

# INSPECTION REPORT

## TOTTINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Laurel Street

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105357

Headteacher: Mr A Scott

Lead inspector: Mr C Glynn

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 October 2003

Inspection number: 259957

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	986
School address:	Laurel Street Tottington Bury
Postcode:	BL8 3LY
Telephone number:	01204 882327
Fax number:	01204 884849
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr W Johnson MBE
Date of previous inspection:	14 September 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Tottington is an average size comprehensive school with 986 students aged 11-16. Less than one percent of students are from non-white families and the intake is above average in terms of attainment and social and economic status. The number of students on free school meals is below average but the percentage with a statement of special educational need is well above the national average. A special resource unit exists for 20 such students.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2741	Mr C Glynn	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Drama
9843	Mrs S Drake	Lay inspector	
30996	Mrs A Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics Citizenship
23462	Mrs J Morrison	Team inspector	English
17799	Mr A Stoddart	Team inspector	Science
31096	Mr J Thornhill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
32329	Mr A Stafford	Team inspector	Art and design
1759	Mr G Edwards	Team inspector	Design and technology
32169	Mr B O'Hagan	Team inspector	Geography History
27082	Mr G Henshall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Business studies
20490	Mr P Wilson	Team inspector	Music
31821	Mr B McCann	Team inspector	Physical education
27803	Mr J Clark	Team inspector	Special educational needs
7602	Mrs E Milroy	Team inspector	Religious education
28882	Mr B V Jones	Team inspector	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 1BB

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES</b>	<b>19</b>
The Resource Provision	
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS [AND COURSES] IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>42</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Tottington High has many good features.** It is an effective, well managed, happy and busy school which successfully promotes students' personal development and which earns high approval from parents. The exam results are above average. Learning is satisfactory and students' positive attitudes often raise their learning to good. Teaching is satisfactory. It is often good, especially of the most able students. While the staff work hard to meet the needs of all the students; the achievement of the average attaining students could be higher with more challenging work. Overall achievement is satisfactory. The headteacher and senior managers continue to give sound leadership. They are well supported by the governing body. Systems for self-evaluation have been set up well and data very well analysed but a more robust approach to ensuring their use across all areas of the school's work is needed to ensure that the high standards already achieved continue to rise and that priorities for development are more accurately defined. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The above average results in national tests and public examinations. Standards in English, mathematics, double science, German, art and design, drama and music are particularly strong but weak in information and communication technology (ICT) French, RE and in graphics in design and technology.
- Unsatisfactory teaching is found in a significant percentage of lessons.
- Students with special educational needs are well catered for and they achieve well.
- The inclusive ethos is shown in the warm relationships and concern for the students' welfare.
- Governors' involvement, expertise and commitment are good.
- There is a very high level of parental and student satisfaction with all aspects of the school's life.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching in departments is underdeveloped.
- Data is used inconsistently by middle managers to inform future planning and target setting.

Satisfactory progress has been made in the last inspection's key issues to improve students' contributions in class, boys' achievement, homework timetables, teaching time and to meeting most statutory requirements. More remains to be done to ensure effective systems of monitoring and evaluating teaching quality and in the use of data to inform future planning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	B	B	B	C

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

Standards in the majority of subjects are **above average**. Achievement is **satisfactory**. Across the school from Years 7 to 11 there is underachievement among some students within the middle band and those of just below average capability. High attaining students at entry fulfil their potential and reach high standards at GCSE. The significant number of students with special educational needs achieve well.

In Years 10 and 11 students achieve satisfactorily except in religious education where there is not enough time to cover the syllabus and in graphics and ICT where there is some unsatisfactory teaching. The school has identified a group of students in the middle range who underachieve in relation to their capabilities. These students are being mentored intensively to improve their progress.

By the end of Year 11, results attained in GCSE are well above average for the group who gain five subjects at grades A\*-C. When compared to similar schools and with their previous attainment the proportion attaining 5 grades at A\*-G is below average. This represents underachievement again in the middle band. The school is taking steps to match teaching more closely to the needs of these students and to raise teachers' expectations of their capabilities. There is little difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls in the three core subjects. Students with special educational needs attain standards appropriate to their prior attainment. Because they are well supported and fully included, they make good progress. Unsatisfactory teaching hampers the learning of some students who do not make enough progress in their English lessons.

Personal development is **good**. Social and moral development is good; spiritual and cultural development satisfactory. Students have good attitudes to learning and behave well. Punctuality is good and attendance is very good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching and assessment are **satisfactory**. Learning is **satisfactory** and students' positive attitudes often raise their learning to good. Most lessons are well planned and taught and students effectively encouraged to learn. Unsatisfactory teaching and learning was seen in a significant number of lessons where the work and teaching method chosen was ill-matched or the management of the students' behaviour was ineffective. This resulted in under-challenging work and weak progress. The school is particularly successful with teaching the highest and lowest attaining students and needs to address more the attainment of the average and below average attainers. Although the provision for ICT does not yet fully meet national curriculum requirements, a good curriculum is provided with a good range of alternative courses and extra-curricular opportunities. Time allocations for German, RE, PE, design and technology are below those found in most schools. The care, guidance and support for students as well as the partnerships with parents and the community are **good**.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and senior managers who have considerable length of service and experience continues to be **sound**. The governing body supports and challenges the leadership well and effectively acts as a critical friend in evaluating the school's provision and success. Management is **good**. Middle managers need to be more effective in the self-evaluation processes, particularly in monitoring and evaluating teaching quality and the use of assessment to set students' targets.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school, taking a keen interest in their children's progress. They are generous in their financial support and mostly approve the care given to settle students in school, the level of work expected and the teaching. Reservations were expressed about the range of activities offered, behaviour and how much the school seeks parents' views. Students like the school, asserting that they are taught well, are trusted and are expected to work hard. Bullying, behaviour and fair treatment were the concerns raised in the students' questionnaire but interviews with students confirm that staff are quick to spot and deal with any signs of unhappiness.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Monitor and evaluate more effectively the quality of teaching and learning in order to eliminate the unsatisfactory teaching, particularly the effectiveness of middle managers in this self-evaluation process.

- Raise standards in ICT, religious education, design and technology (graphics) and modern foreign languages.
- Ensure that the extensive data analysis available is used effectively across all areas of the school's work to identify strengths and weaknesses and set challenging strategic targets.
- Use assessment data consistently to inform long and short term target setting for student and help them to improve their work and, to meet statutory requirements by:
  - improving the provision for information and communication technology.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards in the majority of subjects are **above average**. Achievement is **satisfactory**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.8 (34.4)	33.3 (33.0)
mathematics	37.9 (38.1)	34.7 (34.4)
science	35.5 (36.1)	33.3 (33.1)

*There were 203 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

#### *Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002*

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	64 (65)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (96)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	43.3	39.8

*There were 189 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

### Main Strengths and points for improvement

- Results in tests and examinations reached by the highest attaining students are very good.
- In the years 7 to 9 results are well above the national average.
- In the core subjects, achievement in English is good and satisfactory in mathematics and science.
- When students' prior attainment is taken into account the degree to which the school lifts students' achievements in Years 7 to 9 is below average in mathematics and science.
- Standards in English, mathematics, double science, German, art and design, drama and music are particularly strong.
- Standards are weak in information and communication technology (ICT) French, RE and in graphics in design and technology.
- There is underachievement of those in the middle band of attainment.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well.
- Boys and girls achieve similar standards in the core subjects.

### Commentary

1. Standards in the majority of subjects are above average. Achievement is **satisfactory**. In the years 7 to 9 results are well above the national average. Students reach well above average standards compared with all schools nationally. For these students achievement is good in the core subjects of English and satisfactory in mathematics and science. However, when students' prior attainment is taken into account the degree to which the school lifts students' achievements in Years 7 to 9 is below average in mathematics and science.

2. Across the school from Years 7 to 11 there is some underachievement among some students within the middle band and those of just below average capability. This is related to less effective teaching methods used where there is an over reliance on teacher talk or where objectives for learning are not shared, or expectations are too low or time deadlines for work to be completed are not explicit. This leads to slow pace and lack of challenge in lessons. Teaching is better matched to the ability of the higher attaining students who fulfil their potential and reach high standards at GCSE as they make steady progress.
3. In Years 10 and 11 students achieve satisfactorily except in religious education where there is not enough time to cover the syllabus and in ICT and graphics where there is some unsatisfactory teaching. The school has identified a group of students in the middle range who underachieve in relation to their capabilities. These students are being mentored intensively to improve their progress.
4. By the end of Year 11 results attained in GCSE are well above average for the group who gain five subjects at grades A \* -C. The trend in the school's average total GCSE/GNVQ point score per student in 2002 was above the national trend. In the 2002 GCSE results, English, German, mathematics, art and design, dual award science and drama were the most positive and French, graphics and history the least. Difficulties in staffing and management in these last three subjects affected the overall achievement of students. The school is addressing these issues positively. Art, business studies, English and English literature, music, drama, geography and agriculture and horticulture are the most successful subjects for this age group and modern foreign languages, design technology, particularly graphics and religious education the least.
5. Students with special educational needs achieve well. Because they are well supported by specialist teachers and teaching assistants and fully included they make good progress.

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

Students' attitudes and behaviour are **good**.  
Their social and moral development is **good**,  
while their spiritual and cultural development is **satisfactory**.  
Their attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' regular attendance ensures that they do not have gaps in their learning.
- Students are proud of their school and keen to take part in activities.
- Very good relationships between students and with staff enhance the quality of learning and mean that students have the self-confidence to take on responsibilities.
- Students' good behaviour means that the school operates as an orderly community but inconsistent behaviour management results in some students not working hard enough.
- Students develop a personal moral code clearly distinguishing right from wrong.
- Their appreciation of other cultural traditions that contribute to modern multicultural Britain requires further development.

### **Commentary**

6. The great majority of students speak very positively about their school and express appreciation for the opportunities that it provides for them. They take these positive attitudes with them into lessons, generally settling well, following instructions and working hard. Many are keen to volunteer suggestions and they mostly complete their work diligently. There is very good participation in sporting and other extra-curricular activities. For example, there was a real buzz after the end of the school day with team members preparing for matches

and a large group of students of all ages rehearsing dance routines for a forthcoming show. Students from Year 10 and 11 led the dance groups with self-confidence, authority and very good humour so that their 'students' worked hard, enjoyed themselves and performed to a high standard.

7. Paired reading sessions between students in Years 7 and 10, also promote the self-esteem of both sets of students and encourage a sense of community spirit. Such very good relationships, both between students and with staff, extend throughout the school and help to create a positive environment for learning. Students say that any bullying or other harassment is dealt with effectively by staff and that they feel that this is a safe and friendly school to attend.
8. Despite difficulties posed by the accommodation, students move around the school in a generally orderly manner. Break-times are lively and frequently quite noisy but, overall, students behave well throughout the day in assemblies, around school and in most lessons. However, not all staff use the behaviour management procedures consistently with the result that in some lessons students do too little work, often because they are too inclined to talk among themselves or make inappropriate comments, rather than listen to the teacher. The school compares well with others in the local authority for the numbers of exclusions over the past year, most of which have been for a short period and have been effective in that the individual has not been excluded a second time. This is impressive given that Tottington has accepted a number of students who have been excluded from other schools.
9. Students' moral and social development is good. The school promotes inclusion and fairness, and these are reflected inside and outside lessons. Students are encouraged to develop a personal moral code, clearly distinguishing right from wrong. The development of spiritual awareness is more limited, as opportunities for reflection are missed in some assemblies. However, in literature and performing arts' work, students explore profound thoughts and creative influences on human beings. The school provides good opportunities through music and art especially, for students to appreciate western cultural traditions, but there is less attention to ensuring they understand the diverse cultural traditions that contribute to the heritage of modern Britain.
10. Students have good relationships with their teachers who are generally very supportive and encourage students to want to learn. Consequently students' attitudes are at least satisfactory and often good. However, a minority of students can occasionally be disruptive and prevent other students from learning. Outside of the classroom, students with special educational needs mix well with other students and are fully integrated into the day to day life of the school.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.1
National data	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	1.2

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

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	950	49	4
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education provided overall is satisfactory.**

Teaching is **satisfactory**.

Learning is **satisfactory**. The students' positive attitudes often results in learning that is good.

Provision for the assessment of students' work is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' positive attitudes towards learning greatly support teachers in developing their skills and understanding.
- Departments are provided with a range of data relating to students' attainment. This data is not used consistently by teachers to target areas of improvement for students.
- Good planning, high levels of challenge and the use of a variety of methods characterises good teaching in history, mathematics, art and design, drama and music. Slow pace, the use of a restricted methodology and a lack of challenge characterises unsatisfactory teaching in graphics, English, ICT and RE.
- Literacy skills are well developed by a range of subject teachers, but numeracy and ICT skills are not consistently stressed.

### **Commentary**

11. Whilst the overall quality of teaching across both key stages is satisfactory, the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection represents a challenge as an area for improvement for the school. Despite a whole school focus upon teaching and learning recently, which has supported the implementation of the national Key Stage 3 strategy, the number of unsatisfactory lessons seen was more than at the last inspection.

12. The quality of learning is satisfactory. When helped by the good attitudes and behaviour shown by the majority of students learning is good. An undeveloped approach to assessment sees only rudimentary use of data to inform target setting in English, geography, history, art and design, modern foreign languages, ICT, design technology and business studies. Although the school's assessment policy is consistently applied across all subjects, the process itself does not support students' learning as effectively as it might. The policy confuses attainment and achievement, giving school grades which have to be translated to national curriculum levels or GCSE grades. This results in a lack of clarity in English and mathematics where students are not always aware of their attainment levels, or what they need to do to improve.
13. Many teachers have wide ranging subject knowledge and make good use of questioning to enable all students to participate actively in lessons. Good planning and high expectations allowed students to work independently at a sophisticated level to solve problems using inequalities and linear programming in a Year 11 mathematics lesson. Challenging and uncompromising questioning extended Year 10 students in their consideration of World War 1 in history, and very skilful questioning and a good range of strategies actively involved students in challenging their preconceptions in a Year 10 RE lesson based upon Adam and Eve. In drama lessons the use of varied teaching methods and theatre-based techniques brought high levels of involvement and skill in developing role play skills.
14. Teachers enjoy good relationships with students, and most lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of shared respect and good humour. Students settle quickly, listen attentively and respond enthusiastically when required to. Teachers usually share clear learning objectives at the beginning of lessons, though few close with an effective plenary session to reflect on learning. Behaviour is only inappropriate in those lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory or dull, where tasks are insufficiently challenging or the lack of a clear structure or time frame leads students to lose concentration. For the most part, however, students are industrious and committed to learning, proud of their achievement and highly motivated.
15. In good lessons in geography, science and ICT teachers used a variety of methods to engage students, move lessons forward at a good pace, and constantly consolidate and use prior learning. A good science lesson, where students watched a kidney dissection and tested a range of "urine" samples (cold tea) was expertly led and captured the interest of everyone; even the student who had initially requested on principle not to be involved in the dissection couldn't resist peeking over the top of her book. In drama the teachers' use of imaginative role play motivates and energises students' responses and the quality of their contribution to the lesson is deepened and active. Year 9 students exploring the purchase of an alleged haunted house or Year 11 students improvising how most sensitively to give bad news to a terminally ill patient were good examples of this commitment.
16. In contrast to this, the key feature which makes lessons less successful is that teaching is not imaginative enough. Opportunities to make lessons more interesting by involving students more actively in learning are missed in science, English, and graphics. In too many lessons students waste time on work which is poorly matched to their ability. For example, in a geography lesson, where Year 11 students worked on an Oil and Conflict topic from a textbook designed for a Year 8 class, the task to reproduce a cartoon sequence was too low level an activity.
17. Evidence of the explicit teaching of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. A newly appointed co-ordinator has realistic plans in place to implement strategies to extend the work still further. Some teachers are very good at developing students' vocabulary. For example in a Year 11 art lesson the teacher used imaginative language to involve students e.g. "tickle the surface to get a subtle effect" and "kiss the cheek lightly with the powder". All students in this lesson were fully engaged, leaning forward and smiling. In an English lesson with very low attaining Year 11 students the teacher skilfully developed their use of language, moving

from discussion of a “wall” to a “perimeter fence”, and from “nice things” to “advantages”, encouraging students to do likewise.

18. However, students’ skills in numeracy and ICT are not similarly developed across the curriculum. Teaching assistants and SEN support assistants are deployed effectively throughout the school to support individual students inclusively within classrooms. Good active support in a Year 9 mathematics lesson exploring inverse functions in algebra ensured individuals made good progress. Where the teaching assistants did not have prior knowledge of the lesson plan or objectives their input was less focused and subsequently less effective. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, where the assistant was used to maintain order rather than support learning the students spent forty minutes labouring independently through a comprehension exercise on the Bermuda Triangle.
19. The teaching of students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons teachers have a detailed knowledge of each student’s needs and work is planned to take into account the targets set in individual educational plans. Good examples of this were seen in art, science and physical education lessons. In some lessons little use is made of students’ individual education plans, there is little reference to student targets and the teaching fails to match the needs of the students. This was a feature of most English lessons with groups where the vast majority of students had special educational needs. Teachers generally make effective use of teaching assistants, though they rarely involve them in lesson planning where they have much to offer. Students are well managed and lessons go according to plan. The use of the school’s integrated learning system, “Successmaker” could be improved. Students are not tested, for example in reading and spelling, before and after being on the programme to assess what progress, if any, they are making.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection : 140 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (1 %)	23 (16 %)	63 (45 %)	39 (28%)	14 (10%)	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 provision for a broad range of worthwhile curriculum opportunities is **good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- There are alternative courses in business and science and a flexible syllabus in art to cater for differing needs.
- Additional lessons out of school hours to allow students to gain GCSE geography or an additional qualification in mathematics.
- The full curriculum is available to all students.
- National Curriculum requirements are not fully met in ICT in Key Stage 4.
- Time allocated to teaching religious education, physical education, design and technology and the second foreign language German is below that found in most schools.

**Commentary**

20. Overall the breadth of opportunities for learning is **good**. All statutory National Curriculum requirements are met except the school does not teach the National Curriculum programme

of study in ICT to students in Years 10 and 11 who do not follow a GCSE examination course.

21. Students with special educational needs have access to the whole curriculum and the work of curriculum support assistants is significant in diminishing barriers to progress. A thriving 'paired reading' scheme allows younger students to practise their reading several times a week with older volunteers.
22. The curriculum is inclusive since all students have access to all its parts. They study a range of National Curriculum subjects up to Year 9. In year 8 there is the opportunity to study a second modern foreign language. In Years 10 and 11 students follow courses in compulsory National Curriculum subjects and may also choose from a range of optional subjects. The syllabus in art allows students considerable freedom in their approach to the subject while the option to study single award science allows students additional curriculum choice and within business education there are alternatives to allow for students' differing needs. There are opportunities outside the normal school day to study for a GCSE in geography or for an additional qualification in mathematics.
23. The time allocation for several subjects is below that found in most schools. As a result, religious education meets the requirements of teaching the Agreed Syllabus but cannot cover it fully. The shortage of time allocated to PE for students up to Year 9 was commented on in the previous report and has not been increased and the time for teaching design and technology in Year 7 is low in comparison to national norms. A review of the timetable is part of the current school development plan.
24. The study of citizenship has recently been incorporated into the curriculum and is taught within the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme with some identified aspects taught within specific subject areas. Vocational developments in the curriculum include a course in agriculture and horticulture, leisure and tourism and CLAIT. Curriculum enrichment for those students who are disapplied from the study of a foreign language is provided through a key skills programme to improve their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. In Year 10 students spend time on work experience and there are opportunities to join work related courses at Bury College.
25. The school offers a wide and varied extracurricular programme. There are games fixtures, sports clubs, exchange visits with a 'twinned school' in Germany, trips to places of interest at home and abroad and an extensive programme of music concerts and drama productions.
26. The school's provision for personal, social and health education programme, including sex education and drugs awareness, is **satisfactory**.
27. In Year 7, groups of students debate strategies to stop unacceptable behaviour. In Year 9, equal opportunities work covers areas such as stereotyping and for example, how television soap operas stereotype the elderly. A visiting theatre-in-education team from a local college graphically demonstrated the painful implications of unchallenged bullying and explored reasons for its origins and possible solutions.
28. Careers education is an effective component of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) modular curriculum in Years 8,9,10 and 11. It provides valuable information on the various ways of obtaining careers guidance and counselling and raises students' awareness about making the right choice and implications of having a job. In Years 10 and 11, preparations for work experience applications for jobs and post 16 educational opportunities are well covered. For example in Year 11 students receive lessons on writing their CVs. There is a clear process for learning progressively through the PSHE curriculum. Currently, its effectiveness is monitored and evaluated only through informal discussions with staff and students but formal assessment procedures are being developed. The school has identified the need to bring pastoral and curriculum provision closer together and this is reflected in the

responsibilities of the recent appointment of assistant headteacher. A whole school staff and student questionnaire has been completed to identify issues and inform development.

29. Students with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum and all statutory requirements are met. Curriculum provision is good. Students have good opportunities to supplement their learning, through, for example, extra help with reading and spelling in Years 7 to 9 and study support in Years 10 and 11. Students with reading difficulties in Years 7 and 8 also receive good support from paired reading opportunities with older students.

### Care, guidance and support

The school provides **good** quality care for students, especially for those who have personal difficulties, and provides **good** advice and support to help them through the different stages of their education. It is **good** at listening to students' views and acting on them when possible.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good arrangements to welcome Year 7 students ensure that they settle swiftly into secondary school life.
  - Staff know students well as individuals and students feel comfortable approaching them for help.
  - The wide range of support available is very effective in helping students to remain successfully in school.
  - The School Council provides a good forum for students to air their views and bring about change.
  - The school does not yet make best use of the academic monitoring information held on students in order to direct support in a tightly focussed manner.
  - The awareness of some staff of child protection and health and safety procedures is not sufficiently strong.
30. Heads of year, form tutors and senior managers are committed to supporting students, and from September 2003 their good work has been strengthened by the new appointment of an assistant headteacher whose brief it is to oversee the school's pastoral provision. Both parents and students are very appreciative of the arrangements to help newcomers feel part of the school, and particularly like having the haven of the Lofthouse building as the base for all Year 7 tutor groups. From Year 8 onwards, students have the same form tutor and head of year which means that they are very well known to them as individuals and staff are quick to notice signs of unhappiness. Support ranging from informal chat with a staff member, to help from the education welfare officer, to working in the Inclusion Room, to talking with a trained counsellor or Connexions personal advisor, to long-term support from an external mentor, means that students have good access to well-informed advice and encouragement when necessary. They are also given helpful, impartial advice when it comes to GCSE Options choices, and decisions about what to do after Year 11. The school is strengthening work in drawing together the monitoring of students' academic and personal development in years 7 to 9, identifying specific areas that they need to work on and using this information to provide them with well-targeted support.
31. The school follows the locally agreed child protection arrangements and successfully supports students who are in need but has yet to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns. Similarly, procedures relating to health and safety are good, such as in the science and physical education departments or the identification of, and taking action to minimise, any hazards posed by the state of the building. However, practice is weaker when it comes to the hazards created by the use of the building, such as bags left on the floor, students and staff standing on chairs or risk assessment in design and technology.



32. Students make good use of the School Council to make staff aware of their concerns. It meets regularly and students feed back the outcome of meetings in a highly democratic and efficient manner. The school management has responded to their requests to improve the toilet areas and is now seeking suggestions as to how to improve the lunchtime arrangements which currently mean that students, especially the younger ones, can sometimes spend long periods in queues with little time left actually to eat their food.
33. Procedures for identifying students with special educational needs and how to bring any concerns to the attention of the special needs coordinator are good. Individual education plans vary in quality. Overall they are too general and do not give sufficient guidance to teachers on the strategies to adopt to help students make progress and move on. However, some subjects such as art and science use them well and are beginning, along with other subjects, to develop their own subject-based targets. Teaching assistants give effective support in the classroom but they do not always report back, on a lesson-by-lesson basis, how students are achieving against their targets and students' progress is not always being tracked as they move through the school.

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

The school has **very good** partnerships with parents, local schools and colleges. Its links with the community are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's education.
- Staff make themselves freely available to talk with parents.
- The information for parents is of good quality although students' progress reports need to be improved to give more focused comment on how well students are achieving in Years 7 to 9.
- Strong links with local colleges provide support for students of different abilities.

### **Commentary**

34. Tottington High School is very popular with parents who consider that the teaching is good, their children work hard and, therefore, make good progress in their learning. The information provided for parents is comprehensive and clearly written, and it is backed up by the way that staff make themselves readily available to speak with.
35. Heads of year are the first port of call for parents and, over the years, they build up a good relationship with them. In return, parents are very willing to discuss any problems with the school and they attend in large numbers such events as information meetings and those to hear about their child's progress. The annual open days, when any parent may visit the school to see it in action, are particularly popular.
36. Parents ensure that their children attend school regularly, generally support their completion of work to be done outside lessons and are generous in their fund-raising activities, most recently to help the school's bid to secure specialist school status.
37. The area for development in the partnership is the quality of students' progress reports, and the school recognises the need for this. Parents highlighted that the reports are impersonal. They also do not distinguish between students' levels of attainment and their achievement, nor do they give sufficiently focussed, subject specific guidance about what the individual needs to concentrate on in order to improve.
38. The school works closely with the primary schools from which most students transfer, with particular emphasis on projects related to the Healthy Schools programme. Activities such as the 'Tottington Trail' which involved students from Year 6 and Year 7 working together with

a school governor and member of the local civic society, help students to grow accustomed to secondary school while learning more about their community.

39. Other activities such as the public display of students' art work, Year 10 work experience and Year 7 students' work shadowing day effectively bring students into contact with the wider world. There are particularly strong working relationships with the two local colleges: students have access to good quality information about courses and expectations post-16. High attaining Year 10 students have attended a college summer school, and there is access to college courses for those in Year 10 and 11 who find it hard to sustain interest and succeed when following a purely academic curriculum.
40. Students from the Theatre Studies course in one of the local colleges regularly visit the school to demonstrate their skills in high quality Theatre in Education programmes. These are valuable inputs into the PSHE provision as well as being good models of performance standards for students following the GCSE drama option.
41. Parents of students with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress and are fully consulted and involved in annual reviews.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the headteacher and senior managers who have considerable length of service and experience continues to be **sound**. The governing body supports and challenges the leadership well and acts effectively as a critical friend in evaluating the school's provision and success. Management is good. Middle managers need to be more effective in the self-evaluation processes, particularly in monitoring and evaluating teaching quality and the use of assessment to set students' targets.

The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is **satisfactory**.

The governance of the school is **good**.

The effectiveness of the management is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision of, and high aspirations for the future of the school.
- The senior managers are very experienced and work well together as a team.
- Governors are knowledgeable, well informed and active in support of the school.
- The school's systems are well managed but closer attention is needed to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and the accuracy of target setting.
- Financial controls are secure and administration procedures are very well managed.
- Middle managers do not apply consistently the school's process of evaluating its own strengths and weaknesses.
- The requirements for the provision for information and communication technology are still not fully met.

### **Commentary**

42. The headteacher, as at the last inspection, continues to give sound leadership and has built a strong team of senior managers around him to realise his clear and ambitious vision for the school's future. A comprehensive review of the school's strengths and weaknesses has been undertaken and a detailed analysis of the data from students' and departmental performance completed. However, the use of this information is uneven across the subject areas and closer attention needs to be given to some areas. These particularly relate to the evaluation and monitoring of teaching quality as there remains a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Similarly, better use needs to be made of the assessment data to provide more accurate and more shared information of the targets set for students to attain.

43. Governors are proud of the school and give generously of their time and experience to assist the school leaders and managers in raising the performance of the school and its reputation locally. The high level of demand for places is testimony to their success in these efforts. The governing body contains many highly expert members who apply a critical but friendly overview to the school's development plans. They have been particularly supportive of the bids to achieve specialist school status and as part of the local authority's bid to improve accommodation in the borough. Other than the work on provision for ICT noted above statutory requirements are carried out and particular efforts have been made to create an inclusive ethos which promotes the individual students' equal rights and safety.
44. The day to day operation of the school is good. Most systems run smoothly and despite some accommodation difficulties with so large a student roll the school is an orderly, friendly place in which students feel secure and staff feel affirmed.
45. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision in the school is satisfactory. The new coordinator has only been in post a few weeks and has not yet had time to have an impact. However, areas for development have already been identified. There is currently insufficient monitoring of how students with special educational needs are taught, and observation of lessons with groups where there is a preponderance of special needs students, such as in English, is an urgent priority. Teaching assistants give good support but are not fully involved in recording students' achievements against their targets which would enable students' overall progress to be better monitored and assessed as they move through the school.

**Financial information for the year April 2001 to March 2002**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£2,738,575	Balance from previous year	£6,633
Total expenditure	£2,736,439	Balance carried forward to the next	£2,136
Expenditure per pupil	£2,783		

46. Financial management is good. The headteacher and governors ensure that spending is geared appropriately to the strategic plans they have for the school. The school benefits from the expert knowledge within the governing body, which is used fully to inform all strategic spending and this ensures that best value principles are applied. School finances are closely checked and all monies are administered by the Local Education Authority. All points raised in the auditor's report have been dealt with efficiently.
47. Given the above average attainment on entry, the overall quality of teaching and the achievement of students, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

**The Resource Provision**

The Resource Provision has not previously been inspected. It is funded by the LEA through the main school budget for students with moderate learning difficulties who have further problems, such as speech and language, medical, sensory, movement or emotional difficulties. Twenty students are registered in this Resource at present, fifteen boys and five girls. Provision for their needs is good and gives access to all areas of the National Curriculum. Students attend mainstream classes throughout the school and are included in all aspects of school life. A base room is available and provides a resource of appropriate materials for teachers and students. Students show good achievements within their own modification programme and set targets.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher-in-charge has very clear understanding of strategies and requirements to help students achieve well. Leadership is very good.
- The students' personal development is a main feature, enabling growth of confidence and self-esteem.
- Specialist teachers and support assistants from the Resource provision work closely and the co-operatively with all members of staff and outside agencies.
- The process and effectiveness of inclusion are good.
- The ongoing evaluation and monitoring of students' progress results in good reports and reviews.
- Skilled teaching and very good pastoral care enhances achievement.
- Contact with parents is very good. Parents are keen to help students succeed.
- Students make good progress throughout the school.
- Further input is needed in general staff training to ensure understanding of the complexity of needs across the school.

## Commentary

48. The Resource Provision was established ten years ago by the current teacher-in-charge, whose enthusiasm for students' welfare remains undiminished. Her understanding of individual needs is apparent and her skills to determine a process through which a student can achieve success are obvious. She has strong support from the remaining specialist resource teacher and the three assistants, whose work is greatly valued in the school. Their effective team-work and collaboration with other staff in the school assures appropriate placing of students to access the curriculum in order to give them the best chance to achieve.
49. Resource Provision materials are well chosen and adapted to meet students' changing needs. The base room and other free spaces in the school are used for individual or small group work to reinforce learning techniques. More effective use could be made of the base room, especially in providing literacy backup support for younger students. A strategy to this achieve this end is planned for the near future.
50. Standards measured against national requirements are well below average in general in core subjects at Key stage 3 in written tests. In oral, creative and practical work Resource Provision students show good understanding but are unable to express this in written work. Readers may be used in some tests or exams. Records show higher levels of success in subjects such as art, drama and physical education. Students are sometimes selected for a sports team or drama productions. In upper school students may follow a G.C.S.E. Course or an Entry Level Course. Courses such as Business Studies and Agriculture/Horticulture are available and a 'link' course is set up at the local college as need arises. Good achievement is evident across the school against low starting points. Good progress is made overall for students within the Resource Provision.
51. Specialist teachers from the Resource Provision are skilled and experienced. Their teaching brings enhanced learning in their lessons. Support assistants for the Resource Provision give strong backup to mainstream teachers in their classes and enable students to achieve well. All Resource Provision students have Individual Education Plans drawn up between specialist staff and subject teachers. Ongoing progress can be tracked in reports and reviews. Regular recording and reporting occur, with monthly and annual reviews. Evaluation of progress is systematic and assessment appropriate. Resource Provision students are closely monitored by specialist staff. Students are supported throughout the school in individual or group work.
52. The school places a priority on the personal development of students within the Resource Provision, with attention to behaviour and outcomes. Targets are set to raise standards of

behaviour and learning and to increase confidence. The policy of inclusion is beneficial for these students, whose successful integration into mainstream classes shows full acceptance by all staff and students. Regular celebrations of effort and achievement strongly boost self-esteem. Records of Achievement are greatly valued by students and parents. Students make every effort to improve and take care with work presentation.

53. The school works closely with outside agencies such as the education, psychology and social services. Particular value is placed on contact with the speech and language therapists, who regularly see students outside school and set exercises to be practised in school or at home, to enhance learning, for those with speech and language difficulties; and the Careers Officer, who carefully advises and supports students from the Resource Provision. Liaison with primary feeder schools and colleges of further education ensures a smoother process of transition. Work experiences for older students are undertaken with the understanding and goodwill of the community in shops, offices or nurseries.
54. Very close links are fostered between home and school. Parents are encouraged to contact school as often as possible, and to visit regularly. They support homework to boost achievement and attend annual reviews. Their views are recorded and they are encouraged to offer suggestions for development. Their strong support is welcome and valued.
55. There is a need for further in-service training for all staff, to clarify the current nature of individual needs of Resource Provision students and for the school to develop the use of the base room. Given the complex nature of the students' backgrounds the school is doing well in its provision for their education and welfare.

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

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- High standards of attainment in statutory tests and national examinations.
- Interim management of the department in the absence of a substantive head has ensured effective implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy.
- A significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching hampers learning across the department.
- Prior attainment data is not used consistently to set students challenging targets for improvement.

#### **Commentary**

56. Students make good progress in lessons, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and interim arrangements for departmental management are effective.
57. Results attained in statutory tests and examinations are well above the national averages. Boys perform well, and A\* attainment is very high. Standards achieved in lessons are good overall. Year 9, lower set students produce good quality extended writing, articulate preferences convincingly and distinguish between different text types. An appropriate range of activities results in examples of good quality writing in the middle sets. Students respond to text on a narrative and personal level. Upper set students' work is more challenging, differentiated through complexity of text.
58. Years 10 and 11 work gives evidence of good progression. Lower set students' creative writing shows good understanding of style and purpose. Whilst examples of low level language work and an over-reliance on printed worksheets hampers progress in the middle sets, upper set students produce work to a very high standard. Students write well, they read with inference and deduction, and appropriately reference text to evidence their views. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Learning is satisfactory. At both key stages there is much good teaching; however, a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching hampers learning for some students.
59. Strengths include high teacher expectation, reflected in good use of open questions which encourage students to reflect on prior learning, make connections and progress. Where students work collaboratively, and think for themselves they make good progress, as for example, in a Year 7 class working out the story behind a one sentence mystery. Where clear objectives were shared and care taken to match resources to students' interest, good learning took place. Year 8 students used emotive language to write front page news of non-event headlines, a challenging activity with responses demonstrating they had fully grasped the concept and thoroughly enjoyed the process. "Dad does washing" had everyone in stitches.
60. Areas for improvement exist in both key stages and include an over-reliance on teacher talk. This results in slow pace and lack of challenge. Where objectives were not explicitly shared, or time parameters set for tasks, students tended to lose concentration. This led to off-task chatter and inappropriate behaviour. Whilst most students know what level or grade they

hoped to attain, few knew what they needed to improve upon in order to achieve it. Targets, where they existed, were vague, for example “improve spelling”. Specific targets, like “learn and consistently apply the rule for doubling consonants before a suffix” rather than the general “spelling” would focus students and improve attainment still further. Management of the department is satisfactory. The absence of a substantive departmental head resulted in a temporary lack of leadership and direction, however, a new head of department was appointed at the time of the inspection. Information is effectively shared informally and progress has been made aligning the scheme of work to the national Key Stage 3 framework. The department does not formally monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, which results in some good practice not being identified or disseminated. Overall, whilst standards remain high, having risen since the last inspection and the attainment of boys has improved; some unsatisfactory teaching is now in evidence.

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

61. Evidence of the explicit teaching of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. A newly appointed co-ordinator has realistic plans in place to implement strategies to extend the work still further. Some teachers are very good at developing students’ vocabulary. In mathematics there is good oral work in lessons, key words are well displayed and teachers insist on the correct use of mathematical language. In history, good attention is given to developing literacy skills such as note-taking and essay-writing. Students’ oral contributions in leisure and tourism are good because the teacher uses questions very perceptively to elicit sensible and informed answers from students as in a Year 10 lessons on the facilities and services of a professional football club.

### **Modern Foreign Languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards at GCSE are below average.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, but students need more challenge and stimulation.
- The emphasis on literacy skills is a strong feature of the teaching.

### **Commentary**

62. Results at the end of Year 9 have fluctuated over the last four years, with half to two-thirds of students attaining the average level. Girls have tended to perform better than boys, but no more significantly than nationally. Attainment in French at GCSE in 2002 was below the national average at grades A\*-C and represented a decline in standards from previous years. In German, with a small entry, standards were above the national average for grades A\*-C. In 2003 there was a further decline in A\*-C grades in French. Two major external factors may have contributed to this. The department had staffing difficulties, which disrupted students’ progress, and the examination board removed the use of dictionaries without compensating for the added difficulty. Results in German were also below average, but a wide discrepancy between the foundation level speaking test marks and those for the other skills is under investigation. In all GCSE examinations every student has obtained a grade. In lessons and in their work students at both key stages are performing at a level appropriate to their capabilities. Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Year 7 students pronounce well the names of colours in French and interpret simple sentences to extract information accurately. In Year 9 weak vocabulary knowledge meant that middle attaining students had difficulties identifying the relevant parts of a passage if an alternative stimulus word was used than the one originally used. In a Year 11 lesson, initial insecurity using the past tense was helped by good teaching where effective prompting and revision of word endings resulted in a notable improvement in accuracy and good achievement. A Year 9 German class identified good listening skills, good pronunciation and a satisfactory ability to

apply grammatical rules about subjects and objects. The students' accurate use of the past tense raised the attainment to that expected given their ability.

63. Students with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
64. The department has a team of well-qualified specialists, effective teachers who plan their lessons well, vary activities to practise and develop the different skills, and use time and resources efficiently. Particularly strong is the emphasis on literacy awareness, not just in understanding and applying grammar and syntax, but in using writing frames and adapting construction models. In lessons, however, the activities tend to be mostly teacher- and text book-led. Students perform their tasks successfully, seem happy with the outcomes, but lack that extra element of challenge which will stretch them beyond their expected performance level. This is reflected in their written products, in which, apart from GCSE coursework, there is only occasional evidence of extended work. There is also insufficient opportunity for them to be responsible for some part of their own learning. Although they practise role-plays in pairs, there are few opportunities for them to make presentations or to contribute to game-like activities, which require their initiative and personal input. More stimulating activities, especially if they help to break up the long 70-minute period, will aid retention, as well as increasing interest and motivation, and contribute to raising standards. Marking is frequent and consistent, and feedback positive and constructive. Students are consistently aware of their attainment, but the use of such data to inform target setting is at present rudimentary. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department has a committed team, which has reacted quickly to the fall in standards and is implementing strategies to tackle underachievement. There is limited access to information and communication technology (ICT), but the department plans its use well to ensure that each group can benefit at least once per half term. Although teaching is monitored and evaluated through the school's performance management system, the team would benefit greatly from the opportunity to observe each other and share good practice.
65. Since the previous inspection resources have improved and students have more frequent access to ICT.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The department is well led and teachers work hard and demonstrate commitment.
- Test and examination results are well above the national average and particularly good for high attaining students.
- Students have a very positive attitude to mathematics and behave very well in lessons.
- Information and Communication Technology is insufficiently used to support learning.
- Monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning needs to be developed further.
- A greater variety of teaching strategies needs to be employed.

### **Commentary**

66. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well above the national average. When compared to similar schools, standards were below the average. By the end of Year 9 in 2003 standards in mathematics were even higher when compared to the national average and in line with standards for similar schools. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls.



67. In GCSE examinations in 2002 the proportion of students gaining A\*-C grades was well above the national average. In 2003 the proportion had fallen slightly but was still well above the national average. The proportion of students gaining A\*-G in both years was the same and above the national average. Girls' results were better than boys' results at GCSE.
68. Standards of work seen in lessons and in the students' books throughout the school were well above average. Students' attainment on entry is well above the national average. Achievement by the majority of students at the end of Year 9 and 11 is satisfactory. In a Year 7, top set lesson all students could substitute in algebraic expressions of considerable complexity; a skill above that expected for most students of this age. In contrast, the lowest set had very weak number skills and were unable to work out simple calculations without the help of a number square. Middle set students in Year 11 can calculate greatest and least values using formula to a standard above the national average for their age group. The practising of examination techniques using past papers encourages good independent learning in Year 1.
69. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
70. Teaching is good overall. In the majority of lessons seen teaching was good and in some, very good. All lessons were at least satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives which are usually shared with students. Teachers have high expectations of the students and prepare tasks to challenge them so that they all work at a good pace. A Year 11 group of high attaining students was challenged to work out problems using linear programming. Some excellent coursework was seen from high attaining year 11 students on a problem to find the maximum volume for open boxes of different dimensions made from square and rectangular card of various sizes. The use of calculus, very good graphs and the solution of quadratic equations were used to obtain and analyse results and prove these results were correct.
71. Some good starter exercises were seen, for example, in a Year 7 lesson where a magic square was used and the numbers were worked out by substituting into algebraic expressions. The ending of lessons was generally not so well focused, with students' learning not always appropriately consolidated. Teachers make effective use of questioning, encouraging students to explain their answers and solutions to the rest of the class. Where teaching was less good the pace of the lesson was usually insufficient or the teacher talked for too long. Insufficient use is made of ICT in lessons.
72. As a result of effective teaching, most students acquire knowledge of basic skills and concepts which enable them to work on their own to improve their understanding. Literacy skills are improved by the good displays of key words, the insistence of teachers on the correct use of mathematical language and the good oral work in lessons. Students have a very positive attitude to mathematics. They behave very well in lessons and relationships between students and with their teachers are good.
73. Leadership and management of the mathematics department are good. The department is responding positively to the National Numeracy Strategy and this is raising standards. Assessment data is used well to monitor students' progress. Marking is encouraging rather than informative and not all students are aware of the National Curriculum level they are working at.
74. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection though attention still needs to be paid to the development of a greater variety of teaching styles, to increasing the use of ICT to support learning and to the more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to raise standards further.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

75. The key features of the National Numeracy Strategy have been shared with all staff by means of a training day. Students are using their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects across the curriculum. Students were able to analyse and interpret data in science and design and technology but graph drawing skills in science did not generally match the students' attainment. Students were able to demonstrate their ability to do mental calculations in a number of subjects but opportunities to develop students' mathematical skills were sometimes not taken in all subjects.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well above average results in test and examinations.
- Good relationships between teachers and students assist learning.
- Well-planned lessons make good use of the time available.
- Students' good behaviour makes lessons effective.
- Provision and use of ICT equipment needs to be improved.
- Teachers' marking gives little advice on how students can improve their standards.
- Standards of graph drawing and presentation of work are unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

76. Results of national tests for Year 9 students in 2002 were well above average though below the average for students with similar attainment. The performance of boys and girls over the last three years has been broadly similar. Results in the GCSE dual award science examinations in 2002 were well above the national average but below those of the previous year. In 2003 results dropped again. Girls have done better than boys recently. Results in single award science were similar to the national average in 2002 but dropped in 2003. GCSE dual award results have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
77. The standard of most students' work seen is well above average. By Year 9 they have studied a range of topics. They enjoy the variety of practical work and do experimental work sensibly and safely. Standards seen in Year 11 dual award science are well above average. Students make informed predictions about the outcomes of practical situations, test hypotheses experimentally and use word processors to present their assessments. In Year 11 single science standards are below average. Graph drawing and diagrams are below expectations at all ages because teachers do not demand high standards.
78. Students' achievement is satisfactory. They enter school with well above average standards, make satisfactory progress and leave with well above average standards, though a number of single science GCSE candidates do not achieve what they are capable of.
79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned. The best include a variety of activities, which maintain students' interest and make learning effective. Relationships between teachers and students are good so students behave well and concentrate on their work. Teachers give clear instructions so students understand any risks involved in experimental sessions and work safely and productively. Students enjoy practical work and this helps them to understand the underlying theory. Good relationships and well-structured lessons allow all students to make satisfactory progress. The marking of students' work by teachers praises good work but gives little guidance on how students can improve standards.

80. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Day-to-day organisation is good and teachers deployed to make best use of their expert subject knowledge so teaching is effective. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Test and exam results have improved and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. However, there is no provision for data logging or use of computers in class and marking gives little help to students on how to improve.

### **Rural and Agricultural Science**

81. This subject is offered as an NPRA unit as part of the GCSE in Rural and Agricultural Science, to a small group of students as part of the alternative curricular provision for students. It was only possible to see one lesson in this subject during the inspection so there is insufficient evidence on which to base judgements on overall provision. The students worked enthusiastically on designing and then creating a flower bed in the school's garden plot area, benefiting from enthusiastic and expert teaching. They were secure in the knowledge they had acquired and keen to discuss their plans.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory at Key Stage 3 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources for ICT have improved and allow students greater access.
- The new course in Years 7 to 9 is beginning to raise standards, however, students in Years 10 and 11 are underachieving.
- Positive attitudes of students help them to progress in lessons.
- Lack of challenging tasks results in lower than average standards in GCSE examinations.
- Teaching does not always challenge students sufficiently to improve skills in ICT.
- Statutory provisions for some students are not met in Years 10 to 11, as too few subjects make effective use of ICT.
- The effectiveness of the management could be improved.

### **Commentary**

82. Teacher Assessments in 2002 indicated Year 9 students' attainment was above average, which represents satisfactory achievement, and that they remained similar in 2003. Results in the GCSE examination in 2002 were below average.
83. Inspection evidence reveals that the assessments were inflated and that standards in Years 7 to 9 are average. Standards for Years 10 and 11 are below average. Achievement is unsatisfactory.
84. When students in Year 9 mix text and pictures in slides about the wives of Henry VIII, they do not use colour and text suitably. Students insert data into a database, but do not search that data efficiently. They create formulae for spreadsheets to calculate the best mobile telephone tariff, but do not use the results to provide constructive advice. The National Strategy introduced in September 2003 is now helping to improve the level of students' work.
85. Students in Year 11 search the internet for data to import into presentations. They do not use a consistent style in creating slides or pages of websites. They link together different parts of a database, but only the higher attaining students explain why such links are necessary. Students describe the basic uses of ICT, but do not apply their knowledge of ICT to specific applications. Their level of exploration of the impact of ICT is under-developed.

86. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory. Teachers set tasks which allow students to extend their skills and knowledge. However, some teaching does not always challenge all students and the higher attaining students are not always given the opportunity to extend their skills.
87. In Years 10 to 11 some unsatisfactory teaching has resulted in a reduction in standards. Teachers ensure that students understand the requirements of the examination. However, the level of challenge needs to be increased to enable students to present work at a higher level and allow the more competent students to gain higher grades. Girls attain better than boys as a result of more positive attitudes.
88. Leadership has not been sufficiently effective in raising standards. However, the management of the new hardware and software, introduced following a review of the results in 2002, has been constructive and there is good technical and classroom support. Three good ICT rooms give students individual opportunities to improve ICT skills, though one room does not help classroom management. The homework policy ensures that students strengthen what they have undertaken in lessons.

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

89. Provision for ICT across the curriculum requires further development. Science, history and design and technology do not provide a wide enough range of experiences. Other subjects use ICT but not sufficiently to raise standards. The school does not provide a minority of student in Years 10 to 11 with ICT experiences and so does not meet statutory requirements.
90. Since the previous inspection resources have improved significantly which allows considerably greater access.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Skilled teachers use a wide range of teaching methods successfully.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing the skills of the historian.
- Students' achievement is now satisfactory and still improving.
- There is insufficient variety in the work set and in teaching methods to meet the needs of all students.

### **Commentary**

91. GCSE results in 2002 were below average, particularly among the most talented. The results for 2003 were better and the improving trend was reflected in work seen during the inspection, which for all year groups was broadly average and higher in their use of historical skills such as why past events are interpreted differently both at the time and subsequently. Throughout the school.
92. standards of work is satisfactory; achievement has improved in recent years and is now satisfactory overall, though the relative achievements of the most able students still lags behind that of others.
93. Most of the teaching is good and some of it is quite exceptional. It is better in Years 10 and 11 where the pace is faster than with younger students. The long lessons are well divided to

maintain levels of concentration and skilled teachers present students with varied tasks using a wide range of methods. Expectations are high, with emphasis on developing the skills of the historian, which is a real strength now. Learning is good overall but the most talented students in top sets are not always sufficiently challenged because they are not given separate tasks.

94. The students enjoy the lessons. They are keen and the subject is particularly popular as a GCSE option. Homework is well-planned and set regularly, with good attention to developing literacy skills such as note-taking and essay-writing. It is marked promptly, often with constructive guidance on how to improve. However the procedures for assessing Year 9 work against national curriculum criteria do not assure accurate, reliable judgments by teachers, and students are vague about how they are doing and the targets they are aiming for. The teaching makes an important contribution to developing students' understanding of citizenship, though students have little opportunity to practise or develop their skills with information technology.
95. Students have good opportunities to practise their skills through fieldwork. Teaching assistants provide effective support and students with special needs make good progress.
96. Leadership and management are good and much improvement is evident since the last inspection even though most of this has happened only in the last two years. There is some extraordinarily good practice within the department which is now being shared, and schemes of work have been fully revised. The previous overemphasis on knowledge over skills has been corrected and more diverse lessons are now well planned. The head of department has a good appreciation of strengths and weaknesses. However, staff performance is not monitored systematically enough, the arrangement of sets is restrictive, preventing all students being assigned correctly, and performance data are not yet being interrogated to inform departmental planning and to raise standards. Nevertheless, within the history department there is a collective determination to go on improving.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Experienced staff support students' learning effectively.
- Recent developments in programmes of study are promising.
- Standards are in line with those expected nationally.
- Assessment is not yet used effectively to set short-term and long-term targets.

### **Commentary**

97. By the end of Year 9, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. For instance, higher attainers have a good knowledge of physical and human processes but do not yet show how they interact to create geographical patterns.
98. Lowest attainers in Year 7 achieved well in using four figure references to create their own treasure island map and were well supported by the teacher and support assistant so that they could all build a grid on top of the maps created. Higher attainers in this year understand the function of symbols, can draw simple plans of the school building and most have used ordinance survey maps accurately.
99. Year 10 students demonstrate sound basic skills in geography and understanding of the interaction of people and the environment and the impact this has on coastlines.

100. By the end of Year 11, GCSE results matched the national average in 2002. Unvalidated results for 2003 are similar. This picture of broadly satisfactory achievement was confirmed by standards of work seen during the inspection. Lower attaining students and those with special needs achieve comparatively better than the more talented geographers.
101. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The team of teachers is skilled and experienced. They manage classes well and promote high standards of behaviour. They are very inclusive, providing compassionate care, clear guidance and sensitive support for all, and students with special needs are helped to make good progress. Teachers ask probing questions to develop students' understanding. However, the pace is sometimes slow because teachers rely on a limited range of teaching methods to fill the long lessons. Consequently, the most talented students are not challenged as much as they could be to reach the highest levels of attainment. This affects standards negatively. In a Year 11 lesson on high tech industries and the impact of multi national companies the students' good knowledge and motivation was not sufficiently exploited because the teaching method used failed to extend the abilities of this high attaining group.
102. New schemes of work have been introduced for Years 7 to 9 and teachers make good use of lesson starters and plenary sessions at the end of lessons. Homework is set regularly and it is often open-ended, enabling students to show what they can do. Books are marked regularly with suitable praise, but comments indicating what individuals need to do to gain higher marks are hard to find. Students are mostly keen and industrious but fewer now choose geography as a GCSE option than a few years ago. Students have few opportunities to practise or develop their skills with information technology but plans are now in place to exploit this potential for geography more effectively.
103. The effectiveness of leadership is satisfactory. New ideas recently introduced include units of work that develop thinking skills and group-based self-assessment by students. These are promising innovations and a development plan is in place. However, there has been insufficient urgency or clarity of focus since the last inspection on the need to raise levels of attainment and to use data both to diagnose strengths and weaknesses and to set targets for students.
104. The department is well managed. New schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 have been introduced and selected units are carefully graded and moderated by the team of teachers to ensure consistency. The head of department works hard and even provides an opportunity for those who have not chosen geography to take it as an additional GCSE through after-school lessons. The results of this small group last year were very impressive. However, the monitoring and development of team members, for example through collective planning and sharing good practice is at a rudimentary stage. The staff share a commitment to further improve their skills.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
- The very good teaching of the lowest attaining students raises their achievement.
- Not enough time is provided to cover the syllabus so students underachieve.
- There is little educational direction for the subject and management is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

105. At entry to the school standards are average. By the end of Year 9 standards are slightly higher, particularly in the knowledge of Christianity. The limited curriculum time reduces the depth of understanding achieved especially in the work on the other world faiths of Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. Achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 11 standards are about average but high attaining students underachieve. The only form of assessment is a certificate of achievement designed for lower attaining students but offered to all levels of capability. A ceiling is placed on the learning and achievement by the very short modules of study. No levels are built in and once a unit is completed another topic is studied for a few lessons. Understanding is superficial. As the subject is not taken to GCSE level no homework is set in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are timetabled as one 70-minute period per fortnight, which interrupts progress further.
106. Students struggle to cope with some moral issues such as crime and punishment, the just society and ideas about good and evil. The standard of the work seen in lessons and in notebooks is average when it should be much better for high attaining students. Standards of personal extended writing have improved and some high attaining students who can work fast produce good short narrative pieces, play scripts and witty letters.
107. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. More than half the lessons seen were good and about one in five was very good. There were two unsatisfactory lessons. Students were not interested by the abstract approach in one and immature, impulsive behaviour and calling out was not well managed in either lesson. The teaching of some low attaining students is a real strength lifting achievement to average levels in the oral parts of the lesson. Good probing questions helped students to explore and extend their thinking and to wrestle with deep questions raised by the creation stories in Genesis. Good discussion in these lessons sometimes continued as students left the lesson challenged by the questions posed. Students' answers are treated with respect and teachers use them well to extend understanding. A small amount of ICT is used effectively for research as when using 'Aspects of religion' to study Judaism. The very short lessons pose great difficulties. In one a student raised the question 'But without evil wouldn't life be boring?' but there was no time to tackle the comment and the issues of free will and choice, which it raised.
108. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Of the ten teachers who cover the subject only three have some subject specialism, which lowers standards and means that there is unequal treatment of some groups. It is not possible for the head of the subject to form a unified department as no meetings are held and apart from the head of subject there has been no professional development. Most teachers have another subject as their first priority and the status of the subject is low.
109. Textbook and other resources have improved since the last inspection and there are now sufficient materials to cover the agreed syllabus.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and Technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory overall** but **unsatisfactory in Graphics**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' attitude and behaviour are usually good.
- Students have good relationships with teachers and each other and receive high levels of individual support which is reflected in their attitudes to work.
- GCSE results in 2002 in design and technology food, textiles and electronic products were above and well above school and national averages respectively.

- Standards in graphics are low and remain below school and national averages.
- There is a need to ensure assessment is used effectively to inform curriculum planning and monitoring of student progress to evaluate effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management are weak. Co-ordination, including consistency in curriculum planning across all areas, is not secure.
- Statutory requirements are not fully met in the design and control aspects of the curriculum.
- Students do not always build on previously acquired skills.

## Commentary

110. There is no evidence available to indicate standards in design and technology on entry. Although results in statutory teacher assessments have improved significantly and were well above school and national averages, in Year 9 standards of work seen are extremely variable across subjects and overall only similar to national standards. The reliability of teacher assessments should be reviewed following confirmation of national data. Achievement is satisfactory but is hampered between Years 7-9 due to the rotational course structure and reduced time allocation in Year 7. Students are not always guided through the stages of designing and making in a way that enables all students to establish basic competence in using a range of research, analysis, development and communication techniques. They do not, therefore, always recognise and use the skills acquired in earlier work to inform increasingly demanding design and make activities in new situations. Standards in graphics are weak and this hinders progress in developing design fluency. Students use a satisfactory range of hand and machine tools safely for designing and making a range of products using a range of resistant and compliant materials, electronic components and food products.
111. GCSE results in 2002 for all design and technology subjects taken as a whole were similar and above the school and national averages respectively. This represents a sustained level since the last inspection. Design and technology food, resistant materials and electronic products achieved good results; textiles were similar, whilst graphics were below average. Girls' results at the higher levels A\*-C were above average, but compared to their results in all other subjects and national norms, were significantly below average. This is the reverse of the national trend. Results in 2003 show a dip in all subjects, with the exception of resistant materials.
112. Standards in Year 11 are variable across subjects but are satisfactory overall. Achievement is satisfactory but there is still underachievement in graphics, which impacts upon sketching for designing. Students' drawings contain unnecessary embellishment and work is repeated at the expense of content. In a Year 10 lesson on packaging, students show weak understanding of isometric and oblique projection. The low level copying and colouring-in task asked of them had insufficient challenge and purpose.
113. The use of ICT is beginning to improve standards of presentation and depth of research, for example in textiles and food technology. However, statutory requirements are not fully met in relation to computer-assisted-manufacturing and designing.
114. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others because they are well supported in lessons. Students clearly enjoy the practical aspects. This is reflected in their attitudes to work and high standards of behaviour. Progress is greatest where students are interested in the task and where expectations are high.
115. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but variable across the subjects. They are unsatisfactory in graphics work. The most effective teaching makes a positive contribution to the learning and the standards achieved. Good teaching was characterised by well-organised lessons, high expectations and students understand what is expected of them, with clear deadlines. In lessons where teaching was less than satisfactory, there was lack of organisation, inappropriate management and insufficient pace or challenge to inspire; as a



result students learned very little. Lessons where teaching was satisfactory had some good features, but the focus for the lesson was directed towards the task at the expense of developing learning to the depth and breadth expected. Assessment data are not used effectively in Years 7-9 to inform planning and target -setting. There is inconsistency in marking of work and setting of homework.

116. Leadership and management are presently unsatisfactory and reflect long-term staffing and management difficulties. One effect is that there is no system currently to disseminate the good practice across subjects and address variations in standards. The senior management team of the school have recently devised a clear plan to be put into place following the inspection, to resolve current deficiencies.
117. Although no health and safety issues were observed during the inspection the school should review its risk assessment policy and procedures as a matter of urgency. The potentially hazardous layout of the food technology room identified in the last two inspections remains a weakness. Unsatisfactory progress has been made in addressing all of the issues identified in the previous reports.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent GCSE results over several years.
- Good teaching that is a major factor in getting all students to achieve well.
- Co-operative attitudes of students and their strong relationships with teachers that enable all students to make good progress.
- The use of data to set targets for students is underdeveloped.
- Accommodation is inadequate.

### **Commentary**

118. GCSE results in 2002 are well above the national average. Unvalidated results for 2003 are similar.
119. Standards on entry are average and in the current Year 9 are above average. This represents good achievement. Students in Year 7 use colour and shape effectively. This was seen in a project based on the work of Stuart Davis. They demonstrated the ability to make the link between his and their own perception of letterforms to make interesting Pop Art type compositions. Students demonstrate good skill in using drawings to develop their ideas for work in textiles and card low-reliefs. This was seen in their study of Aborigine art. Students with special educational needs make good progress and achieve standards often in line with their peers.
120. Standards in the current Year 11 are above average. This represents achievement that is in line their prior attainment. All students show the ability to develop their own ideas for GCSE coursework. One student working on a portrait project said that her clay head had got a look of surprise that she wanted to emphasise using metallic oxides; a boy wanted to include pieces of textile to highlight parts of his ceramic sculpture. Middle and low attaining students made exciting surfaces in a project on textures influenced by the work of the American Expressionists. They enjoyed using a graffiti technique of scratching into pastel that has been laid over coloured tissue paper.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Well-prepared demonstrations of techniques, using examples of successful outcomes, lead students to know exactly what is required in the lesson and how they can get started promptly. They learn how to improve their work by responding to open-ended questioning by the teacher. Much assessment is carried out by the teachers' skilful probing. This is reflected in the personalised summative reports sent to parents of students in Years 10 and 11. This is an area for improvement in Years 7-9.
122. The leadership of art is good because the head of subject leads by example and motivates his team to achieve highly in all aspects of their work. A particular strength is the innovative establishing of the school's own art gallery. Apart from this feature accommodation is inadequate for students taught in groups as large as thirty-five. ICT in the art curriculum has improved since the last inspection but is still unsatisfactory. Health and Safety issues have been addressed.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths and areas for improvement

- Inspirational leadership.
- Good teaching.
- Very strong practical work.
- Strong extra-curricular opportunities.
- Allocation of time in Year 9.
- Computer resources for music.
- Unsuitable accommodation.

### Commentary

123. In general, GCSE music results have been well above average in recent years. In 2002 results were also well above average with all candidates gaining upper grades. Music is becoming an increasingly popular option in Years 10 and 11 and numbers are growing. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.
124. Students' attainment at the end of Year 9 is above average. The standards achieved by students in Year 9 are good when compared with their attainment on entry, which is average. Achievement by students with special educational needs, and gifted-and-talented students, is above average. Students in Years 7 to 9 have some opportunities to use computers but these are not available in the department in sufficient numbers to fully cater for students in this key stage. At the end of Year 9 all students are able to use electronic keyboards with competence for performance and for composition. Listening and appraising skills are above average; students develop a musical vocabulary with which to describe the music they hear. Progress in Year 9 is curtailed by a reduction in the amount of time given to music. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.
125. By the end of Year 11 students are fluent in the use of music technology and often reach above average standards in composition and performance. Compositions display interesting use of computer-generated sounds. Students' musical and general literacy are good and this has a positive effect on attainment in those areas requiring written, rather than practical, skills.
126. Teaching is good. In Years 7 to 9 students benefit from knowledgeable and committed teachers. Care is taken to relate tasks to previous learning; lessons often have a range of tasks and energetic pace. This helps to consolidate student learning and maintain interest.

Teaching embodies strong preparation, a range of teaching styles, interesting work, and very good organisation.

127. Teaching in Years 10 to 11 is good. Teachers successfully build on previous attainment. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on composition, the work was closely linked to the instrumental expertise of students. Music teachers support special needs students and involve them in all activities. There is some work especially designed for students with special needs and gifted-and-talented students, and most classroom activities are available at a range of levels. Good teaching and very good planning ensure that most students make good progress across Years 10 to 11. Teachers ensure that at all stages students have opportunities to develop necessary musical skills. Learning is good across all years.
128. The provision for instrumental teaching is good. The number of students taking lessons in school is near average in relation to the size of the school. About 100 students have instrumental lessons each week. The visiting instrumental teachers make a strong contribution to the curriculum and their work is carefully managed and generally integrated into the work of the department. In the best instrumental lessons teachers keep careful records of student progress and give students opportunities to take instrumental grade examinations. This has a good effect on student progress. The department does not as yet record successes in grade examinations as part of its statistics.
129. Leadership in the department is excellent and management very good. Administration within music has strong organisation. Some aspects, for example consideration of SMSC, are currently under development. The department promotes literacy by giving students key terms in each lesson and this has a significant impact on student attainment in appraisal and listening. The long-term monitoring, assessing and recording of students' work are good. Teachers analyse attainment across the range of skills taught in music lessons and consider this information to extend the work offered to students. Teachers are committed to high standards. Some lessons are taught outside the music area in unsuitable accommodation and this hampers progress for some students. In addition the computer suite used for some music lessons is not equipped with music keyboards. This slows learning.
130. Extra-curricular activity is strong. The performing and composing work of students is appropriately celebrated in musical events and in recordings produced each year for students and parents. Standards of performance are often high. There are also large-scale musical productions involving large numbers. Such opportunities have a strong impact on the cultural and social development of students; they also contribute strongly to the prevailing ethos of the school.
131. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last report. Two issues from the previous report, concerning the time allocation in Year 9, and the use of unsuitable accommodation for some lessons, remain unresolved.

## **Drama**

Provision in drama is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good examination results.
- The teaching is good and raises students' achievement.
- The subject is very inclusive and all students have access to the work.
- The subject is very well led and managed but the expertise of the head of department is not fully deployed in teaching drama.
- Accommodation constraints still restrict the range of activities possible for GCSE work.
- Some lessons need more time to make the students' experience more effective.

## Commentary

132. Drama is a strength of the school. From an average level of attainment at aged 11, students acquire a wide range of drama and performance skills which results in well above average success in GCSE examinations at aged 16. These results are a reflection of the good teaching that students receive. Attainment is well above average in Years 10 and 11; and good in Years 7 to 9.
133. The teaching is good. It is authoritative, imaginative and based on very good relationships, high expectations and skilful control of students' behaviour. Most of the lessons are taught by the head of the department whose enthusiasm for and expertise in the subject has raised the profile and popularity of the subject significantly. It also has raised the quality of the students' work throughout the school. The learning is good across the school. Students display from early on an impressive command of skills in improvisation and script work and their achievement is good. In Years 7 to 9 students are confident in role play, mime and in the use of such theatre techniques as freeze-framing, hot-seating and tableaux work. Their maturity in evaluating their own and others' work is a key feature of the very positive attitudes they demonstrate towards the subject. Because this mature approach is taken students in Years 10 and 11 are able to present work that is sensitive and moving and can display strong emotional content without fear of peer criticism, as in an exercise set in a hospital ward. Many individual students display exceptional dramatic skills and the school has a good reputation for preparing students for work in the professional theatre and television.
134. Students from all levels of educational attainment and need have access to the subject. The success of those students with special educational needs in external examinations and in performances again represents good achievement. In one lesson a student with significant educational behavioural difficulties produced sustained levels of intense listening and highly appropriate, imaginative improvised work. This was very high achievement and resulted from the strength of the climate for learning that is a feature of the department. The work in drama contributes well to the personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students. This is further enhanced by the very effective links with the drama departments in the local further education colleges, one of which presented very high quality work on issues of racism, drug abuse and bullying during the inspection. These performances served as excellent models for the examination course students who saw and evaluated them. The school's own productions are highly praised by parents who also see the work as enhancing the status of the school locally.
135. The subject is very well led and managed by the head of the department but much of her time is used in teaching in other departments and mainly non-specialists are used to cover other classes. This is not an ideal use of specialist expertise and the school should consider the level of deployment in the subject. Similarly the time allocated to some lessons is too short for students to gain the maximum benefit from the provision.
136. As at the last inspection accommodation remains unsatisfactory and continues to restrict the range of theatre arts skills available for study at GCSE. However, given the rise in status and success in the subject the improvements since the last inspection are good.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in Physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good.
- Students attain above average standards.
- GCSE results are well above average.
- Extra curricular provision is good.

- The time allocated for the subject remains below that found in most schools.
137. Standards among most non-examination students are average. A significant number of individual students reach standards that are above average in athletics, cross-country, swimming, badminton and rounders. Students have gained recent representative honours in hockey, netball, football and cricket. One student is a biathlete international.
  138. The department receives very little information about standards on entry. Even though the time allocation remains below that found in most schools as it did at the time of the previous inspection, students in Year 9 are achieving particularly well in games. Though satisfactory overall, achievement among younger students in gymnastics and outdoor and adventurous activities is limited by the shortage of time. Students with special educational needs, who are fully integrated in all lessons, progress as well as others. Several are following the GCSE course. Achievement among examination students is good. Non-examination students continue to achieve well in games. Opportunities are also provided for students in Year 11 to gain local accreditation in a variety of activities and many do so.
  139. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Lessons are carefully planned and resources, including information and communication technology, are used well to support learning. Opportunities are provided in some lessons for students to show initiative by leading warm up activities. In a Year 11 GCSE lesson, students were given the tasks of organising coaching sessions. They did so very effectively and all students conducted themselves sensibly and with maturity. Students are always correctly dressed for physical activity. Relationships between teachers and students are very positive and encourage learning at all levels. Participation rates are good throughout the school. In-class support for two students in Year 7 is sensitive and effective.
  140. Although it has still not been possible to rectify the problems relating to the showers that was identified in the last report, overall improvement since the last inspection is good. New schemes of work have been produced and a new assessment system is in place. Other developments include higher standards among examination students and the successful introduction of the Junior Sports Leaders Award as an extra curricular activity in Year 11.
  141. Leadership and management by the two teachers who share joint responsibility for physical education are good. Teachers work very well together and roles are clearly defined. Extra curricular provision is good. School teams have enjoyed recent successes in cricket, netball, football, and hockey. The additional opportunities provided for students outside normal lessons make an important contribution to the overall standards achieved.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business**

Provision in business is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards at GCSE have risen considerably in business studies.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support the curriculum is good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The two courses offered cater well for the differing needs of students.

## Commentary

142. In 2002 attainment at GCSE in business studies was below the national average at grade A\*-C, above average at A\*-G and in line on average points scores. In 2003 standards rose considerably, as four-fifths of the entry gained A\*-C grades, with over half the students gaining A\* and A grades. Girls have tended to perform better than boys, but not significantly. In business and communication systems GCSE standards have been similar in both 2002 and 2003, but no national comparisons have been made, owing to the relatively small entry. In groups of mainly middle and lower attainers, approximately half of the students gained grade C or above. In the work seen in this course, students in Year 11 are fulfilling the unit requirements, and attaining average standards. Given the lower grade profile of the group this is good achievement. Although there is a wide range of ability in the business studies groups, assessments of Year 11 work indicate that standards are above average, and that students are achieving well. Inspection evidence confirms this view. Many higher-attaining students have good analytical skills and are able to link different aspects of the subject into business theories.
143. Teaching and learning are good. In theory lessons the teacher gives students every opportunity, through varied well-timed tasks, to explore the key concepts for themselves and to contribute to discussion to ensure that they understand them clearly. In the computer room the process may be more teacher-led, but students are carefully prepared to ensure that their product is of the highest quality.
144. Marking is frequent and consistent. Feedback is constructive, and particularly effective in Year 10, where the subject is new. Many students have difficulties initially in reading questions and instructions carefully, and using notes efficiently, in order to fulfil the specific requirements of a task. The teacher gives clear guidance on how to improve performance and to progress to a higher level.
145. The two GCSE courses meet the needs of a wide range of students. Business and communication systems is more practical and incorporates a high proportion of ICT, with unrestricted access in lessons to computers. Even on the more "academic" business studies course, students have half their course linked into ICT.
146. The delivery of the business courses is the responsibility of just one teacher, who reacted swiftly to the below average results of 2002, and implemented effective strategies, particularly in examination techniques, which aided the considerable improvement of 2003. The department has firm policies in place and very detailed schemes of work, which are constantly under review. There is good support for students who have problems with understanding or completing work, or meeting coursework deadlines.

Business was not reported on at the previous inspection.

## Leisure and Tourism

Provision in Leisure and Tourism is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are achieving well.
- Teaching is very good.
- Assessment is very good.

## **Commentary**

147. The school currently offers leisure and tourism as a double award GCSE in Years 10 and 11. The course was introduced only last September and so there are no previous results to report.
148. Although there are variations in the ability levels of students in both year groups, standards overall are below average. This is because most students are of lower academic ability. In Year 11 a small number of students are producing work that is average for the course.
149. Given their starting points, achievement is good. Students in Year 11 for example demonstrate a competent level of understanding about customer services. Their oral contributions are good. This is partly because the teacher uses questions very perceptively to encourage students to think about, and comment on, different aspects of their work. Students in Year 10 for example can talk sensibly about the facilities, activities and services found at a Premiership football club from a business point of view. Opportunities are provided for independent research. Students use the internet very effectively to obtain different pieces of information, for example about various towns and cities. They then present their findings to others in the class.
150. Teaching and learning are very good. Information is shared with students at a pace that helps them with their understanding. The teacher has high expectations of work and behaviour. Students respond well and consequently their learning is very good. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect in lessons and this gives students the confidence to make progress. Assessment is very thorough. Through their 'review sheets', students are given very clear and precise guidance on the strengths and weaknesses of their work and are shown how they can improve.
151. One teacher has sole responsibility for implementing and delivering the course. The teacher has already reviewed the effectiveness of the first twelve months and has made some adjustments in approach for this academic year. This level of self-evaluation is good practice.
152. Resources and links with the community are very good. A range of visits to relevant places of interest supports students in their work. As part of the course, students go to places such as the Castle Leisure Centre, Skill City, Alton Towers and the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. Such educational trips and the involvement of visiting speakers, provide students with an additional and realistic insight into leisure and tourism.

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

### **Personal, social and health education**

153. On the basis of a light touch review of these areas the school's provision for personal, social and health education programme, including sex education and drugs awareness, is satisfactory.
154. In Year 7, groups of students debate strategies to stop unacceptable behaviour, in Year 9, equal opportunities covers areas such as stereotyping and for example, how television soaps stereotype the elderly.
155. Careers education is a component of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) modular curriculum in Years 8,9,10 and 11. It provides information on the various ways of obtaining careers guidance and counselling and raises students' awareness about making the right choice and implications of having a job. In Years 10 and 11, preparations for work experience applications for jobs and post 16 educational opportunities are well covered. For example, in Year 11 students receive lessons on writing their CVs. and undergo mock interviews with outside professionals.

156. There is a clear process for learning progressively through the PSHE curriculum. However, its effectiveness is monitored and evaluated only through informal discussions with staff and students and there is no baseline assessment. The school has identified the need to bring pastoral and curriculum provision closer together and this is reflected in the responsibilities of the recent appointment of assistant headteacher. A whole school staff and student questionnaire has been completed to identify issues and inform development.

## **Citizenship**

On the basis of a light touch review of this area provision in Citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Recognition that citizenship is a compulsory National Curriculum subject.
- Appointment of a curriculum leader to develop citizenship.
- A further audit needs to be carried out to determine full entitlement of all aspects of citizenship for all students.
- Assessment needs to be developed.

### **Commentary**

157. Insufficient evidence was available to judge teaching and learning in Citizenship which is an emerging subject in the school. The relevant aspects of the subject have been identified and are taught currently through the personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme, in a range of subjects across the curriculum and in tutorial periods. The school conducted a full audit of the range of topics each department teaches about two years ago. There is no formal procedure for managing the development of the subject and measuring the progress of students at the moment. The school appointed a curriculum leader from September this year to develop the subject. He has recognised the issues involved in managing such a diverse subject and monitoring the cross-curricular delivery and has made a good start. There are plans to use the new departmental audit to establish parts of the course which are at present not accessed by all students. Assessment procedures are in the early stages of development.
158. The school currently provides a number of opportunities for students to experience active citizenship with the well established and well run upper and lower school councils. These councils meet weekly and the elected representatives take suggestions from and report back to the tutor groups in a very organised and mature way. All years are supporting a charity of their choice.
159. Citizenship has been identified in most departmental schemes of work and is a particular strength within history where a mock ballot was held in Year 9 with a discussion on democracy. Geography makes a good contribution through consideration of the environment and a good assembly for Year 8 on the theme for the week, "saving the planet" was seen. In religious education many issues are studied, for example, moral issues and issues concerning prejudice and world poverty.
160. There is recognition that there are a number of areas for development and with the new appointment the school is well placed to move forward to implement fully the development of citizenship.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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