

INSPECTION REPORT

THE VYNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116440

Headteacher: Mrs Judith Edge

Lead inspector: Dr Faysal Mikdadi

Dates of inspection: 22nd - 25th March 2004

Inspection number: 258832

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:	683
School address:	Vyne Road Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG21 5PB
Telephone number:	(01256) 473 003
Fax number:	(01256) 816 956
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Nigel Clarke
Date of previous inspection:	9 th February 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Vyne School is a small, mixed comprehensive school in Basingstoke. The school gained Specialist Performing Arts College Status as from September 2002. It has 683 students on roll with marginally more girls than boys. The overwhelming majority of students are white. About six per cent are of other ethnic backgrounds including mixed backgrounds, African, Bangladeshi, Caribbean, Chinese and Indian backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of students with special educational needs at 26.8 per cent is well above the national average of 15.3 per cent. The school also has a special educational needs unit designated for speech or communication with twelve students attending. The proportion of students with statements of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Ninety four students are disapplied from the National Curriculum. The area from which the school draws most of its students is socio-economically disadvantaged. However, the number on roll has increased from the 586 at the last inspection and has brought with it some children from professional households. Attainment on entry is skewed downwards, although increasingly there are more students being admitted whose attainment is in line with the national average. In the latest admission year, the proportion of students gaining the national Level 4 in their National Curriculum Tests is below the national average in the core subjects.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that has made steady improvements over the last decade. Students make good progress. Teaching and learning are good and students have good attitudes to their learning. Their attainment in all years in 2003 was below the national averages for both the end of Year 9 and Year 11 National Curriculum Test and GCSE results. The GCSE results were in line with the national average for similar schools. The school provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students' achievement is good.
- Students' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Attainment is below national expectations in mathematics, French, information and communication technology (ICT) and literacy. Achievement is poor in mathematics in Years 10 and 11 and it unsatisfactory in French and ICT.
- School leadership by the headteacher, governors and most key staff is good and often very good.
- The school offers a good range of enrichment activities.
- Links with parents and the community are good and links with other schools and colleges are very good.
- Statutory requirements are breached in the inadequate provision of ICT in all years, religious education in Years 10 and 11 and a daily act of corporate worship.

IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the last inspection have been **satisfactory**. Attainment has improved overall. The school's assessment policy is now satisfactory. Middle managers now monitor their subject area effectively. There have been particularly good improvements in science. The school still does not comply with the statutory requirements to provide ICT in all years and religious education in Years 10 and 11. Attainment in mathematics is still unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Students' achievement is good. These results indicate that good value is added during their secondary education because many students join the school with well below average prior attainment. Results are average compared with similar schools. Students attain below average results in the National Curriculum Test results by the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. Students with special educational needs make good progress. Students with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those deemed gifted and talented make good progress. Standards of work seen during the inspection were below the national average overall. Overall achievement in literacy and numeracy in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory although standards remain relatively weak especially in number work.

Students' personal qualities are good. Students' behaviour and attitudes are good. Students' personal development is good and there are some positive features in their moral, social and cultural

development. Opportunities for spiritual development are satisfactory. Students' attendance is satisfactory but some improvement is needed in the students' punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the students' education is good. Teaching and learning are good in all years. Students respond well and are quite keen to do well. Teacher recruitment and retention difficulties, as well as recent staff illnesses, can sometimes have a negative impact on the students' achievement. Partnerships with parents and the community and with other schools and colleges are good. The Specialist Arts College Status is having a positive impact on the quality of education provided.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's leadership is good. Leadership by governors and by key staff is also good. The school monitors teaching and learning well and has worked hard to ensure that teacher recruitment difficulties are kept under control. School improvement planning is good. This is an inclusive school where everyone receives the same opportunities to achieve.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and students think highly of the school. Both parents and students feel that teachers work hard and offer very effective support.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is to:

- Improve standards in mathematics, French, ICT and literacy skills;

and, to meet statutory requirements, ensure that provision is made for all students to receive:

- A daily act of corporate worship.
- Religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- ICT in all years in addition to the discrete ICT lessons in Years 7 and 8.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

In 2003, the students' National Curriculum Test results at the end of Year 9 **were below the national average**. The GCSE results for those attaining five or more grades A*-C were also below the national average. In both cases, given the well below average prior attainment on entry, these results represent good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly all students leave the school with a qualification.
- GCSE examination results, although still below the national average, have improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection.
- Students' achievement is good overall.
- Students' literacy, numeracy and computer skills are vital areas for further improvement.
- Good progress is made by students with special educational needs, those with English as a second language as well as those who are gifted and talented.
- Achievement in the small unit for students with language impairment is very good.

Commentary

1. Based on National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6, students who are currently in Years 8 to 11 joined the school with standards that were well below the national average overall. Standards on entry are significantly lower in English than in either mathematics or science. In addition, Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) when students first arrive in Years 7, carried out by the school, established that very few students have scores above the national average, whilst around a third have CAT scores that are typical of students with special educational needs. These tests also show that students' verbal reasoning scores, a measure of literacy competence, are significantly lower than their non-verbal scores, a measure of general aptitude. The current Year 7 students' standards on entry are higher than in previous years, but are still below the national average.
2. Students' 2003 National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 were below the national average overall: well below in English and below in mathematics and science. Based on students' prior attainment, this represents good overall achievement in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 11, the 2003 GCSE examination results were below the national averages for those attaining five or more grades A*-C and grades A*-G, but this represents good achievement by these students, between Years 7 and 11.
3. Standards of work seen in Year 9 during the inspection were below national expectations overall. Standards were above the national expectations in art and design, citizenship and religious education. They were in line with the national expectations in design and technology, drama, music and physical education. Standards were below national expectations in English, science, geography, German, history and ICT. Standards seen were well below national expectations in mathematics and French.
4. Nearly all students leave the school with at least one or more GCSE grades A*-G. For a number of years, the school's performance has been broadly in line with the national average, using this measure.
5. The proportions of students attaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C and five or more grades A*-G are below the national averages. Nevertheless the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C has increased significantly since the time of the previous inspection.

For example, the three year average for 2001 to 2003 was 41 per cent compared with 31 per cent at the time of the previous inspection. The school's target for 2004 of 50 per cent is a challenging one.

6. Standards seen in Year 11 during the inspection were above average in art and design, citizenship, religious education and well above average in geography. Standards seen were broadly in line with national expectations in drama, German, music and physical education. Standards seen were below average in English, science, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, history and well below average in mathematics and French.
7. Literacy standards are below national expectations. Students come into the school with language skills that are well below the national expectations. They make satisfactory progress, although their literacy skills remain weak. Students lack confidence in their use of numbers, including simple mental calculations. In Years 7 to 9 they progress a little but in Years 10 and 11 their mathematical skills are poor. Students' information and communication skills are underdeveloped. These weaknesses in literacy, numeracy and the use of ICT are partly although not exclusively caused by non specialist teaching.
8. Achievement is good overall. Students enter the school with prior attainment that is well below average and leave with below average results overall. In Years 7 to 9, achievement is very good in science, art and design and drama, geography and history. It is good in citizenship, design and technology, German, music, religious education and physical education. It is satisfactory in English, mathematics and French but unsatisfactory in ICT. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is very good in art and design drama, geography and history. It is good in science, citizenship, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education. It is satisfactory in English and German. Achievement is unsatisfactory in French and ICT and it is poor in mathematics. In addition, students' personal qualities develop well during their time in the school. The achievement of students with special educational needs, including those who are gifted and talented, and those for whom English is a second language is also good. In a few subjects, it is felt that less-able students, although achieving well, do not achieve as well as others. The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 who are doing the basic skills course is good and they are making good progress with reading and spelling. The achievement made by the students with speech and language impairment is very good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (31.9)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	33.0 (33.0)	35.4 (34.7)
science	32.3 (32.4)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 123 students 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 students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	37 (48)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	84 (84)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	29.1 (31.8)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 141 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students show **good** attitudes towards school and in lessons. Behaviour and relationships among students and with adults are good. Students' personal development is good overall, with positive features in their moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Students' attendance is now satisfactory but punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students show positive attitudes towards school and in most lessons where weaknesses in students' literacy skills do not limit their interest and capacity to learn.
- Relationships among students and with adults are good; this is reflected in good behaviour outside lessons.
- Students' personal development is good, including their moral, social and cultural development.
- Students' punctuality in unsatisfactory.

Commentary

9. Most students show positive attitudes towards the school and like attending. Very helpful and friendly teachers and the wide range of clubs and other enrichment activities are important factors behind students' positive attitudes. Students are also positive about the contribution made by friendships with other students. Students express negative views about the state of some toilets and the price and limited choice of healthy food. These matters are under discussion by the School Council. In lessons, students respond particularly well when expectations are high and they are able to engage in a variety of practical activities. This enthusiasm for practical activities is clearly evident in art and design technology, drama, music and physical education. Students also show enthusiasm in other lessons, such as geography and history, when visual aids, such as short videos and computer-based presentations are effectively used to enhance their learning. In contrast, a significant minority of students show much less interest and enthusiasm in lessons where listening for long periods and where literacy skills are primarily required.
10. Harmonious relationships among students, irrespective of ethnic background or capability, are a positive feature. Most teachers value students' work and effectively praise effort and good work. As a result, the majority of students are comfortable expressing views and asking questions of their teachers. This assists their learning. Students' behaviour, in the playground, at lunchtime and breaktime is good. A calm, sociable atmosphere prevails in the dining hall. In most lessons, students behave well; unsatisfactory student behaviour occurs in only a few lessons. Parents and students confirm that incidents of bullying and other anti-social behaviour are effectively resolved by the school.
11. The level of permanent exclusions is above the national average and there is a significant level of fixed term exclusions, mostly of short duration. Around half the exclusions relate to students with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties is significantly higher than the national average.
12. Attendance, whilst below the national average for several years, shows a rising trend. Unauthorised absence, whilst reducing, is still above the national median. A small minority of parents do not always carry out their responsibility to contact school in the event of absence. School's measures to combat absence, including first day contact, are good. This is making an important contribution to the steadily rising attendance. As a result, in the current year, attendance levels are broadly in line with the national average. The table below provides absence data for the latest complete reporting year, when the attendance was below the national average at 91.2 per cent.

13. Students' punctuality at the start of the school day needs some improvement. A significant minority of students arrive late for assemblies and registration. Whilst most students get promptly to their lessons, throughout the school day, there is significant slippage in the start time of some lessons.
14. Students' social development is good. Most students show respect and care for others. For example, they hold doors open for adults in corridors and are kind to peers who are feeling unwell. They exercise responsibility for themselves and others in a sensible way. For example, most students routinely complete and return their homework. School councillors and the Year 11 prefects show real enthusiasm and commitment in their roles. Nevertheless, in all year groups, there is a minority of students who do not work effectively when asked to discuss ideas in pairs and small groups. They tend to leave the task to others and merely record the views of others, without contributing. This adversely affects their learning. In subjects, students' moral, social and cultural development is a very strong feature of art and design, geography, history, music and physical education lessons. The contribution to students' personal development made by English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology lessons is much less pronounced. Students' spiritual development is satisfactory overall.
15. Students' attitudes and behaviour in the special needs lessons and in the department generally are very good. They appreciate the opportunities to improve their reading and spelling skills.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.1	School data:	1.7
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 for which national figures are available.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	639	155	5
White – Other	10	2	0
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	5	3	0
Mixed - White and Black African	2	1	0
Mixed - any other mixed background	3	3	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Parent/student preferred not to say	10	4	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of the students' education is good.

Overall, the quality of education is **good**. The good quality teaching leads to students achieving well and making good progress. Students with special educational needs make very good progress. Curriculum provision is satisfactory. Assessment strategies are satisfactory. The school cares well for its students.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching is good in all years. Almost every lesson seen was at least satisfactory. Students have many opportunities to learn well and they are satisfactorily assessed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Teachers successfully insist on good behaviour.
- Students have good attitudes to learning and most are keen to do well.
- Some lack of specialist teaching has a negative impact on students' achievement.
- Subject targets are insufficiently precise to help students systematically improve their work.

Commentary

16. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was at least satisfactory in almost every lesson seen. In two thirds of the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good or better. This is an improvement on the last inspection when the overwhelming majority of lessons were satisfactory or better.
17. The school has a strong focus on teaching and learning. A consistent and widespread programme involving monitoring teaching and learning has meant that lesson planning is a priority. Teachers always start lessons with clear targets that are shared with the students. Questioning strategies are aimed at ensuring that the majority of students make contributions to lessons. Assessment is satisfactory and students are given clear guidance on how to improve their work, although there is some inconsistency amongst subjects.
18. Teaching seen was very good in art and design, drama and history. It was good in science, citizenship, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in English, mathematics, ICT and modern foreign languages. There was no difference in the quality of teaching between years except in geography where it was good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Students respond well and the majority are keen to do well. Teachers also give a great deal of their spare time to help and support students outside lesson times.
19. In the very few lessons where the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory and in a few where it was less than good, the reason was that the teachers concerned were unqualified in the subject that they were teaching. This meant that the students did not make sufficient progress. The school has had significant problems recruiting staff and, where this has been the case, it has given considerable support to those who have lacked expertise or specialism. This is an ongoing problem, although it has improved over the last few years as the school's reputation also improved. However, there is still a small shortage of specialist teachers in English, mathematics and ICT.
20. Students are aware of their targets, which are written into their homework planners. Closer inspection of the set targets reveals they primarily relate to students' attitudes, supporting their personal development very effectively. Key subject targets are not yet precise enough to

similarly support systematic academic improvement. This is an important aspect of the wider issue around improving the use of assessment information.

21. In special educational needs, teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Youth Award Scheme files are very good and demonstrate very good teaching. The basic skills course is taught very well and students make very good progress. The rationale for deciding whether students are supported in class is good, as there is as little disruption to the curriculum as possible. There is very good management by teachers of potentially difficult behaviour. In lessons where there is a learning support or teaching assistant, the support given to students is very good. For example, the support worker in science is very well qualified and helpful to students and good literacy support was given to students in a very good Year 9 design and technology lesson.
22. Students are identified as having special educational needs by relevant information from their previous school, standardised testing and observation. They are regularly assessed and monitored. Work is marked well with suggestions for improvement.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 135 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (3%)	36 (27%)	50 (37%)	39 (29%)	6 (4%)	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 school curriculum is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 provides a wide range of vocational options.
- The curriculum is not compliant with the requirements of the National Curriculum in religious education in Years 10 and 11, and in ICT in all years.
- The school attaches a high priority to matching the curriculum to the needs of individual students.
- There is a good range of enhancement activities each day after school, most of which are well supported by students.

Commentary

23. In Years 7 to 9, there is a broad curriculum, which provides all the subjects of the National Curriculum, as well as religious education and drama. About one student in five does not study a modern foreign language; the time is spent improving basic skills, particularly in literacy. The allocations of time to subjects are mostly appropriate. However, there is still insufficient time allocated to cover the programmes of study for ICT; therefore statutory requirements are not fully met, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. However, the requirements in religious education are now fully met. Overall, the curriculum provides satisfactory educational opportunities.
24. In spite of the non-compliance in religious education and ICT, overall provision is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, there is a much wider range of options. Teachers consult fully with parents and students to ensure that individual students select appropriate courses. The school has extended its links with neighbouring schools through joint provision at Basingstoke College of Technology. As a result, a very wide range of vocational options is available to students for one afternoon per week. These courses are carefully monitored by the school; they add interest to

the options programme, and extend the qualifications students can gain. The overall range of courses now available provides a good base from which students at all levels of attainment can progress to further training, and develop their chosen careers. However, only about half the students take courses in design and technology. When students attend college for one afternoon each week they may miss lessons in other subjects, making continuity in these subjects more difficult. Disapplications from the National Curriculum for a minority of students are administered correctly, but the overall curriculum is still not compliant in religious education (for which there is insufficient time), and ICT (for which some students do not receive their full entitlement). The dedicated courses for lower-attaining students, available in science and history, provide relevant and interesting courses. These students also benefit from taking part in the Youth Award Scheme. A small number of students in Year 11 are permitted to undertake work placements for one day per week.

25. The provision for gifted and talented students is good. The school has begun to identify gifted and talented students when they arrive in Year 7. All students who achieve an average of Level 5 or greater are met by the deputy head, and all staff are informed of this group of students. The CATs test results are profiled in rank order and are used by every member of staff. Departments nominate the 50 most able in their subjects in Year 7 and there is an "able and talented" assembly where achievement is celebrated and students get certificates for the nominations they have received. By Year 9, the 20 most able are monitored. Any exceptional student is monitored carefully by the head of year. The school does not have gifted and talented clubs, as it finds these are divisive, but there are opportunities for extended work for these students after school. For example, a group of Year 8 students has researched a project of their choice and carried out very good individual presentations, with confidence, using presentation software. There is very good support from the governing body; one governor went on an appropriate course and subsequently wrote the policy. This is helping the ethos in the school to change to one that recognises and is proud of achievement.
26. The curriculum is regularly reviewed by the school's senior management team, and there is good liaison with the governors' curriculum committee. There are regular consultative meetings in school to keep all teachers informed of any proposals for change. During the inspection, an open meeting discussed presentations by five teachers about initiatives they had introduced to improve the quality of learning in their departments. There was a very positive response at the meeting to these initiatives, with an expectation of replication across the curriculum.
27. The provision for students with special educational needs is good. Some aspects are very good. Staff in the department are committed to raising standards. Students in Years 7 to 9 who need support with literacy are disappplied from modern foreign language and instead follow a course in basic skills, which is primarily literacy but includes some ICT. This is fully supported by parents who consider that their children need to improve their literacy skills first and there is flexibility if a student needs to be reintegrated into modern foreign languages. The basic skills course continues in Years 10 and 11 together with an appropriate work related programme. They also follow the Youth Award Scheme and achieve the Bronze Award. This course makes a particularly valuable contribution to citizenship. More-able students carry on to complete the Silver Award, which includes Level 1 key skills. The basic skills curriculum is very good and gives students a chance to improve their literacy skills and this is confirmed by regular assessment. However, at present, there is no provision for the improvement of mathematics, although a group of students use Successmaker. Individual education plans are available to all departments. There are no numeracy targets on the individual education plans. The special educational needs co-ordinator needs to ensure that all teachers are aware of the targets and that they are used in all lessons and that teachers know the best teaching strategies to be used for these students.
28. Links with primary schools have increased since the last inspection, partly due to the requirements of the status of Performing Arts College. The links in mathematics are yet to be

- fully developed. Links with the two local colleges of further education are very strong, and ensure that all students are aware of the opportunities available through to the age of 19.
29. The curriculum benefits from the good enhancement opportunities provided each day after school. These are particularly wide ranging in physical education and music. The status of Performing Arts College has had a positive impact on the courses available, and the number of students taking part in activities such as dance. There are extension activities and courses for higher-attaining students, in topics such as law and German. Most courses are well supported by students. There are a number of other opportunities for enrichment within the curriculum. In mathematics, for example, higher-attaining students can join master classes, and take part in the annual 'Maths Challenges', in history there is a good range of visits and visitors, and in English there are regular visits to the theatre.
 30. Accommodation is satisfactory. The majority of rooms and other spaces make good provision for the subjects and activities undertaken. Accommodation for music, dance and drama is very good. Status as a Performing Arts College has provided the school with funding for new rooms with a sprung floor and mirrors for dance, suitable lighting for drama, and practice rooms for music. The facilities for art and design are also very good. Rooms for mathematics, geography and ICT are satisfactory but space is limited for classes of 30 or more students. One of the geography rooms is irregularly shaped and has poor ventilation. Science accommodation is unsatisfactory, as there is one laboratory less than is needed. Consequently, a proportion of science lessons occur in general classrooms. However, the best use is being made of what is available. Special educational needs accommodation is unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the space for special educational needs with an extra classroom, and teaching areas created in corridors. However, interruption to teaching and learning can occur in these spaces. It is still difficult to find enough space for confidential discussions at times. In order to fulfil the requirements for disabled access, advisors recommended provision of a lift, additional handrails, and non-slip stair treads. The governors are seeking funding for a lift, and they have authorised renewal of stairs with non-slip treads. The dedicated site manager and his team maintain the building and grounds to a very high standard.
 31. The provision of resources for learning is good. Music has excellent ICT resources and non-western musical instruments – provision that results from Performing Arts College status. Resources are good in English, art and design and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT and physical education. In mathematics, textbooks are sufficient but they are not issued to students for independent use beyond classrooms. Very little use is made of ICT, as was reported at the time of the last inspection. There is a degree of limitation in the breadth of resources available in modern foreign languages. Very few ICT resources are available in religious education, and the number of new books purchased is small. In art and design the lack of computers restricts students' opportunities to carry out independent research. Book resources for science are insufficient and unsatisfactory. As at the time of the last report, the Learning Resource Centre continues to provide students with a pleasant and stimulating place for study and research, using books and information and communication resources. The librarian uses the teachers' recommendations for purchasing books and software relevant to curriculum topics and examination syllabi.
 32. The school's staffing is satisfactory overall. In most subjects, there are enough suitably qualified staff and there is a sufficient number of technical and administrative staff. Staffing in design and technology is good and all staff are specialists. Staff are very well supported by the headteacher and work together as an effective team. The school has also been affected by recruitment difficulties in special educational needs, particularly in the last three years. The special educational needs department is short of staff. There are not enough learning support staff or teaching assistants to support students in class. Nonetheless, learning support assistants make a good contribution to the achievement of students with special educational needs.

33. Due to problems of recruitment, there are insufficient qualified teachers of mathematics and this is a contributory factor in the poor provision for this subject. There is no qualified specialist for ICT and the religious education department would benefit from another member of staff. Teaching by non specialists also has had a negative impact on the teaching of English. It was impossible to recruit a graphics teacher for one year and this had a direct effect on achievement in design and technology.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares **well** for its students. It gives them good support, advice and guidance. There are good measures to involve students in the school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- School cares well for its students.
- Support, advice and guidance are good.
- School regards the views of students as important to its work.

Commentary

34. Levels of minor accidents are low in the playground. First aid and health and safety arrangements are clear and effective. Good arrangements for child protection and looked after children are in place.
35. Student induction arrangements are effective. This helps to support students personally and ensure continuity in their learning. The school's Specialist Status in the Performing Arts has created important new links with the feeder primary schools. Good support and guidance is provided for Year 9 students in choosing their GCSE options. Careers guidance is a positive feature in all years. In Years 10 and 11, the work of school staff is well supported by the 'Connexions' service. This is important, particularly for the one third of students who do not continue in full-time education beyond Year 11. The effective work-related learning programme, taken by 20 students in Years 10 and 11, gives these students a very good introduction to a wide range of vocational courses and careers.
36. The support of all students' achievement, through monitoring, is frequent, and effectively shared with students and parents. Where there are concerns, the heads of year and form tutors act quickly to ensure students are aware that improvement is needed.
37. Students' views form a key part of the reviews of personal targets. The school council is working on students' concerns about the conditions in some toilets and the price and choice of food. Councillors confirm that their ideas and suggestions are taken seriously and they have good access to the headteacher. Questionnaires have been effectively used to provide students with insights into their learning styles. For example, the more-able Year 11 students say that they find the information about their learning styles of continuing value.
38. The care and support for students with special education needs is very good. There is an inclusion support worker, who supports reintegration, inclusion and students who are likely to be permanently excluded. There is a good procedure for identifying students who need support and good use is made of outside agencies. At this time, the school is lacking a behavioural support worker and a counsellor. However, a new counsellor has been appointed and the school is part of the second pilot of the Hampshire schools counselling project.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and with the community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with both parents and the community are good.
- Educational links with other schools are good and this ensures the smooth transition of students into the school.
- Procedures to deal with parental concerns or complaints are very good.

Commentary

39. Parents attending the pre-inspection parents' meeting and those who responded to the questionnaire spoke very well of the school. Parents are satisfied that their children learn well and are happy in the school. They feel that their children behave well and are well cared for within an inclusive school. Parents also feel that the school values their children.
40. The provision of information to parents is good. The school provides good reports that give a clear indication of how well their children are doing and what they need to do next in order to improve. There are some minor inconsistencies between subjects in the amount and quality of the provision of information and in the accuracy of targets set. Links with parents are good and encourage parents to help and support their children's learning at home.
41. Inspectors agree with the parents' views that the school listens to their concerns and complaints. The school actively seeks parents' views and acts on them effectively. This area is a strength of the school and it is already having a significant impact on the students' learning. The school's community status also brings in parents to participate in an extensive and well run community education programme. This strengthens the bonds between parents and the school. Parents also appreciate the progress evenings, which are well attended. The school is working hard to increase the number of parents of Years 10 and 11 coming in to discuss their children's progress.
42. Inspectors agree with the parents' view that the school has improved significantly over the years. For the first time the school is now receiving students whose parents used to be more likely to send them to other local schools perceived as more academic. The result is that the current Year 7 has the first cohort of students with the potential to exceed the national averages in their forthcoming National Curriculum Test and GCSE results.
43. Parents say that the school is making strides in developing community relationships. Again, inspectors agree. Community relationships are a significant improvement since the last inspection. The local community is heavily involved in the school through progress evenings, fund raising activities, a rich variety of performing activities that are well attended, and a rich adult education programme, which is over subscribed. All of these have resulted in the school becoming a strong learning focus for its local community.
44. There are very good links with the parents of students with special educational needs. The opinion of parents is regularly sought and they are kept fully informed of how well the students are doing. This enables parents to feel a strong sense of partnership and to help them support their children at home.
45. To assist with transition, the special educational needs co-ordinator visits the feeder primary schools and attends the reviews of students with special educational needs. She contacts parents and the Educational Psychologist carries out some transition work.
46. Other agencies are used well. The school uses health visitors. The Youth Service is well used. A gardener works once a week with some students to promote self-esteem and to enhance the skills of working in a team. The special educational needs co-ordinator belongs to a local consortium and there are links with a local special school for students with moderate learning difficulties.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of the headteacher's leadership is **good**. The headteacher has ensured that the focus of the school remains on the students' learning and on their achievement. The result has been some good improvements in teaching, learning, students' attitudes and behaviour and staff retention.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and the governing body provide good leadership.
- The day-to-day management in the office is good.
- The school has handled its staffing limitations well, although there are still a few recruitment and retention issues, which have a negative impact on the achievement of a minority of students.
- Leadership is unsatisfactory in mathematics and ICT. Management is unsatisfactory in religious education.
- Leadership is very good in science, art and design, design and technology, drama, geography, history, music, religious education, physical education and special educational needs.

Commentary

47. The headteacher has specifically made teaching, learning and staffing the school's priorities. The result has been an improving school that continues to improve. During the last inspection, the average three year GCSE pass rate at five or more grades A*-C was 31 per cent. This has now risen to 41 per cent. The headteacher has done this by maintaining a high profile presence around the school, ensuring that her senior team work closely with teachers, monitoring provision and acting on the outcomes of monitoring. There are still hindrances to improvement, such as teacher recruitment and retention, some teacher illness, some subject weaknesses, as in mathematics and information and communication technology, and the low prior attainment of many students on entry, especially in their language and literacy skills.
48. The senior management team support the headteacher well. They share her vision for the school and work hard to maintain a strong focus on teaching, learning and staffing. They monitor teaching well and in most cases act well on discovered weaknesses through an ongoing and flexible programme of support. In spite of very good leadership in several subjects, there are areas of lack of expertise in teaching, which are not as rigorously supported as they should be. There are also subject weaknesses in mathematics, ICT and religious education, which have not been fully addressed. The monitoring of students' performance is broadly satisfactory, although there is significant variations between subjects. Student performance data available are not always used effectively and consistently by every subject to plan further work or to advise students on how best to improve.
49. Day to day office management is good. Finances are effectively managed with best value principles well applied. New staff across the whole school speak well of the way that they are looked after and valued. The retention of staff is part of the school's successful inclusion policy implementation where everyone matters. Race relations are good and all individuals, students and adults, are equally valued.
50. Governors give effective support and challenge to senior managers. They know the school quite well although there are pockets of weakness concerning non-compliance with statutory requirements that they are not fully aware of. The improvements in the school since the last inspection are partly due to effective governor support. There are three areas of non-compliance with statutory requirements: there is no daily act of corporate worship, religious education in Years 10 and 11 is not fully provided to every student and there is a shortage of ICT in all years, despite the ICT lessons in Years 7 and 8.

51. Leadership of special educational needs is very good. The headteacher and the senior management team are very supportive and ensure the special educational needs co-ordinator has sufficient time to fulfil her role and follow the requirements of the Code of Practice. There are good relationships with other staff and the professional development of learning support staff is actively encouraged. The lines of communication with other departments are very good and enable all staff to be aware of the students' needs and to identify students causing concern. There are regular meetings with representatives from other departments and all departments have a copy of the "SENlink" file containing all relevant information. However, the special educational needs co-ordinator must ensure that this link person gives information to all staff in the department so they are fully aware of individual education plans and have the opportunity to write subject-specific targets.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,422,551.77	Balance from previous year	94,270.37
Total expenditure	2,166,441.92	Balance carried forward to the next	256,109.85
Expenditure per student	3,171.95		

Resourced provision for students with speech and language impairment

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievements made by the students with speech and language impairment are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The provision is well led.
- Language Resource Assistants (LRAs) are very flexible and take on additional responsibilities.
- Where teaching is less good, the support provided by LRAs ensures that learning is still good.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

52. The admissions procedure for students attending the resourced provision states that students must be of average or above average ability. In addition, these students have moderate or severe language impairments. The results gained by the students in National Curriculum Tests and GCSE examinations are well above predictions, based on their abilities prior to entering the school. All the students gain GCSE's and these include some results that are at or just below the national average. This indicates good progress given the student's language impairments and additional difficulties - for example their difficulties in following oral and written instructions, personal organisation and understanding subject-specific language. The students also make very good progress towards their focused Individual Education Programme (IEPs) targets. Most importantly, they make significant gains in their ability to communicate, their social skills, confidence, self-esteem and ability to be independent. The students' attitude and behaviour are very good. They concentrate hard, behave very well and answer questions as well as offer contributions in lessons.

Teaching and learning

53. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Where this is very good, lessons are well planned with very clear objectives and approaches that are particularly helpful in supporting those students with language impairments. For example, in one food technology lesson observed, students with language impairments fully participated in a collaborative group

approach as part of a class appraisal of the best equipment to use when making Danish Apple Charlotte. Individual teaching to prepare students for practical food technology lessons uses visual prompts to support vocabulary learning and coloured cue cards written by the students, that they use as prompts to successfully follow a recipe.

54. When teaching is satisfactory - where the lessons are less well structured and the behaviour management of students is less secure - students with language impairments are very well supported by LRAs and their learning is still good.

Leadership and management

55. The provision is very well led and managed. The resource manager has a clear vision and empowers the team to work collaboratively and confidently in managing the diverse needs of the language impaired students. They have worked together to create an improvement plan that demonstrates ownership of developments. The LRAs have an extended role whereby they share responsibilities for different aspects of the provision. They also work as a 'Keyworker' for individual students and this creates positive links with the parents, who appreciate the increased level of contact this provides.
56. The students' achievements are made possible by the flexible support and additional group work provided by the enhanced resource provision. In-class support is enhanced by one-to-one preparation for future lessons. There is a "Chocolate Club", which is a social club for resource students and their friends. Groups work under the guidance of the Speech and Language Therapist on the "Social Use of Language Programme" (SULP). This encourages students to work on social skills and communication strategies in a safe environment. Students are encouraged to join in after-school activities and the provision arranges its own out-of school visits once a term. Additional support for the acquisition of life skills, such as using public transport independently, is provided to prepare students for the transition to college or work after school.
57. The resourced provision has worked with the history and design and technology departments to develop approaches and materials, which enhance the students' access to the curriculum. This is particularly positive in the food technology department, enabling students to gain good GCSE successes. There are plans to expand to other similar collaborative working between the resourced provision and departments.

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 **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of frameworks to support writing.
- Good support for students with identified special educational needs.
- Students' attitudes to learning are positive.
- Good classroom management.
- Marking and assessment are inconsistent.
- Monitoring of students' progress is underdeveloped.
- Use of ICT in English is underdeveloped.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

58. National Curriculum Test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below the national average, which indicates satisfactory progress given the students' very low prior attainment on entry. By the end of Year 11 the GCSE examination results in English were below the national average in 2003.

Standards and achievement

59. Overall, students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills are below the standards expected for Year 11. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to standards when students entered the school, which were very low. At this stage, teacher assessments reveal that girls outperform boys but in the 2003 National Curriculum Tests there was no gender difference. By the age of 16, there is a significant gender gap between the achievement of boys and girls with girls outperforming boys. Standards in both English and English literature are below the national average. Students with special educational needs benefit from good support and make satisfactory progress. The very few students for whom English is an additional language also receive specialist support and they are making satisfactory progress.

60. In good lessons, students respond well to teachers' skilful questioning and to prompts and encouragement to refine and develop their ideas and extend their vocabulary. Paired and group work provide good opportunities for students to develop oral skills, culminating in confident participation in formal debates with students able to argue coherently and justify opinions. Poor reading skills are evident in all years but particularly in Years 7 to 9. Students' reading is

hesitant and lacking in fluency. Poor decoding skills were also evident in lessons with students relying on the teachers to provide the correct pronunciation. Strategies in lessons such as paired reading partners, providing opportunities for reading aloud, effective deployment of learning support assistants and the use of Key Stage 3 intervention materials support the development of this key skill. The well-stocked library has a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and students are encouraged to read for pleasure and to research topics. There continue to be weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar but teachers' good examples of how to write and effective use of writing frames are improving students' ability to write for different purposes and audiences. In both English and English literature coursework in Years 10 and 11, students demonstrate developing skills of critical appreciation.

Teaching and learning

61. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all years. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. Teachers have secure knowledge of their subject. They know the requirements of the National Curriculum Tests and GCSE English and English literature courses well and lessons are well focused on them. Students benefit from the thorough preparation for tasks. Homework is set regularly, which develops, extends and consolidates learning. Teachers question adeptly, developing students' ability to deduce, infer, analyse and evaluate. Skilful teaching of literary terms provides opportunities to apply knowledge and develop analytical skills. The promotion of the skills of analysis and emphasis on the close reading of texts helps students to make satisfactory progress in English and English literature. Some non-specialist teaching, and problems with recruitment and retention as well as teacher illness problems, have a negative effect on students' achievement.
62. The standard of assessment is variable across the department. Marking is inconsistent and although some constructive comments are given these rarely identify the next steps in learning for students. The use of specific targets remains underdeveloped.
63. Students' attitudes to learning are positive and students are co-operative and collaborate effectively with one another in paired and small group work. Limited opportunities currently exist for students to develop ICT skills in drafting and presenting coursework.

Leadership and management

64. Management of the English department is satisfactory and improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The proportion of students achieving Level 5 and above in the national tests in Year 9 has increased but is still below average when compared to similar schools. The percentage of students achieving grades A* to C at GCSE is still below the national average. Procedures for monitoring the performance of staff and students are developing. Teaching strategies, such as the introduction of a short, focused, timed tasks and use of frameworks in a range of lessons, have improved the learning of boys and all students. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 are being reviewed in the light of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. Leadership of this close team is competent.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. Provision for the development of language and literacy across the curriculum is devolved to departments, but it is underdeveloped and unsatisfactory. The display and use of keywords and strategies to address weaknesses in spelling and support the development of students' literacy skills is variable within and across departments. Science, design and technology, geography, history, physical education and the performing arts subjects, however, do make effective contributions to students' language and literacy. Staff training has recently been provided to promote this key aspect of students' learning but so far there has been only limited improvement.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are planned carefully.
- Teachers use French or German effectively.
- Most students contribute well in lessons, but a significant minority disrupt learning in some classes.
- The range of teaching strategies is too narrow.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	French: well below average German: below average	French: well below average German: average
Achievement	French: satisfactory German: good	French: unsatisfactory German: satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

66. French GCSE results have been consistently below average since the last inspection. There was a marked dip in 2003 when the performance of boys was particularly weak. German results regularly match national averages with boys performing particularly well.
67. Standards and achievement in both languages are fundamentally affected by the attitudes of students in the class and the match of teaching and learning styles to the ability and aptitude of those students.

French

68. Most students study French in Years 7 to 9 and the majority are well motivated. However, only a small proportion of more-able students choose to continue with French to GCSE level. A substantial number of lower attainers quickly become disenchanted with the rigours of the course. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
69. Students in Year 7 make a good start. Many are devising compound sentences when given opportunities to use language independently. Thereafter rates of progress vary considerably. More-able students improve substantially. Those in lower sets achieve much more slowly, particularly when didactic teaching styles do not engage their interest. Throughout Years 10 and 11, a significant number of students are reluctant to participate actively in lessons. Higher attainers generally approach their work seriously and reach nationally expected levels. Speaking and writing are usually accurate when practised within a well-defined framework, whereas extended tasks lack spontaneity and individuality. Many students are too casual in their approach to comprehension texts. Listening activities are usually approached seriously and most students recognise the need to identify key words and ideas.

German

70. Those who study German are usually drawn from higher-ability sets. Progress in Year 9 is rapid as many students already recognise patterns in the language, including word order and the use of cases. Boys are often confident in speaking situations and are prepared to 'have a go'. This sense of purpose serves them well. However, in one Year 11 group there were some negative attitudes displayed. Students in the other groups blossom because they listen, question and follow the good role model provided by their teacher.

Teaching and learning

71. Lessons are planned systematically. A lot of effort has been expended in ensuring that key skills are consolidated regularly. Half of the lessons observed were good. All of these involved groups of motivated students, who respond well to challenge and contribute thoughtfully. In less successful lessons with lower sets, teaching methods lack originality and do not stimulate interest.
72. In both French and German, students of all abilities would achieve higher standards if they were required to use the language more independently. In question and answer sessions there is often insufficient analysis of students' responses. All teachers work hard to ensure coverage of all four skills in every lesson.

Leadership and management

73. There is a commitment to improvement. Schemes of work have been developed to meet the challenges presented by the wide range of ability in every class, although this is not always apparent in individual lesson plans. Department development plans do not contain precise, measurable targets. There is also a lack of consistency in assessment and marking strategies. Sharing of expertise and development of a common purpose is hindered by the allocation of teaching rooms in different parts of the school. All rooms are enhanced by vibrant displays of relevant information and students' work. No member of the department has a specified responsibility for French, which is the main language in the school. Nevertheless, co-operative teamwork continues to create an atmosphere of ambition and optimism.
74. Despite numerous staffing changes since the last inspection, teaching has become more consistent. Standards are similar, but the main problem remains that of finding strategies to engage reluctant learners.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall standards are well below average in Years 10 and 11.
- Too many students lack pride in the presentation of their work.
- The scheme of work has been revised, but pays insufficient attention to the National Numeracy Strategy.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory; a minority of teachers lack good management techniques, and there are too many non-specialists.
- Unsatisfactory curriculum leadership results in too much inconsistency in practice.
- There is insufficient use of computers and technology to extend learning opportunities for all students.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Poor
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

75. Results in the National Curriculum Tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below the national average, but well above those of students in schools in similar contexts. There was no significant difference in the overall results of boys and girls. These results represent good achievement, since standards were well below average when these students entered the school. Results were better than those in English, but below those in science. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average, and well below those gained by students in 2002. The proportion of students gaining the higher grades was particularly low, and students' performance in mathematics was lower overall than in all other subjects. The achievement of these students since taking their National Curriculum Tests in Year 9 was poor.

Standards and achievement

76. Standards seen in Years 7 to 9 were below the national average. Only a small proportion of students present work of a high standard. Variations in attitude were very noticeable. In a Year 7 lesson about 'reflections' with lower-attaining students, for instance, students responded well to the teacher, and used mirrors carefully to check their drawings. Although standards were well below average, students enjoyed the lesson. Lower-attaining students also concentrated well in a Year 8 lesson about using bus timetables. By contrast, students in a Year 9 lesson to consolidate the use of formulae for the area and circumference of a circle, showed far less pride in the standard of their work. There were too many off-task comments and conversations, and their achievement was unsatisfactory as a result. Across the range of ability, students generally show insufficient pride in the quality of their written work. They are not sufficiently well trained in Year 7 to develop high standards of presentation. Nevertheless, achievement across Years 7 to 9 in work seen was broadly satisfactory.
77. All students in Years 10 and 11 are prepared for the GCSE examination. Most, but not all, are entered for the final examination. Higher-attaining students in Year 11 clearly realised their examination is imminent, and they concentrated well throughout their lesson. About half the class, entered for the higher paper, worked independently, and used the sine and cosine rules well; their work was of a high standard, and a significant number expressed an interest in studying mathematics to A level next year. The remainder, entered for the intermediate paper, revised the use of fractions with their teacher. They were keen to overcome their weakness in using the four rules. By contrast, students in an average set showed very poor levels of concentration in a revision lesson about distance/time graphs. They showed very little interest in improving their standards, they were far too easily distracted, and did not respond to the teacher's efforts to encourage them to work. Unsatisfactory attitudes also contribute to the underachievement of a significant proportion of students in Year 10, including many students in higher sets. A significant proportion of students in lower sets in both Years 10 and 11 show a lack of confidence in their ability with mathematics. Their number bonds are weak, causing difficulty, for instance, in simplifying fractions. Progression in their work is limited by the fact that they do not have the same teacher for all their lessons (one group has four different teachers for their four lessons), and that there are too many non-specialist teachers. The overall achievement of both boys and girls in Years 10 and 11 is therefore poor.

Teaching and learning

78. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, but satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Too many teachers from other subjects teach a small number of mathematics lessons each week. Although they are conscientious about their work, they lack specialist knowledge, and continuity in the work of students becomes very difficult. This lack of continuity causes inconsistency, for instance in the application of the National Numeracy Strategy, in the use of computers, and in the use of marking and assessment. A number of teachers also lack classroom management skills. As a result of these difficulties, too many students lose confidence and interest. Progression in Year 11 is undermined still further by the irregular attendance of a significant minority of students.
79. Teachers prepare the content of lessons well, but there is a lack of variety in learning strategies. For instance, there is very little use of equipment to help students' understanding, and to increase interest. A lack of liaison with teachers of mathematics in primary schools means that students find difficulty in adjusting to the changes in teaching strategies. The use of data has increased, however, so that teachers are more aware of students' potential, but there is insufficient action taken when students underachieve. Homework is set regularly, but many students have a very casual attitude to completing it effectively. Students with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants. They are well known by teachers, but few of their individual education plans contain targets for improving their standards of numeracy.

Leadership and management

80. The leadership and management of mathematics are unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, there has been little improvement in monitoring the work of the department, or in co-ordinating the use of mathematics across the school. Moreover, too little priority has been given to using national strategies for improving provision in mathematics, and the work of the department has fallen behind national expectations. Insufficient time has been devoted to monitoring teaching skills, and to developing consistency in practice, such as the quality of marking, homework tasks, and the use of computers.
81. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. Too few students show a real interest in learning, and far too many students are content with a moderate effort, and moderate standards. This is largely the result of an insufficient emphasis by teachers on improving strategies and opportunities for learning. Whilst achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, it has deteriorated in Years 10 and 11, and is now poor.

Mathematics across the curriculum

82. Since the previous inspection, insufficient priority has been given to improving students' standards of numeracy. For instance, there has been a lack of training for teachers and teaching assistants to raise awareness of the contribution all subjects can make to students' development of mathematical skills. Furthermore, there is no whole school policy to encourage consistency in the use of terms such as average/mean or direct proportion, and in the analysis of data by using graphs. There has also been insufficient monitoring of provision across the curriculum in order to reach agreement on ways to improve progression and students' confidence.
83. Across the curriculum, there is a regular need for students to use mathematical skills. For example, in science, students regularly analyse their results by using graphs, and also use formulae to calculate values, such as speed and acceleration. In geography also they are required to manipulate numbers, for example in the use of scales and gradients, and in English, students use numerical data when considering the costs of advertising, and of buying a car. However, a number of students find unexpected difficulties with relatively simple mental calculations, for instance when using tens and units.

84. Students' standards of numeracy are below average in Years 7 to 9, and well below average in Years 10 and 11. Many show a lack of confidence in using number in a range of subjects, and too frequently this has a negative impact on their overall standards.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**. Very good action to improve student achievement is producing consistently rising standards for students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' understanding of the stages in student learning and assessment of their learning are good.
- Collection and use of data to track and monitor student and departmental performance are good.
- Good student attitudes and behaviour contribute to a positive learning environment.
- Better use of the good quality resources for teaching and learning would be facilitated by further development of what to teach and when to teach it.
- The department should make more effective use of the data on student attainment and of quality teaching resources to develop materials, which are more closely tailored to the needs of individual students.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Very good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

85. Results in the National Curriculum Tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below the national average but very high in comparison with the results in similar schools. Boys' and girls' results are similar. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above average in the A*-C grades in double award science. Boys gained more higher grades than girls. There has been a significantly improving trend over the last four years.

Standards and achievement

86. By the end of Year 9, students' knowledge of science is below average. Despite this, this represents very good achievement for many students in relation to their standards when they entered the school. Those with special educational needs also make good progress. Students show confidence when doing practical work and follow procedures well. Key words are used to help develop literacy skills and scientific understanding. The department has made use of writing frames and employs different strategies to engage students in written work, such as imagining being a melting ice cube, preparing a pamphlet on smoking or writing a diary as Lavoisier's assistant. By the end of Year 11, students' practical skills have improved and they produce good quality investigative work. They collate and tabulate and many analyse results well, although some are less precise in their evaluation of results. Weaker students sometimes do not complete their work. Coursework marks have improved because of efforts to encourage students to apply reasoning to planning and analysis. The standards seen in Year 11 represent good achievement for many students in relation to their well below average

standards when they entered the school. Students' books show well-developed work in biology. Chemistry also shows logical progress but sometimes concepts are not clearly explained and implications or applications of principles are not always well developed. Physics books show a tendency to emphasise calculation more than the development of concepts.

Teaching and learning

87. Teaching is good across the department. Features of the most effective teaching were seen in a very good lesson with Year 7 where ICT, questioning techniques and practical demonstrations were used to provide a well structured, well sequenced and enjoyable learning experience where students made good progress in their learning. In a well planned Year 10 lesson about photosynthesis, the teacher had students' attainment data to hand. ICT was used well to provide good quality visual stimulus material. Worksheets, annotated by students, saved time and the students understood the significance of diagrams. Further strengths of teaching are where teachers ensure the use of effective and enjoyable demonstrations and the skills of adaptability - modifying plans to meet students' needs. The department has made real efforts to understand stages in the progression of students' learning; applying this strategy in lessons is a key factor in raising standards of attainment in many lessons.
88. Where teaching showed room for improvement, as in a Year 7 lesson about circuits, whilst the lesson had been planned, the purpose of introductory activities and questions were insufficiently clear, resulting in students giving a range of only partially appropriate answers. Work sheets were used with insufficiently clear instructions so students gave only partially appropriate answers. The lesson was slow. In other lessons, planning of investigative work needed greater scientific precision and attention to practical details. Some Year 11 teaching lacked enthusiasm and some showed a need for greater use of materials appropriate to student's needs and interests. The use of text book questions forms a disproportionate amount of work in some exercise books, leading to a smaller proportion of practical work.

Leadership and management

89. Departmental leadership is very good; there is a strong focus on raising standards. An extensive database records students' prior attainment, target grades and progress. The departmental handbook identifies areas contributing to student progress. In-service training has been actively followed up, especially linked to the Key Stage 3 strategy. Links with Cams Hill School in Fareham, the University of Reading and the Local Education Authority advisory service are used very well to improve teaching and learning strategies. This link has developed an approach to teaching and learning that has been used at County and national level and is a strength of departmental working. Standards have improved consistently over recent years. Evaluation of students' attitudes and progress at GCSE level has led to curriculum change, single award science being dropped in favour of applied science, which has improved attitudes and achievement. Management is good but some areas need attention. Literacy and numeracy have been considered but the approaches are not well structured; the approach to numeracy is less well developed. Teaching schemes have been purchased for all years providing quality materials. The organisation of these into teaching schemes is not well developed and the overall planning of progress through courses needs further development. The provision and management of preparation of materials for lessons create pressure on the technician. The very supportive and effective technician works hard but there is too little time for preparation and there is insufficient technical support time. Tracking, marking and target setting are in place; however, the frequency, quality and feed-back from marking to students is inconsistent. Many students are not clearly aware of their targets. The use of ICT for teaching and learning is improving but is still an area for development to ensure consistent experiences for students.
90. There has been recent expenditure on textbooks, basic laboratory equipment and laboratory furniture. This has made a significant improvement in provision. There is still a need for further laboratory equipment to enable class practical work. All laboratories lack blinds, making practical work with light virtually impossible and constraining effective use of projected images for teaching. The department is one laboratory short, requiring the use of non-specialist rooms;

this constrains teaching and requires moving of resources, making teaching more stressful. Despite improvements and efforts by teachers to reduce the impact on learning, accommodation and resources for science are unsatisfactory.

91. Since the previous inspection, progress has been good. Many areas mentioned in the last report show improvement; especially those which impact directly on student achievement. Much effort has been put into raising standards, which has worked well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective student/teacher relationships.
- The ICT curriculum does not meet statutory requirements.
- The standard of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- ICT assessment in Year 9 is too lenient.
- The management of ICT is unsatisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

92. There are currently no examination results to report as students only follow a key skills programme in Years 10 and 11.

Standards and achievement

93. Students' achievement by the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory. Students are not sufficiently challenged and produce work at a standard below that expected nationally. Students studying ICT in Years 7 to 9 do not have enough opportunity to achieve high standards, particularly those students who take two modern foreign languages and who miss some ICT lessons. However, there is some evidence that the school is beginning to adopt nationally recognised units of work in an effort to improve the current situation.
94. Students' achievement at Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory because the non-specialist ICT teachers of the key skills programme have not received adequate training and are, therefore, unaware of the specific requirements. Students are also confused about the key skills programme, with many thinking they are studying towards a GCSE.
95. There are good pockets of ICT use across the curriculum, particularly in design and technology and geography. Where ICT is being used well, it is clearly helping to support learning and is raising standards. Students' attitudes are always at least satisfactory and in Years 7 to 9 they are good.

Teaching and learning

96. Overall, the teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory with some very good teaching. The very good teaching is lively and stimulating and engages students well. However, the use of homework is inconsistent and misses this opportunity to reinforce and extend learning. In Years 10 and 11, the teaching is unsatisfactory because the non-specialist teachers' expectations of the students are too low. Teachers are aware that significant numbers of students are not making progress in their lessons, but are currently unable to resolve this situation.

Leadership and management

97. Management and leadership are unsatisfactory. The ICT co-ordinator has other major responsibilities in the school and this reduces the time that is available to manage this key area of the curriculum. Inevitably, this affects ICT as a subject and the monitoring of its effectiveness in other subjects. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 is insecure. Student targets are unrealistic and are not based on where they start in Year 7. There is no evidence to substantiate that the National Curriculum Levels reported are based on students' work samples. Marking and feedback to students is unsatisfactory because students are not clear about how to improve their work. The recording and tracking of students' progress is also weak.
98. Detailed schemes of work are not yet in place and this has a significant effect on planning for learning. Departmental development planning is too general. There is no planned programme to replace and upgrade ICT facilities as they become obsolete.
99. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory since many of the issues raised then have not yet been resolved, including those where responsibility still lies with the senior management team.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

100. Gaining access to the ICT suites by some subject teachers is difficult and the present booking system does not meet all needs. There is a process for recording technical problems and requesting support but this is not always followed up promptly, partly because of a shortage of ICT technicians. Some departments are using data projectors to enhance learning. Plans are in place to expand this capacity further. ICT is well used in design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, including very good and excellent examples.
- Achievement is very good, and Year 11 students attain well above average standards.
- Very good attitudes and good behaviour contribute to students' success.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teachers do not share assessment data with students sufficiently.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

101. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average for grades A*-C and all students gained a grade A*-G. The percentage of A grades was well above average, although the percentage of A* grades was below average. Students consistently perform well above average over the last four years and the rate of improvement is above average. Boys performed better than girls did in 2003, but there is no established pattern, as girls performed better in 2002 and gained above average A* grades.

Standards and achievement

102. Students in Year 7 begin with well below average standards, and weak literacy skills. By the end of Year 9 their standards improve considerably, indicating very good achievement. Higher-attaining students recall subject terms accurately, and understand the various processes that change coastlines. They draw sketches of physical features, such as *stacks* and *arches*, and label them to explain their formation. Lower-attaining students take longer to understand processes: for example, the formation of *wave-cut platforms*. Students in Years 10 and 11 also achieve very well in relation to their attainment levels when they begin GCSE studies. They investigate geographical issues independently, using skills they have learned through lessons and fieldwork. Their evidence is thoughtfully presented and evaluated to reach conclusions about whether coastal features, such as Hengistbury Head, are worth protecting from erosion. By this stage, their writing is good, and they use ICT skills to present work to a very high standard. Achievement of students with special educational needs is also very good.

Teaching and learning

103. A specialist teacher makes excellent use of ICT through PowerPoint presentations of photographs, maps, diagrams, and graphs. Very clear photographs help students understand the distinctiveness of places and physical features. In an excellent lesson for Year 10 students the teacher challenged their thinking with probing questions on maps and photographs about possible flooding of London. They identified quickly the economic and human consequences of water cascading into the underground rail network and public buildings. The series of lessons links with a visit to the Thames Flood Barrier: evidence of very good planning. Where teachers lack experience, they do not always give enough support to younger students who have difficulty with English so that they can start work independently. Non-specialist teachers occasionally do not appreciate what students have misunderstood in important geographical processes. For these reasons, teaching and learning is less strong in a few lessons below Year 10. Expectations of effort, achievement, and behaviour in the majority of lessons are very high and students respond very well. Homework is set regularly, and work is marked with helpful comments. However, students do not have a written record of their current levels or their target grades to remind them of where they are and what is their goal.

Leadership and management

104. The head of geography has a clear vision for improving standards further through curriculum development, and consistent quality in teaching and learning. She is an inspiring role model and has created a successful teaching team. However, the lack of permanent staffing limits the subject's development. The innovative head of department has set up a subject web site for students' use. This provides a rich resource for their work, at home and in school. Students' learning also benefits from very well-organised fieldwork. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Achievement is very good.
- Students' work is well assessed and homework is used well.
- Management and leadership are very good, with particular strengths in curriculum development.
- Skills in literacy and numeracy are not yet sufficiently developed.
- There is not always enough challenge for the highest-attaining students in Year 7.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Examination results

105. School assessment shows that standards at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were just below the national average, indicating good progress given the well below average attainment on entry. GCSE results in history, overall, were below the national average in 2003 with boys attaining less well than girls. Overall results were better in the economic and social history course. Lower-attaining students are entered for the Certificate of Achievement and all candidates gained that qualification.

Standards and achievement

106. Standards in Year 9 are just below the national average because of the large proportion of lower-attaining students and because history is affected by weaknesses in literacy. However, the highest-attaining students are reaching the highest levels and some of their written work is really impressive. Achievement overall, including that of students with special educational needs, is very good. Standards in Year 11 are below the national average, although there are students on both GCSE courses who will achieve the very highest grades. Boys are now achieving as well as girls. History attracts students from the full range of attainment because it is so well taught in Year 9 and students are achieving very well. Attitudes to the subject are good in class, although not all students complete set tasks or course work. Students respond well to teachers' skilful questioning and make good oral contributions to lessons, although

some have problems with written work. They enjoy the wide range of activities and visits and many students continue to study history at a higher level at the local college.

Teaching and learning

107. Students make very good progress because they are very well taught. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of their subject and they make lessons exciting by using games, simulations, video and role-play. GCSE candidates know the requirements of the external examinations well because two members of staff are examiners. Revision lessons and homework are used very effectively. The good standard of assessment allows teachers to improve weaknesses and build on students' strengths. They provide good opportunities for self and peer evaluation and target setting so that students know how to improve. Marking is very thorough and provides valuable guidance. Students are taught as mixed ability groups in Year 7 and grouped by ability in Years 8 and 9. There is not always the extra challenge in Year 7 lessons to ensure that the highest-attaining students make the progress that they should. Elsewhere, lesson content matches the needs of students very well.
108. Students are enthusiastic learners because they enjoy lessons that involve role-play to help them understand the spread of the Black Death or planning board games to illustrate the complex problems of Germany between the wars. They work well in pairs and small groups and are capable of some independent learning and research. When they have the opportunity they use computers well and teachers use PowerPoint to enhance the quality of learning in the classroom. There is scope for a greater focus on both literacy and numeracy in the subject, although the contribution to citizenship is very good.

Leadership and management

109. The very good leadership and management of the history department have ensured very good improvement since the last inspection. Schemes of work have been rewritten and assessment is now good. Students' work is celebrated in displays that make a valuable contribution to learning. The differing strengths within the department have been used to provide a choice of GCSE courses and to ensure a good level of support for temporary teachers. Resources, including those in the library, have been well chosen and are well used. This is a very successful department.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good** despite the limited time allowed for this subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- A notable strength is the emphasis put on developing students' independence in their learning.
- Students are well motivated and are often perceptive in expressing their views.
- The achievement of girls is better than that of boys.
- The marking of work and ongoing and formal assessments are regular and comments on students' work are constructive and indicate positive ways in which students can improve.
- The topics covered in some of the classes in Year 8 and occasionally in the GCSE groups in Years 10 and 11 do not always have a sufficiently rigorous academic content to ensure that students deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.

	Year 9	Year 11
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Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

110. Last year was the first time the religious education department entered students for the GCSE examination. Fifteen students were handpicked to sit the examination; of those, 12 students gained C grades and three gained D grades. This was below the national average. It is not possible, however, to compare results with the previous inspection report or to say anything about improvement. This year, 70 students are entered for the examination.

Standards and achievement

111. In Year 7, students successfully identify some of the major arguments put for and against the idea of God's existence and they know what the terms, atheist, theist and agnostic mean. Students learn about the various creation stories in different religious traditions and also learn from these traditions how to think for themselves and to make their own personal responses. In Year 8, students accumulate knowledge about some of the key religious concepts such as "sin", considered from the point of view of all that is wrong in the world, such as poverty, war and conflict. Students understand the origins of Christianity and Islam and begin by studying the lives of Christ and Mohammed. Their understanding of the more basic religious precepts, for instance, in Year 8, of who wrote the Qu'ran and what it contains is, however, less secure.
112. At the end of Year 9, students have a good understanding of what the "Rites of Passage" mean in religious traditions and offer good written accounts of the various relevant ceremonies and celebrations held by the major religions. Students achieve good standards when they look closely at the idea of "spirituality", as an aspect of one's inner-self and as a prelude to studying Buddhist ideas about the three marks of existence. Their written accounts, based on well-focused whole class and group discussions, are thoughtful. Achievement at the end of Year 9 is good and attainment is above the national expectation.
113. All students in Years 10 and 11 follow an integrated humanities course and consider broad themes that have religious, moral and social implications such as stereotyping, prejudices and discrimination. Students consider controversial topics as a part of class debates, for example, "The place of women as priests in our society" and they are required to reflect for or against. Some references are made to Biblical and other religious references when discussing particular topics but this is not so consistently undertaken as to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the religious, moral and social dimensions. Students in their GCSE course work look at the rise of the suffragette movement within a global context and the non-examination Years 10 and 11 students produce course work on charitable organisations. Students use their research and investigative skills well when accessing the Internet. They collect data, select relevant material and identify salient features in the texts, accurately.
114. Despite the unsatisfactory nature of the provision for students in Years 10 and 11, they attain above average standards and their achievement, including students with special educational needs, is good.

Teaching and learning

115. The teaching is good. Good use of carefully structured questions enables students' responses to be personal and honest. Class discussions are also of good quality since the topics chosen relate well to students' interests and help them to formulate their own set of beliefs on a range of religious, moral and social issues. The teaching focuses on encouraging students to identify beliefs that people from various religious traditions hold and to consider how they impact on their own lives. The teacher uses a good range of methods involving students in working collaboratively as well independently to develop their research and investigative skills. The supervision of older students, when using ICT to develop their GCSE course work, is of good quality. The teacher offers constructive advice and suggests alternative ways of gathering information. Students are regularly reminded to remain focused and to limit their Internet search in realistic ways.
116. Students achieve good standards in their learning. In Years 7 to 9, students are regularly encouraged to think for themselves and to write down their own thoughts honestly, which they do successfully. They produce written work that is of good quality and occasionally the written work is of very good quality, especially that of the girls. In Years 10 and 11, students discuss and write about important ethical issues and they are particularly articulate when the topics deal with aspects that relate directly to their day-to-day interests. Students' understanding of the "practical" features within a range of religious traditions is good and above national expectations. Insufficient use is made, however, of ICT in Years 7 to 9 and to some extent in Years 10 and 11, to support students' learning.

Leadership and management

117. The religious education department is very well managed. The one teacher teaches all classes in the school, except one Year 7 group, which is taught by a non-specialist. The arrangement whereby students in Years 10 and 11, in both the non-examination classes and GCSE groups, are taught in half-termly blocks of six weeks is unsatisfactory. In the case of all Year 10 and 11 classes, the school management is failing to ensure the statutory provision for religious education on a regular basis, and for the GCSE classes, there is no parity of provision compared with those pursuing other GCSE examination courses in other subjects. As a result, the students are disadvantaged with gaps of six weeks every term when they do not have any religious education lessons, students' learning experiences lack continuity.
118. The head of department has improved the quality of the teaching and learning by careful planning and by introducing a scheme of work that accurately reflects the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The teaching is based on the use of a range of teaching styles that appropriately matches the needs of students of all abilities. The work set encourages students to sustain an interest in their work as well as enhancing their levels of motivation and commitment. Regular assessments are undertaken and the marking of students' work is consistently good and helpful.
119. There has been significant improvement in the quality of the teaching and learning since the last inspection. Students' attitude to the subject is very good and is having a positive effect on their attainment and achievement.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well taught.
- Students achieve well.
- Students have good attitudes to learning.

- The developing use of computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) is effective.
- There is effective support given to the development of students' literacy.
- Marking and assessment across the focus areas are not consistent.
- The teaching of design skills in Years 7 to 9 is not well developed.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

120. At the end of Year 9 in 2003, Teacher Assessment results were below the national average. This represents good achievement given the wide variation of students' attainment on entry.
121. GCSE results were also below the national average, although students' results were comparable with their other subjects in food technology and resistant materials, representing good achievement. However, results in graphics were well below national average.

Standards and achievement

122. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and the work seen indicates that average standards are now being attained. Girls' work is slightly better than the boys'. The higher-attaining students can express ideas through good quality annotated sketches. The lower-attaining students are generally less confident about doing things for themselves and need more direction from their teachers. Students do not spend enough time investigating and evaluating everyday products
123. Achievement is also good in Years 10 and 11. Standards in the range of courses offered in Year 11 are below average, although good progress has been made since the beginning of Year 10. Students' designing is weaker than making because students are not able to generate and develop ideas to a high enough standard. Higher-attaining students are developing skills in reflecting function and quality in product specifications, but their theoretical knowledge is weaker.
124. Lower-attaining students research and analyse design issues superficially prior to writing a manufacturing specification. However, students generally do as well in design and technology as they do in their other subjects.

Teaching and learning

125. Teaching and learning are good. In the most effective lessons, teachers are well prepared, highly organised and are clear about what they expect of students.
126. Very good lessons have lively and stimulating teaching, with high expectations of students and make very good use of question and answer sessions. All teachers have expert subject knowledge. Teachers provide high quality classroom displays and well-structured worksheets to support students' designing and the development of literacy and numeracy skills. CAD/CAM is now used effectively in many lessons.

Leadership and management

127. Leadership and management are good. There is a developing team approach to management of the department. Systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Regular departmental meetings focus on improving standards by evaluating the design and technology curriculum and assessment issues. However, there is not yet a consistent system applied across all focus areas that provides students with on-going information on how to improve their work. The teaching of designing skills in Years 7 to 9 needs more effective co-ordination.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The students' achievement is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- There are no computers in the art and design rooms, which means that there are insufficient opportunities for students to use ICT.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

128. The end of Year 9 Teacher Assessment results for 2003 were in line with the national average for those attaining Level 5 or above. The GCSE results for 2003 were well below the national average for those attaining grades A*-C. This was a particularly low-attaining year and the department slightly exceeded the target set for it by the school senior management. In the previous year, results were above the national average. The department's three year GCSE trend is rising.

Standards and achievement

129. Standards in all years are above average. Year 9 students have good knowledge of the work of artists. They understand the different forms of art work and can competently replicate some of them. They are also skilled in producing three dimensional art work and using colour contrasts and shapes. Students are able to discuss their work well using subject-specific vocabulary accurately. Year 11 students can research and explore the work of artists. They are also able to reproduce work in the style of the chosen artist. They can discuss their work with considerable confidence. The use of ICT is limited by a lack of computers in the art rooms. This has a negative impact on the students' achievement, particularly in Years 10 and 11 because GCSE students can not readily access the Internet in order to carry out research, especially during the examination period. All students, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make very good progress.

Teaching and learning

130. The quality of teaching is very good, with some outstanding features. Because of this very good quality teaching, students invariably make very good progress. Teachers are enthusiastic and they give a huge amount of energy to their subject. Lessons are well prepared and students are clearly well versed in the routines of settling down and getting on with their work as quickly as possible. They respond well to their teachers' suggestions and support. Many can work independently and do so well when given the chance. The end of lesson whole class discussions are very good in testing the students' gains during the lesson and in evaluating the work done. Assessment is effective and students know what they need to do to improve their standards.

Leadership and management

131. Both the leadership and management of the subject are very good. The two art and design rooms are well organised and displays of students' work are very attractive. The art and design handbook and the schemes of work are outstanding. They include comprehensive coverage of every aspect of the subject. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, when the provision for art was already judged to be good.

Performing arts

132. Since the last inspection, the school has achieved Specialist Arts College Status. In the eighteen months since the Status was achieved, the faculty has begun to have a significantly positive effect on the life of the school and its community. It is very well led and managed and there is a consistency and coherence throughout its discrete subjects. The introduction of the BTEC performing arts course opens up access and opportunities for more students than before. The Year 10 students who have begun this course are making very good progress, aided by well-informed, supportive teaching. Performances by students specialising in music were confident, well-choreographed and ably supported by the faculty staff, including the technician.

Music

Provision in music is **good, with many strong features**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The accommodation and resources are very good.
- The learning ethos and teachers' high expectations are consistently found across the performing arts faculty.
- The provision for and use of ICT at both key stages are very good.
- Teachers' command of the subject, planning, and use of time and resources are all very good.
- Homework is very well used to reinforce and extend the students' learning.
- Assessment is good, and the marking of written work is particularly helpful.
- Technician support is excellent.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Standards and achievement

133. Results at GCSE dipped dramatically in 2002 and rose marginally in 2003. Observations during this inspection suggest that this improvement will continue. The strategy for raising standards, devised as part of the arts college bid, and the changes in staffing are having a positive effect. Students in both key stages can use, with confidence, a wide range of traditional classroom instruments (tuned and untuned) as well as a variety of instruments from other countries. The use of the voice is promoted well, performances are confident and controlled, and information and communication technology is well integrated in the curriculum and well used by the students. Overall, students, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.

Teaching and learning

134. Teaching and learning are good overall, never less than satisfactory, and occasionally very good in Years 10 and 11. Features of the good teaching include very good and effective planning, including the scheme of work, the teachers' command of the subject in all years, very good use of resources, very effective use of the short lesson time and the use of homework to extend, reinforce and prepare for work in the classroom. The faculty has its own website, which provides work and resources, allowing all students to print out their completed work. Students, except in Year 8, display a maturity when working independently and collaboratively, and understand how they can improve. Students enjoy their music and make good use of opportunities to extend and enhance their learning.

Leadership and management

135. In keeping with the whole performing arts faculty, leadership and management are very good. There is a coherence and consistency to all that goes on within the faculty, which is appreciated and respected by the students. The music teachers are good role models for the students; they work well together and make effective use of performance data. Professional development is planned and undertaken with good use of evaluation.

136. The department is well supported by a good team of peripatetic instrumental and vocal teachers. The open access and inclusivity of the department are well illustrated by the range of styles and genres taught by the vocal staff. Effective links exist between the school and other local educational institutions. Students benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, many of which are practical extensions of work in the classroom. Overall, the department makes a very good contribution to the social and cultural development of the school. The new status of the school has facilitated the provision of over twenty computer and keyboard stations in a separate suite, which is popular with students and well used both in and out of lessons.

137. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good overall, despite the temporary drop in GCSE results. Very good use is now made of music technology; accommodation and resources have improved considerably; and links and consistency with other arts subjects have improved. Other strengths mentioned at the last inspection, including quality of teaching, acquisition and consolidation of subject knowledge, and attainment of students in Year 10 and 11 lessons have maintained their standards.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The accommodation and resources are very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There are weaknesses in standards in Years 8 and 11.

- Relationships are very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

Commentary

138. This is a very good department, very well led by an, as yet, unqualified teacher. There was a dip in GCSE results in 2001, but in that year the group doubled in size and results have improved each year since then, whilst maintaining the group sizes. Standards during inspection are satisfactory at both key stages but the immaturity of some Year 8 students and some lack of continuity for the Year 11 students mean that there is an inconsistency between year groups. Year 9 students in particular achieve very well. Teaching and learning are very good overall and never less than satisfactory. Accommodation and resources have benefited from the arts college status of the school. The department makes very good contributions to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students, particularly through visits, curricular and extra-curricular enrichment and through the good role models provided by the staff.

139. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. By the end of Year 9, standards in drama are now equal to those expected nationally and the proportion of students achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE examinations has risen significantly since the cohort size doubled. Students still respond well to the work, which they enjoy. The teaching is never less than satisfactory, and is now mostly rigorous and demanding, with students of all abilities both challenged and supported. There is still a good and coherent scheme of work, which is under constant review. The curriculum is supported by an appropriate programme of extra-curricular workshops, trips and visits. There are good opportunities for public performance, although the department would benefit from a dedicated performance venue. The facilities for drama are now very good, as is cross-curricular co-ordination of the subject.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership has resulted in significant improvements.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and produces good learning.
- Good opportunities are provided for students to work independently and with others.
- Most students are very positive and enthusiastic in their approach.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed for students to evaluate their own work and that of others.
- There is no designated room for teaching the theoretical elements of the course.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
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Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Examination results

140. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2003 indicates that standards were above the national average, with boys attaining at a higher level than girls. In Year 11, the proportion of students gaining A*-C grades was broadly in line with the national average. Although below the very good results of the two previous years, the 2003 GCSE results closely matched the estimated grades predicted by the class teachers.

Standards and achievement

141. Detailed teacher assessment shows that the majority of students in the present Year 9 are attaining average standards. Lesson observations support this view. Most students perform competently in a range of games, gymnastic, dance and athletic activities. In core physical education in Year 11, standards are also average. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls. At GCSE level, where the proportion of students following the examination course is much higher than the national average, standards are very similar to last year. Boys are generally performing at a higher level than girls, particularly in practical activities. Individual students attain above average standards in athletics, cricket, cross-country, dance, football and netball.

142. Given their starting point, students' achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. In core physical education in Year 11, where students are consolidating and extending their earlier work, achievement is satisfactory. Achievement is good for the majority of students studying for the GCSE examination. Several students with special educational needs are following the examination course. They are achieving well. The small number of students currently taking GCSE dance in Year 11 are also achieving well and are reaching standards that are at least average for the course.

Teaching and learning

143. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is consistently good and is often very good. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Students respond very well to the teaching they receive. Relationships are good, lessons are well planned and important key terms are emphasised and reinforced very effectively. Although opportunities are missed in some lessons for students to evaluate the work of others, good opportunities are provided in many lessons for students to work both independently and collaboratively. The willingness of students to work constructively with their teachers and with each other is apparent in all lessons. This has a very positive impact on the progress that they make. Students are always correctly dressed for physical activity. They behave very well and participation rates are high throughout the school.

Leadership and management

144. Leadership and management in physical education are very good. There is a clear sense of purpose and a focus on raising standards. Teachers are working very well together. Very good improvement since the last inspection has seen the percentage of students achieving grades A* to C at GCSE level increase significantly. New and much improved assessment procedures have been introduced. Schemes of work have been revised and short-term planning is good. Dance is now offered as a GCSE subject. At present, there is no designated room for teaching the theoretical elements of the two examination courses. Such a facility would help teachers in their quest to raise standards in physical education and dance and

would also support the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The range of after-school clubs is good, although the very short midday break makes it impossible for extra-curricular activities to take place at that time. There are plans to broaden the range of activities available to older students by introducing the Junior Sports Leaders Award and to develop curriculum links with feeder primary schools in the near future.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Citizenship is delivered successfully across the curriculum.
- Aspects of citizenship experiences are promoted through enrichment activities.
- A large number of students take part in citizenship experiences outside the classroom.
- Assessment of the students' attainment and achievement in citizenship is underdeveloped.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

Commentary

Standards and achievement

145. Standards are above the national average. Students have a good knowledge of human rights and the rule of law. They understand values of truth and justice and can talk about them well. Many students take advantage of the opportunities offered to them to take on responsibility and to work on behalf of others, for example raising funds for charity, becoming a member of the school council or mentoring younger students. Older students take their mentoring of younger students seriously and do a good job of supporting them.

Teaching and learning

146. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers of all subjects where citizenship appears clearly identify it as citizenship and ensure that students understand the implication of what they are learning. Teachers' lesson plans state clearly where citizenship occurs and relate each mention to National Curriculum requirements. Students are encouraged to discuss issues that arise and teachers praise their responses regularly. The result is that students become willing and often eager to respond. Although assessment is satisfactory overall, it is still at the stage of being firmly rooted in each separate subject rather than being collected together and collated under citizenship. The result is that students do not fully know how well they are doing in citizenship and what they need to do next in order to improve further. All students, including those with special educational needs and those with English as a second language, make good progress.

Leadership and management

147. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader has ensured that all staff understand the requirements for citizenship and she has led staff development sessions on this. She has also ensured that there is some teacher interest in, and occasionally enthusiasm for, citizenship through its high profile presence in each subject. The management of the subject has been very good with clear documentation produced giving guidelines on requirements. Subjects are regularly audited to ensure they cover their specified requirements. At this stage, assessment is still not consistent.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	4
Students' achievement	3

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

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

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