged. Resources are satisfactory for practical work but insufficient computers with relevant software means that pupils have few opportunities to use computer-based creative art and design.

Music

Provision in music is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above the national average.
- By Year 9, the standard of attainment is outstanding.
- ICT is firmly integrated into the schemes of work.
- Collaborative working between students is very good.
- Imaginative schemes of work provide the basis for very good teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding.
- There is excellent leadership and management which extends beyond the school.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Very high	Well above average
Achievement	Excellent	Excellent
Quality of teaching and learning	Excellent	Very good

Leadership of the subject	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Assessment and examination results

88. In 2003, teachers' assessments of standards of attainment in Year 9 were very high in comparison with county and national results and correspond closely with pupils' current standard of work. Nine out of every ten pupils reached the expected level compared to two-thirds nationally. All pupils achieved an A* to C grade for GCSE in 2003 and this level of attainment has been consistent in three of the last four years.

Standards and achievement

89. Pupils have very competent ICT skills and are able to use a wide range of hardware and software to develop performing, composing and listening skills. Pupils are able to perform their compositions confidently in class and appreciate the achievements of others. Independent work and group work are fostered over Years 7 to 9 and the level of collaboration between pupils is excellent. Understanding of musical notation improves significantly from Year 7

onwards. By the end of Year 9, pupils are familiar with a range of notations, which enables them to annotate their compositions in a variety of forms. In the GCSE lesson seen, pupils' ICT skills were excellent. The standard of performing and composing was very good and the pupils took pride in their work. Progress in lessons is always very good, and sometimes excellent, for all groups of pupils.

Teaching and learning

90. Teaching is very good, with excellent features. The schemes of work incorporate varied activities that cover the statutory requirements in an innovative way. Close attention is paid to developing performing skills which, in turn, enable pupils to compose creatively. Teachers make well-timed interventions which develop pupils' skills and knowledge. Lessons have well-paced introductions which often feature examples of pupils' work. There is good balance between boys and girls in group-work activities and the relationships between pupils are very good. The quality of discussion between pupils in these activities is very high and pupils constantly assess their work as each project develops. This, in turn, enables them to explain their work in detail when questioned.

Example of outstanding practice

Year 8 pupils, beginning a new project in a sequence of activities, were given a very good example of the high standards to which they were expected to reach by other pupils' performance.

Four pupils were preparing to give a performance of their work when other pupils, full of expectation, entered the room. For the previous four weeks, the performers had been working on providing two minutes of music to accompany a cartoon. They had timed the different scenes, discussed the mood, chosen the sound effects they needed, and finally composed their piece. The lights were dimmed, the cartoon started and the group performed. The Year 8 pupils listened and watched, fully engrossed. Inspired by this introduction, and guided by the teacher's exceptional organisation and knowledge of subject, they set to work purposefully on one of several tasks as part of an exceptionally well-planned programme. Some extended their instrumental skills using electronic keyboards, some developed listening skills using a special software, some worked on a project using a mixing desk, an eight-track recorder and an editing suite, while others began a sound track project. Having only just embarked on this sequence, those starting to prepare a performance had an excellent yet realistic example of what they could achieve.

Leadership and management

91. The skills of the head of department have been recognised by the local education authority (LEA) and he works very effectively under the Advanced Skills Teacher programme in local primary and secondary schools. The department has very clear aspirations and a strong commitment to continuing development. Department plans and records are thorough and comprehensive. Links with primary schools are well established. Links with post 16 institutions are the next phase in this development. The visiting instrumental teachers are very well managed. The range of instruments available for pupils' use is good and the development of ICT within the department is a particular strength. As a result, progress since the last inspection is very good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved by the small number of pupils who take the GCSE examination are well above average.

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and maintain a very good level of physical activity in most lessons.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take part in sport, although the range offered is quite narrow and is restricted by the number of staff available.
- The leadership and management of physical education are unsatisfactory.
- There is an unacceptable and significant difference between the provision for boys and girls, and the curriculum does not meet National Curriculum requirements for boys in Years 7 to 9.
- The procedures for assessing and recording girls' achievements are good, but they have not been developed to this standard for boys.
- Assessment information is not sufficiently well analysed and teachers' assessments are not secure in Years 7 to 9.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	No evidence available
Achievement	Average	No evidence available
Quality of teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership of the subject	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Commentary

Assessments and examination results

92. Results of the statutory teachers' assessments in 2003 for Year 9 were well above the national average, but assessment procedures are not accurate and the teachers agree that some pupils were graded too highly. There are no national comparisons for teachers' assessments for Year 11. A small number of pupils opted to take a GCSE examination and their results were well above the national average. The GCSE results have shown a significant improvement in the last two years.

Standards and achievement

93. By the end of Year 9, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they are attaining standards in line with the national expectation. They show good control and co-ordination in games skills, such as dribbling the ball and turning at speed in football. They can apply these skills in games but, generally, their tactical awareness is weak as they have only a basic understanding of attack and defence. For example, in a Year 9 boys' football lesson, pupils did not use space well in a game and tended to crowd the ball. The ability to evaluate their own and others' performance is not as well developed as it should be because, in many lessons, opportunities are missed to develop these skills. When pupils are asked to comment, they are slow and hesitant in their responses. Pupils have a good knowledge of the components of fitness and understand that different types of exercise have different benefits for the body. Girls can measure their own fitness and monitor improvements. Boys are not given the opportunity to develop their knowledge in the same detail and they cover the same topic in a more superficial way. It is not possible to make a judgement about the general standards achieved by older pupils, as Year 11 was timetabled outside the period of the inspection and the only Year 10 lesson timetabled during the inspection was cancelled because of a science examination. A GCSE basketball lesson was observed and standards were in line with expectations in this lesson. Pupils showed good control and co-ordination when shooting at the basket and were able to apply these skills in games. However, their tactical awareness is still only at a basic level. For example, they do not use zone defence tactics well in the game.

Teaching and learning

94. In the majority of lessons, teaching and learning observed were satisfactory and, in some, they were good. Most lessons are well organised and enable pupils to respond quickly through clearly given instructions. However, in one lesson, the organisation was not safe as pupils were required to negotiate gymnastics apparatus at too great a speed. Some pupils became over-enthusiastic and were in danger of harming themselves. Where teaching is good, learning is assisted by well-produced resources that help pupils review and analyse their own and others' performance. Examples of this were seen in a Year 8 dance lesson, where pupils used a video recording of their work and a proforma to guide their analysis. It is also used in Year 9 health-related fitness lessons for pupils to record their progress and evaluate the work they are undertaking. However, there are many missed opportunities for pupils to evaluate work in lessons, particularly in the teaching of games, where pupils are rarely asked to observe or comment on performance. Assessment procedures for girls are well developed, with pupil-friendly criteria shared and displayed for pupils. Grades are given at the end of each unit so that pupils are clear about the level they are achieving. The same procedures have not been developed for boys.

Leadership and management

95. There are significant differences between the provision for girls and for boys. The curriculum for boys does not meet National Curriculum requirements as only three of the required four areas of activity are covered. Schemes of work are out-of-date and assessment procedures for boys are weak. There is no effective monitoring of standards or of teaching and learning by the head of department, who has delegated full responsibility for girls' physical education to another member of staff. The management of girls' physical education is good. Good developments in Year 10 include the Junior Sports Leaders Award. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and many pupils value these opportunities. The range offered is fairly narrow and, with the exception of dance, which is only attended by girls, is based on traditional team sports like football and hockey. There are restrictions owing to limited indoor facilities and to the small number of staff available to take extra-curricular activities. As there was no provision for GCSE in Year 10, this has been offered as an after-school activity. Sessions are well attended, particularly by girls, who in other years have only opted in small numbers for the course. Although GCSE results have improved, standards generally are not as high and teaching is not as good as at the last inspection.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

96. GCSE child development and part of vocational ICT are taught at the school. Other courses are run at local colleges. Work done at the school and two colleges was sampled and lessons at Truro College were seen. The child development results in 2003 were above average and nearly all the pupils made satisfactory or better progress. It was not possible to observe a lesson but the work of Year 11 pupils is above national expectations and shows them to have made good progress. Work is marked accurately and provides pupils with good guidance on how they might improve it in future.
97. Current Year 11 pupils do a range of courses, either for the GCSE or for the NVQ Level 1 at Cornwall College St. Austell. Analysis of their work gives a mixed picture of standards and progress. Standards are below average in ICT and in *motor vehicle engineering*, barely satisfactory progress having been made. Standards are average and progress has been good in *engineering* and *construction*. They are also average in *hairdressing and beauty care*, although pupils fear they will not be able to complete the qualification on schedule. In those subjects where pupils have progressed less well, there have been significant staff changes. Pupils appreciate practical work but most have been disappointed because there has been little opportunity for sustained practical work in the relatively short morning sessions.

98. Year 10 pupils follow courses that include *sport and recreation*, *hairdressing and beauty care*, and *public services* at Truro College. Written work and work seen in lessons show that nearly all pupils are working to the expected standard and many are producing better work. Progress overall is good. In *sport and recreation*, the most able students are currently working at merit grade level, with most fulfilling the criteria for at least a pass grade. Nearly all those students in the *public services* option have made good progress and are close to working at merit level. In the part of the *hairdressing* lesson seen, the students practised their communication skills effectively. However, whilst they show good understanding of the course, their written work shows weaknesses in expression.
99. The lessons seen at Truro College were well planned and the lecturers' lively approach captured pupils' interest well. Work is reviewed very effectively at the end of lessons and marking is accurate, giving good feedback on how the students can improve their work. Many students link their work experience to what they are studying at college.
100. The managers of the courses run at Truro College are responsive to new initiatives taken up by the school. For example, *music technology* has been established as a course from September 2004. Sessions for pupils to try options before their final choice and an induction session make sure that pupils make a good start. Good information ensures that all concerned, whether they are the staff at the school or the college, pupils or their parents, are aware of their partners' expectations. The staff and the students place a high value on the school's links with the college. The students see the programme as valuable experience in preparing for study on leaving school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has done a lot of work to establish this subject throughout the school.
- Citizenship is taught effectively in several other subjects and on special days, and so produces sharply focused learning.
- Some arrangements for the assessment of citizenship are already in place.
- Pupils are not always clear that they are learning citizenship, as this is not always pointed out to them in the lessons and in other situations when it is being taught and presented.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Quality of teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership of the subject	Good
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Commentary

Standards and achievement

101. Pupils have a significant knowledge and understanding of much of the three main strands of citizenship. In their folders, for example, they have covered topics like aspects of the law, ethnicity, decision-making, problem-solving and children's rights. Pupils are able to talk in an informed way about most of these topics. Pupils are also able to talk with fluency about many

local and central government issues, and they are clearly knowledgeable about several aspects of the European community. Much of the citizenship programme is combined with personal, social and health education. Consequently, the pupils also cover topics like sex education, bullying, drugs education, smoking and alcohol education, and relationships. Standards of attainment in these areas are also above national expectations. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.

Teaching and learning

102. During the inspection, lessons were seen which dealt with personal, social and health education and citizenship issues. All lessons are well prepared and a good range of imaginative methods is used to put across the subject matter. The demands made on the pupils are significant. At times, the pupils are not made sufficiently aware that their learning actually is about 'citizenship' and the term does not have a high profile in the school generally. Otherwise, however, the content of the lessons is strong and the pupils' learning of this, effective. Some arrangements for the assessment of citizenship are already in place.

Leadership and management

103. Provision for citizenship is well under way in the school. The school provides it in a variety of ways. These include special days, such as 'innovation' days and 'industry' days, and visits by outside speakers, such as the local Member of Parliament. An audit has been conducted to identify which subject areas are making a contribution to citizenship. More focused provision for citizenship is made through specific units of work in Year 9, through the religious education programme in Years 10 and 11, and through the personal, social and health education programme.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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