

INSPECTION REPORT

**POLTAIR COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND SPORTS
COLLEGE**

St Austell

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 112052

Headteacher: Mr P L Bradbury

Lead inspector: Mr H E G White

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th March 2004

Inspection number: 260783

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1069
School address:	Trevarthian Road St Austell Cornwall
Postcode:	PL25 4BZ
Telephone number:	01726 874520
Fax number:	01726 874529
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Diana Pride
Date of previous inspection:	8 th February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Poltair Community School and Sports College is an average sized, comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 which serves St Austell and the surrounding villages. It is a specialist Sports College, and has received Artsmark gold, Sportsmark gold, Investor in Careers, National Healthy Schools Standards and Investor in Education Business Partnership Awards. It is involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The school is a demonstration site for the Global Institute for Student Aspirations project from Massachusetts University and works with other local sports colleges and The Sports Trust together with eight other groups across the world. The school is used extensively by the local community throughout the year. 523 boys and 546 girls attend the school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The ability of pupils in Years 8 to 11 was below the national average when they joined the school. The ability of Year 7 pupils is well below the national average. Most pupils are of white British heritage; less than two per cent come from minority ethnic or mixed race backgrounds although the information is not known or has been withheld by parents for another 6 per cent of pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational need is above the national average and the proportion with statements for physical, learning or behavioural needs is also above the national average. There are no pupils with both English as an additional language and who are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Two pupils are refugees/asylum seekers and 23 are travellers. The numbers of pupils leaving and joining the school during the school year is high compared to schools nationally. School hosts, but does not manage, the county audiology unit. At the time of the inspection, the school was preparing to reduce the numbers of staff it employs due to falling numbers of pupils attending the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2795	H White	Lead inspector	
11072	S Elomari	Lay inspector	
8503	A Allfree	Team inspector	Design and technology
8632	D E Beer	Team inspector	Geography
28178	J Connor	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Provision for pupils with special educational needs
31171	O Dutton	Team inspector	Music
32348	R W S Greenwood	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Business education
22685	N G Moss	Team inspector	English Citizenship Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
12045	I Rye	Team inspector	Science
30427	F Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	History Religious education
23564	A Thornton-Clarke	Team inspector	Art and design Physical education
22691	R Woodhouse	Team inspector	Mathematics

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

51 High Street
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 3XE

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the 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).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	13
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	21
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	41

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Poltair Community School and Sports College is providing its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and this leads to satisfactory progress in most lessons. Achievement over time is unsatisfactory, particularly for those pupils who do not learn their work or miss lessons through absence. **The school has serious weaknesses.** These are the unsatisfactory achievement in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), the very poor attendance and the unsatisfactory arrangements for the regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress. **The school gives satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The Sports College is very well led and managed.
- Pupils' achievement is very good in art and design and physical education, good in design and technology but unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, science and ICT
- About half of the teaching is good, but there are great variations in the quality of teaching and procedures for the regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching are unsatisfactory.
- Lesson planning does not make sufficient use of assessment information; marking is unsatisfactory.
- Very good links have been established with other schools and colleges; community links are good.
- The school has a good governing body but leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory.
- Attendance is very poor and punctuality to school and to lessons is poor. The attitudes of some pupils to learning and their behaviour in lessons are unsatisfactory.
- The school provides a safe environment although the quality of support, advice and guidance is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in the tracking of pupils' progress.
- There is good provision for pupils who are disabled and those at risk of exclusion.

Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Although the governance of the school is much improved and standards in English are improving, some central issues such as improving marking and tracking pupils' progress have not been tackled effectively. Attendance has fallen from average to very poor; behaviour, which was good, is now satisfactory and achievement is now unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, science and ICT.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement over time is unsatisfactory, standards are below average. In the 2003 tests for 14 year old pupils, results were below the national average, and achievement overall was unsatisfactory. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, standards based on the best eight subject results were average. Although value-added was satisfactory, achievement is unsatisfactory since GCSE English results are below average, and mathematics and science results are well below average. Although achievement is very good in art and design and physical education and good in design technology, achievement is unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils' competence in , literacy, ICT and numeracy is unsatisfactory. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactorily**

developed. Attendance is very poor. Pupils' attitudes to school are unsatisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory overall although some pupils do not listen to their teachers in lessons and distract others from their work. Punctuality to lessons is poor; some lessons start ten minutes late.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. In many lessons, satisfactory teaching is producing satisfactory learning and achievement. In some lessons, good teaching is only leading to satisfactory learning because some pupils are not interested in learning and the teachers have to work hard to get them to concentrate on their work. In some lessons, too much teaching time is spent on managing the behaviour of a few pupils and this limits the overall achievement of the class as a whole. Teaching is consistently very good in art and design and physical education and good in design and technology and history. Teaching and learning in some lessons, and in ICT in Years 7 to 9, remains unsatisfactory. Although the school offers a well-balanced curriculum, the arrangements for ICT in Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory. Good links have been established with further education providers. The quality of accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. Extra-curricular provision is good; opportunities to participate in sport are outstanding; opportunities in the arts are satisfactory. Partnership with parents is satisfactory but school reports do not give sufficient information about the progress pupils make.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Leadership by the head is unsatisfactory overall although the restructuring of the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team is a sound basis on which to build an improving school. The school has a good governing body. The governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are committed to school improvement. The arrangements for ICT in Years 7 to 9 do not meet statutory requirements. The weaknesses in the use of performance data, monitoring of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress are limiting the ability of middle managers to develop a relentless focus on raising attainment. Financial planning has successfully tackled the deficit budget that has faced the school on several occasions over recent years, but it has not enabled the school to purchase sufficient computers and appropriate software for use throughout the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are satisfied with the arrangements for settling their children into the school, the teaching and the progress their children make. They rightly feel they are not well informed about the progress their children make. They have concerns about behaviour and bullying at the school. Pupils say this is a good school where they are expected to do their best. Like their parents, they are concerned about the unsatisfactory behaviour and bullying of some pupils at school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to improve standards and achievement, the headteacher must give strong leadership to:

- Improve attainment in English, mathematics, science and ICT
- Raise the level of teaching from satisfactory to good and better through the regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.
- Continue to improve the behaviour and attitudes of some pupils to work in lessons.
- Improve the quality of support, advice and guidance based on the regular and rigorous monitoring of pupils' achievement and personal development
- Improve lesson planning by making more use of assessment information.
- Improve the quality of marking of pupils' work.

Action is also required to ensure that the arrangements for teaching ICT in Years 7 to 9 do meet statutory requirements.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement throughout the school is unsatisfactory. Standards of work are average in Years 7 to 9, but below average in Years 10 and 11. The unsatisfactory achievement in English, mathematics, science and ICT are **serious weaknesses**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examinations results are above national average in art and design, dance, drama, French, music and physical education.
- Standards of work are well above average in art and design and above average in physical education and pupils achieve very well in these subjects. They achieve well in design and technology.
- Tests results for 14 year old pupils are below the national average in English, mathematics and science.
- GCSE examination results are below the national average in English, and well below the national average in mathematics, science, ICT and religious education.
- Standards of work are below average in English, mathematics and ICT.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- The poor behaviour, attendance and attitudes to work of some pupils in lessons limit achievement.
- Weaknesses in data analysis and the tracking of pupils' progress are a major barrier to the raising of standards at the school.

Commentary

1. In the 2003 tests for 14 year olds, results in English, mathematics and science were below the national average. When compared to pupils' prior attainment at the age of 11, achievement was unsatisfactory. Girls do better than boys in these tests. The trend in examination improvement over recent years has been below the national trend. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are improving and approaching average. This reflects the work being pitched at a better level in English and science where work is now approaching the national average, although mathematics work remains below the national average. Standards remain below the national average in French because pupils have difficulty in their written work and in ICT due to shortcomings in the way the subject is currently taught. Standards are above average in art and design and physical education and reflect the very good teaching in these subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.3 (31.0)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	33.8 (33.1)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	31.9 (32.6)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 220 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, standards based on the best eight subject results were at the national average. When compared to pupils' prior attainment at the age of 14, the value added was satisfactory. The trend in examination improvement over recent years has been broadly in line with the national trend. Between 2001 and 2003, girls did better than boys. The number of pupils

gaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades at A* to G is well above the national average; the number of pupils gaining 5 GCSE grades A* - C is below the national average. GCSE examinations results are above the national average in art and design, dance, drama, French, music and physical education. GCSE examination results are below average in English, and well below in mathematics and science. As all pupils are entered for English, mathematics and science, achievement overall is unsatisfactory because the examination results in these core subjects should have been better. GCSE examination results are well below the national average in ICT and religious education. Standards of work seen in lessons are below average overall and reflect these examination results.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	43 (46)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94 (94)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	33.3 (34.7)	34.4 (34.7)

There were 171 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall. In most lessons, teaching and learning are satisfactory. In some lessons, however, pupils demonstrate poor behaviour and attitudes to work and teachers have to spend time getting these pupils to concentrate on their work; this limits the progress of all pupils in the class. A significant number of pupils come to school with poor attitudes to learning and have low perceptions of the value of education. Consequently some pupils do not learn their work thoroughly over time and achievement is further limited by significant levels of absence. These factors mean that, despite satisfactory learning in the short term, achievement overall is unsatisfactory.

4. Achievement in lessons is very good in art and design and physical education, and good in design technology. Teachers take advantage of the practical nature of these subjects, and plan lessons that readily engage pupils in learning. Good use is made of involving pupils in the evaluation of their own work and this encourages to do better because they have a good understanding of what has be improved.

5. Achievement in lessons is unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, science and ICT. In English, pupils' weak oral skills and the limited amount of reading done out of school hinder achievement. They do not get sufficient practice in writing at length and this limits their ability to deal with the demands of examination questions and coursework. These limited literacy skills affect pupils ability to explain ideas such as surface area in mathematics and science. In mathematics, achievement is also hindered by pupils' lack of pride in their work that leads to inaccurate working when they are solving problems. Achievement in information communication is limited by the unsatisfactory arrangements for teaching the subject in Years 7 to 9.

6. Pupils with special educational needs who attend regularly make good progress and achieve well in design and technology, art and design and physical education. In all other subjects their achievement is satisfactory. This is because they are well supported by a strong team of teaching assistants who know them well. As a consequence, the number of pupils leaving Poltair School with at least one graded result at GCSE is very close to the national average.

7. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language achieve satisfactorily, through the care their classroom teachers take to ensure that they have full understanding of their work and the support, where available, of special educational needs assistants. The school does not review the progress of these pupils other than by the same means that other pupils' progress is tracked and reviewed and the care and concern for their welfare and progress shown by their pastoral tutors.

8. Test and examination results are analysed to compare how each subject has performed when compared to national standards and to other subjects in the school. The performance of boys and girls is also analysed. The results are not currently analysed to explore how pupils such as those who are gifted and talented, travellers or those with English as an additional language have performed. At present data is not being used effectively to take strategic action to raise standards. Ongoing tracking of pupils' progress is now developing across the school at departmental level but is currently inconsistently undertaken. Although plans are in place to tackle the matter, there is as yet no system for collating this information centrally on a regular basis during the school year. Heads of department cannot compare pupils' progress between subjects nor can pastoral staff track the progress of individual pupils or groups of pupils on a regular basis and set appropriate targets. These shortcomings are a major barrier to the raising of standards at the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **very poor**. Punctuality is **poor**. Pupils' attitudes to school are **unsatisfactory**. Overall, behaviour is **satisfactory** in lessons and around the school. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **satisfactory** overall. Attendance is a **serious weakness**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very low and has declined significantly since the previous inspection.
- Punctuality is poor both in the mornings and to lessons.
- Too many pupils show a lack of interest in their lessons.
- Although many pupils behave well, there are too many whose behaviour is unsatisfactory and the level of exclusions is high.
- Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and their spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection.
- Support for vulnerable pupils at risk of exclusion through Student Services is good.

Commentary

9. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are unsatisfactory overall. In a significant number of lessons, pupils do not listen well to their teacher or to one another. They are slow to respond to requests and in many classes only a few pupils offer to answer questions. A large minority of pupils finds it difficult to concentrate for long periods and this leads to increasing chatter and disruption towards the end of lessons. In around a third of the lessons observed, the unsatisfactory attitude of some pupils had a negative effect on the learning of the whole class. Learning is satisfactory; it should be better. Pupils show a more positive attitude to subjects such as physical education, art and design and design and technology where the work is practical and they are well taught. They also respond well in history because they are actively involved in learning. However, overall teachers have to spend too much time dealing with low-level disruption and an unwillingness to work.

10. The school recognises this weakness and is successfully working with a group of pupils in Year 8 to motivate and improve their behaviour and attitude to learning by providing a different curriculum. The school has a system of merits in Years 7 to 9 and credits in Years 10 and 11, which are successful in motivating those pupils who are willing to work. However, the significant numbers who are disaffected or unwilling to work are not sufficiently encouraged by them. The school is involved in the Global Institute for Student Aspirations. Surveys carried out as part of this project indicate that pupils' attitudes to school have started to improve over the year that the project has been in place. Most pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially those in sport, which involve large numbers in clubs and other activities outside the school day. Pupils take a pride in their sporting achievements but pride in academic achievement, particularly in lessons, is less evident.

11. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good. However, there is a large minority who are not willing to comply with the high expectations the school sets for their behaviour. Pupils and their parents are concerned about the behaviour of this group. In particular, many pupils in all years dislike using the toilets because of the poor and sometimes threatening behaviour that occurs there. Pupils and their parents state that incidences of bullying are too frequent. Although parents believe that the school deals with bullying successfully when it is reported, a significant number of pupils disagree. The school has appropriate systems in place to address bullying but these are not used consistently enough so that all pupils feel safe in school. Prefects and pupils in Year 9 are trained to help deal with bullying but are not often approached. The relationships between pupils, their peers, teachers and other adults are often good but too many pupils show a lack of respect when talking to others.

12. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Through the Global Institute for Student Aspirations project, the school fosters pupils' self-esteem and confidence well and this helps to create a sense of belonging to the school community. Many pupils are willing to take an active part in the life of the school by helping with extra-curricular sports activities or acting as buddies or prefects. Most pupils respond well to the moral code promoted by staff and develop an appropriate sense of right and wrong. They have many opportunities to explore their own and other cultures, particularly in music and art and design. The work in history is planned to include aspects of Cornish culture. Pupils' spiritual development was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection but the school has developed a programme of themed assemblies and thoughts for the week, which provides pupils with appropriate opportunities to reflect on their lives and the wider world. As yet, opportunities for spiritual development in lessons are inconsistent but there are examples of good practice, for example in geography where pupils reflect on aspects of the physical world and their response to it.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	10.7	School data :	2.7
National data:	7.2	National data:	1.1

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

13. The level of attendance is very low in comparison with secondary schools nationally. It has fallen considerably since the previous inspection. Attendance is significantly lower than that in other local secondary schools. The level of unauthorised absence is very high and in the top 10 per cent of secondary schools nationally. In every year group there is a large number of pupils whose attendance is below 90 per cent and a significant number attending less than 80 per cent of the time. These numbers rise steadily from Year 7 to Year 11, where almost half the pupils have attendance of below 90 per cent and sixty-eight of them are absent more than a fifth of the time. In every year group attendance figures for the current year are below 90 per cent. Year 7 has the highest attendance, at 89.7 per cent but this falls steadily through Years 8, 9 and 10: in Year 11 attendance is 84.2 per cent. The school has appropriate procedures in place to monitor attendance and to follow up all unexplained absence. However, the range of strategies is insufficient and does not have a high enough profile to drive up attendance. School procedures are not applied with sufficient rigour or consistency to bring about a sustained improvement nor do they make pupils and their parents sufficiently aware of the need for improvement. For example, letters are not sent home to parents until their child's attendance has dropped to 80 per cent. The opening sentences of the leaflet about attendance recently sent to all parents made it possible to infer that the school was concerned to maintain excellent attendance. Parents are therefore insufficiently involved in helping the school to achieve improvements. The school uses an outside service to make calls home on the first day of any unexplained absence. It has successfully involved the travelling children's service to improve the attendance of these pupils and liaises with the education welfare service.

14. Punctuality is poor. Large numbers of pupils arrive late in the morning. Some of this is due to the unreliability of the bus services, on which many depend. However, many pupils who walk to school do not arrive on time and, once they are on the school site, show little urgency to get to their form room in time for registration. For example, during one Year 8 registration only twelve pupils out of thirty-two were on time. Twelve others arrived during registration but eight remained absent. Pupils arriving late, either to their form room or to sign in at the pastoral office, are not consistently challenged to provide the reason.’ Few are reprimanded for their lateness.

15. Punctuality to lessons is also poor. Pupils stroll from lesson to lesson with little or no sense of the importance of time keeping. Some teachers chivvy them along but this is very inconsistent, which reinforces the view that punctuality is not important. Although the site is large and has several buildings it is possible to walk from one end of it to the other, even at busy times, in less than two minutes. However, around a quarter of the lessons observed during the inspection started late. Sometimes when a lesson has started late teachers keep pupils in class until they have finished their work, which has a knock on effect on the next lesson. During the inspection poor punctuality accounted for a significant loss of teaching time.

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	990	81	9
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	10	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	50	0	0

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

16. The school has recently set up Student Services to provide a range of individually tailored support to enable pupils, including those at risk of exclusion, to manage their behaviour more effectively. It is too soon to evaluate the effect of this but the work of Student Services is both innovative and challenging. The rate of exclusions is high because the school takes a very firm line on aggression and verbal abuse.

17. Student Services provides effective support for vulnerable pupils who may be at risk of exclusion. By focusing on helping pupils to manage anger and other emotions, the staff is able to keep them in contact with their formal education longer.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with a **satisfactory** standard of education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** throughout Years 7 to 11. Achievement over time is unsatisfactory because pupils do not learn their work or miss lessons through absence. Assessment is **unsatisfactory** throughout the school. The current lack of regular, rigorous monitoring of teaching is a **serious weakness**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in one in seven lessons.
- Teaching is consistently very good in art and design and physical education and good in design and technology and history.
- In many lessons pupils are not sufficiently actively involved in learning.
- Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well.
- Marking remains unsatisfactory.
- Teaching time is lost on this large site because no time is allowed for pupils to move between lessons.
- Targets set for pupils who have individual education plans are not sufficiently sharply focused.
- There is unsatisfactory teaching in one in fifteen lessons.
- The school is well placed to share good practice and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 138 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	21 (16 %)	55 (40 %)	53 (38 %)	8 (6 %)	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.

18. The quality of teaching is very good in one in seven lessons. In these lessons teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject and how to teach it well. Well-focused starter activities revise previous knowledge and ensure that a very good working ethos pervades the classroom. Very good planning involves a range of practical learning activities such as drama, role play, problem solving and small group discussion to stimulate pupils' interest and make them think. Pupils know what should be achieved during the lesson and regular progress checks are made. Attention is paid to the correct use of technical vocabulary, sentence construction and the importance of showing pupils how to improve their writing, especially when answers to National Tests and Examinations are being considered. Work and activities are very well matched to the different abilities of pupils. Very well thought-out questions are used to probe and extend understanding and check out possible misconceptions. Sufficient time is allocated to discuss, assess and extend what has been learned, and consider the links to the next lesson. When learning is very good, rapid strides in the acquisition of new knowledge, skills, ideas and understanding take place, pupils work at a very good pace and learn very well whether working independently or in groups.

19. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall. Assessment is very good in art and design and physical education and good in design and technology in Years 10 and 11. In these subjects there is particularly good use of pupils' self-evaluation and pupils have a good understanding of how to

improve their work. Procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory in science, ICT, geography and religious education.

20. Marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. This was a key issue at the last inspection. Although marking is good in art and design, design and technology and physical education, the quality of marking is inconsistent across the remainder of the curriculum. Too often comments refer to the effort a pupil has made rather than diagnosing strengths and weaknesses of the work and presenting clear advice to help pupils improve their work. Insufficient thought is often given to the assessment of learning in the lesson and the use of this information for planning the following lesson or sequence of lessons.

21. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in one lesson in fifteen. Insufficient thought is given to involving pupils in learning and pupils are sometimes unclear about the purpose of the lesson. Expectations of behaviour and work quality are unsatisfactory and marking is superficial and does not help pupils improve. Unsatisfactory behaviour is not always corrected; unsatisfactory attitudes are not always challenged. Pupils do not concentrate on their work, work slowly and very little learning takes place.

22. There is some good teaching of pupils with special educational needs in small groups and on a one-to-one basis. Withdrawal is used appropriately to boost literacy skills. In many mainstream lessons, however, the use of individual education plans to inform teaching is inconsistent across the school. Some targets set for pupils with special educational needs lack a sharp focus on raising attainment and are too general to be of value in this respect. This makes it more difficult for teachers to provide a broad enough range of activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers are sometimes able to monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs because they receive good feedback from teaching assistants.

23. The lack of time allocated for movement between lessons on a large widespread site results in pupils inevitably being late for lessons. Valuable teaching time is lost every day, and pupils' learning is restricted.

24. The school is well placed to share good practice to improve the quality of teaching, learning and achievement throughout the school. Very good teaching takes place in English, mathematics, science, art and design, dance, design and technology, geography, history, media studies, physical education and religious education. One in four teachers taught at least one very good lesson. Teaching is consistently very good in this Sports College in physical education and also in art and design and good in design and technology and history. The advanced skills teachers in art and design and physical education have gained the confidence of many staff by helping them review their teaching approaches in terms of matching lesson planning to ways in which pupils learn. Teachers from art and design, design and technology and physical education have good expertise to share in assessment, especially the involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work and that of other pupils. Currently there is insufficient regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching to identify this good practice or to evaluate the impact of the sharing of good practice on achievement in lessons. This is a serious weakness.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is **unsatisfactory** but **good** in Years 10 and 11. The opportunity for enrichment including out of school activities is **good** and in respect to sport it is **excellent**. The quality of accommodation and resources are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good well-established links with the local college of further education.
- The Sports College provides an excellent range of out of school activities.
- The ICT curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient expertise for teaching mathematics and ICT on the staff
- There are insufficient numbers of computers and computer rooms for the size of school.

Commentary

25. The school has recognised that its current arrangements for teaching ICT in Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory. Governors have taken action to rectify this and subject specific teaching will commence in September 2004.

26. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good. A wide range of academic, practical and vocational courses is offered. Pupils receive good advice to help them choose a curriculum that is most suited to their needs. There are good links with the local college where pupils follow well taught, vocational courses such as catering and construction. There is a good careers education programme and good provision for work experience. The successful achievement of the 'Investors in Careers' and the 'Investors in Educational Business Partnerships' demonstrates the strong commitment to helping pupils prepare effectively for their further education and employment when they leave school.

27. There is a good range of curriculum opportunity for pupils with special educational needs through such provision as the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) certificate in personal effectiveness, the Junior Sports Leader Award and the use of Entry Level qualifications. The support for pupils on the register is extended to cover placements at the local college. This element of provision is much appreciated by pupils. Pupils with physical disabilities such as hearing impairment are well served by such provision as the County Audiology Unit which the school hosts. In providing for access for pupils with other physical disabilities, the school has more than met its statutory duties with an impressive array of ramps and stair lifts. This means that these pupils can be fully included in the normal school curriculum. This is no mean achievement on a site that is on a number of levels, dispersed and contains some awkward buildings.

28. The school provides a wide range of activities outside normal school hours with over 60 activities offered each week. The school has received Artsmark gold and Sportsmark gold awards for much of this work. There is an impressive programme of sporting activities including dance, gymnastics, hockey, soccer, rugby, athletics and netball open to both experts and novices. A range of homework clubs, revision classes and subject specific support sessions are helping pupils achieve their potential and provide further support for their learning.

29. The match of teachers' expertise to the curriculum offered is satisfactory in most subjects. It is unsatisfactory in mathematics where non-specialist teachers do not have the required depth of understanding and in ICT where there is insufficient staff expertise to teach the specialist subject. In addition, the staff does not have the necessary expertise to promote the use of ICT across the curriculum.

30. The overall standard of accommodation is unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, Sports College status has resulted in significant improvements in facilities for physical education although changing facilities are still limited. There have also been improvements in the accommodation used by pupils with special educational needs; this area is effective in providing respite for pupils experiencing social difficulties. The main difficulties are in the shortage of accommodation for ICT, the need for refurbishment of the science laboratories, and in history which is taught in different blocks. Less significant problems include: English rooms are poorly maintained, some rooms in mathematics and religious education are too small, geography is short of rooms, and the floor needs replacing in the drama area. These factors all have a negative impact on the quality of education.

31. The overall quality of resources is unsatisfactory. Resources at the time of the last inspection had declined and were only satisfactory. Since then there has been a further deterioration, so that resources at present are better than satisfactory only in art and design, dance, and physical education. They are poor in ICT, and unsatisfactory in music, special educational needs, and science. In all other subjects, resources are satisfactory, but in most of these there are some deficiencies. The number of computers in school is roughly half the national average, and there is a range of non-standard software. There is a particular shortage of computers and software in design

and technology, and for pupils with special educational needs. In music, there are too few instruments, and a shortage of recording equipment and books. Furthermore, textbooks are often shabby in mathematics and science, and there are insufficient books in geography and modern foreign languages.

Care, guidance and support

The school's procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good** overall. The support, advice and guidance pupils' receive are **unsatisfactory**, overall, although careers education and guidance are **good**. The school seeks the views, values and acts on the views of its pupils in a **satisfactory** way.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are not guided well enough about how to improve their learning.
- Personal support and guidance are of inconsistent quality.
- Careers education and guidance are good.
- The school provides a safe environment.
- There are good arrangements in place to support pupils when they join the school.
- Pupils' views are considered and surveys are carried out through the Global Institute for Student Aspirations project.

Commentary

32. The school does not have sufficiently detailed assessment procedures in place for monitoring pupils' progress on a regular basis and on which to provide appropriately targeted advice and support to pupils. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and too often fails to offer them guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational need have individual education plans but the targets in them are not sufficiently detailed and specific to guide their progress. Teachers do not find them helpful when planning for future learning and pupils do not know exactly what they need to do in order to improve. Individual education plans are not reviewed often enough. The school is involving form tutors to a greater extent in monitoring pupils' academic achievement but this is not yet having a significant impact on all pupils. Those pupils in Year 11 who are at risk of underachieving have one-to-one mentoring interviews with the year manager and can choose as their mentor a teacher they trust. This is effective in helping them to improve their learning and revision skills.

33. The school provides a wide range of support for pupils. For example, a school counsellor is available to work with pupils individually and a member of staff runs a group for girls who are under pressure. The Connexions service also offers support to individual pupils when needed. There are initiatives in place in Year 8 and in Years 10 and 11 to provide a more appropriate curriculum for some disaffected pupils and the targeted support this offers is effective in changing attitudes to learning. Other new initiatives are planned but staff are unsure whether these are now in operation or not. The support offered by form tutors and year managers is inconsistent. In particular, year managers have a considerable teaching timetable, which limits the time they have to support and advise pupils. Many pupils have a trusting relationship with one or more teachers and are willing to share problems and concerns. However, too many pupils prefer not to involve teachers in this way. Parents state that the school deals effectively with bullying but a significant number of pupils disagree. The school is concerned that pupils fail to appreciate the difference between sustained bullying and one-off incidents of antisocial behaviour. However, some pupils think teachers treat their concerns without due seriousness.

34. There is a good programme of careers education that includes planned work experience. The school has been awarded Investors in Careers status. The Connexions service offers individual interviews and a wide range of information about careers. Pupils in Year 9 have some careers lessons before they choose what to study in Years 10 and 11. In one careers lesson observed during

the inspection, the work was based on the job opportunities within Cornwall and was well planned to ensure that pupils knew what options were available to them.

35. The school provides a safe environment. Procedures for child protection fully comply with legal requirements and are made known to all staff. Very clear systems are in place to meet health and safety requirements and these have improved since the previous inspection. Arrangements for first aid are very good. The school has a fully qualified nurse who ensures that the procedures for first aid and giving medication are very clear and fully recorded. Pupils generally feel safe in school but they are concerned that there are a number of areas that are not well supervised and about the level of bullying.

36. The induction programme is well organised and appreciated by pupils and their parents. Almost all the pupils entering the school in Year 7 are already familiar with it because they have used the Sports College facilities while at primary school. Pupils in Year 6 visit their new school and have the chance to meet their form tutor. The induction process is well organised and is common to both the secondary schools and the primary schools in the area. Pupils in Year 7 settle quickly into the new routines and appreciate the help they receive from the prefects attached to each form.

37. The school has recently re-established the school council after a gap of several years. The council is a responsible and thoughtful group of pupils who have some sensible and appropriate ideas about how to improve their school. It is too soon for changes to have been achieved. However, as a result of council discussions, the governing body has agreed to consider the refurbishment of the toilets. Councillors and other pupils are very concerned about the amount of smoking that is done in the toilets but disapprove of the school's strategy of keeping toilets locked in order to reduce it. The Global Institute for Student Aspirations project has focused on creating and promoting a sense of belonging to the school community. This is proving successful in motivating the majority of pupils but a large minority continues to express negative views of the school. As part of the project, pupils' views are surveyed and the most recent shows a significant improvement in the last year. Pupils have the opportunity to contribute to school life in a number of ways. For example, some in Years 8 and 11 are trained to help to address bullying, there is a large group of prefects and in Year 9 peer mentors are in place.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a **satisfactory** partnership with parents. The links established with the local community are **good**. Links with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very well with other schools and colleges to the benefit of pupils.
- Pupils' annual reports do not provide sufficient information about progress.
- The school is beginning to work more closely with parents.
- Links with the community are used well to widen pupils' experiences.

Commentary

38. The school has a very wide range of valuable links with other schools and colleges that are particularly strong in sport. The Sports College involves teachers in visiting local primary schools as well as giving primary school pupils the opportunity to experience its facilities. Dance and drama productions have been undertaken with primary schools. There are many links with local sports clubs such as Plymouth Argyle and Plymouth Raiders that help to extend the skills of the elite athletes within the school. Strong links with Cornwall County Youth Dance provide excellent opportunities for those studying dance. The school uses its links with local colleges to help its pupils decide on appropriate courses when they leave school. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 also have the opportunity to undertake part of their education at college, for example, some study engineering. Adult education classes are held at the school, organised by the local college.

39. The quality of pupils' reports is unsatisfactory. All subjects are reported, but for citizenship and personal and social education the report is simply a summary of the areas covered. Teachers' comments are not sufficiently specific to each subject, nor do they identify the progress that has been made. Targets are provided but these are too general to guide progress effectively or to inform parents how to help their child. Parents receive a wide range of appropriate information about the school's expectations and routines. The weekly newsletter celebrates achievements, particularly sporting ones, very well.

40. The school has recently opened a parents' room where parents can meet together or with staff. A weekly surgery, started this term, is attracting small numbers each week to discuss concerns and ask for information. The school is in the process of setting up a parents' forum so that it can seek the views of parents and take them into account when planning change. The school has consulted parents over changes, for example when planning changes to the uniform and timing of the school day. When attendance at consultation evenings dropped to an unacceptably low level the school consulted parents and as a result has established pupil review days instead. Attendance at these is good.

41. The school has a range of links with the community that enrich the experiences for pupils. For example, some pupils visit the police and fire stations to see at first hand what goes on there. Other pupils compete in a Rotary club speaking competition each year. Pupils raise funds for a range of charities, some of them local. Links with the St Austell Community Arts Association enhance pupils' experiences in art and design. The school has received an award as an Investor in Education Business Partnerships. Senior staff have undertaken work experience placements in a variety of local businesses. Business links with a graphic design company, a printing firm and an electronics company are used effectively to support pupils' work in design and technology. The school is currently involved in the Question Time competition run by British Telecom. The school benefits from a considerable amount of business sponsorship, for example to provide sports kit and to support prize days and open days.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **unsatisfactory**. Governance is **good** and much improved since the last inspection. The lack of procedures for the regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and the tracking of pupils progress are **serious weaknesses**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The reconstitution of the senior management team is a sound basis for school improvement.
- Governors know their school well.
- The Sports College is very well led and managed.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient focus and lack of rigour on raising attainment and improving attendance and behaviour.
- Heads of year and the co-ordinator for special educational needs do not have sufficient protected non-teaching time to fulfil their duties.
- The leadership of the headteacher is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

42. Although the headteacher has a clearly expressed vision for the school, fully shared by the senior management team, there are serious weaknesses in the management of key issues. The head teacher recognises the barriers to development that currently exist, for example funding levels and the difficulties of the site. Whilst the structures for performance management are in place, the school has not developed a culture of self-evaluation that allows for the regular and rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection is

unsatisfactory because some central issues such as improving marking and tracking pupils' progress have not been tackled effectively, attendance has fallen from average to very poor, behaviour which was good is now satisfactory and achievement in mathematics, science and ICT are now unsatisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is currently unsatisfactory; the focus upon raising achievement, improving attendance, attitudes and behaviour is not sufficiently relentless to drive the school forward.

43. The reconstitution of the senior management team in September 2003 has laid a sound foundation for school improvement. The senior management team is a cohesive group working to job descriptions that combine academic and pastoral responsibilities. All senior staff are hard working and display a strong commitment to, and an understanding of, their pupils. Line management of departments and pastoral teams is in place, although the procedures are not yet effective in ensuring that performance is consistently good.

44. Professional development has improved in recent years with many staff now involved in further professional studies. Satisfactory arrangements for induction are in place. Some aspects of the deployment of staff are unsatisfactory. Non-specialist teachers teach mathematics, with an adverse impact on standards, and the heads of year do not have their non-teaching time sufficiently protected to enable them to tackle attendance, attitude and behaviour issues with sufficient rigour.

45. Governance of the school is good. Governors take a close interest in the achievements of the school; the committee structure is well established and all meetings are fully and professionally minuted. In addition governors are linked to departments and governors make regular reports of visits to departments. These reports show that governors are offering the right combination of support and challenge, however not all departments are visited with the same frequency. Governors have taken effective action to address the unsatisfactory ICT provision in Years 7 to 9, which does not currently meet statutory requirements, and have also been proactive in tackling other problems when they arise.

46. The leadership and management provided by heads of department are satisfactory overall, varying from excellent to unsatisfactory. Most heads of department create effective and harmonious teams which share good practice. Subject leadership varies from very good in art and design and physical education to unsatisfactory in science and geography (where the postholder has also undertaken head of year responsibilities on a temporary basis).

47. Systems for regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning at departmental level are currently unsatisfactory. In several departments there is still unsatisfactory use of the information available on pupils' progress and the tracking and recording is insufficient to ensure that all pupils receive the challenge they need to move forward at the pace which is best for them.

48. The current school improvement plan has sought to focus attention on a small number of priorities. The Global Institute for Student Aspirations is a major part of the school's strategy to raise the self esteem and sense of belonging of all pupils. There is evidence that this is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes, although as yet it has not made any improvement to overall school attendance which remains very poor.

49. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Statutory duties with regard to pupils with statements are met and annual reviews conducted in accordance with requirements. The team of teaching assistants is as well deployed as it can be, but cuts in available hours due to budgetary considerations mean that some groups and individual pupils are not as well supported. Links between the various strands of provision, for example between the support for pupils in mainstream classes and that provided by Student Services, are not as fully developed as they might be, and the vision for the future is not yet fully established. This is because developmental work is difficult to achieve given the teaching load of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. Improvement in provision for pupils with special educational needs since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There is now greater clarity of

understanding of the role of the teaching assistant and better collaboration between teaching assistants and class teachers.

50. The Sports College is very well led and managed. The excellent vision and direction of the Sports College Director has now ensured successful re-designation on two occasions. A very good collaborative approach has been developed to overall leadership and management of physical education at the school, the school sport and community programme and out of hours learning. Robust development planning and progress reports are made to the Department for Education and Skills. The operational management of all facilities and activities is very good and there are very effective and sustained partnerships with key organisations and sponsors. The monitoring of all activities, training events, festivals and outreach work is of a consistently high quality. The Sports College has an effective management board. For the school, the major outcome is very good achievement in physical education and sport.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3 550 081	Balance from previous year	163 811
Total expenditure	3 455 786	Balance carried forward to the next	258 106*
Expenditure per pupil	3 260	<i>* includes £47,500 for building works and £73,700 for out of school Sports College activities.</i>	

51. Financial management is good but the school is this year having to take severe measures to deal with a sharp fall in income as a result in part of falling rolls. The overall provision of ICT equipment in the school falls well short of national expectations and the planning of ICT development and the use of the National Grid for Learning funds is unsatisfactory. Management of finance consumes a large amount of the head teacher's time and there is a need for such management to be more strategic and for the leadership focus to be more sharply upon raising pupils' achievement and improving attendance and behaviour.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in English by the end of Year 9.
- Standards at the end of Year 11 are below the national average and achievement is unsatisfactory, though showing signs of improvement
- Written work is often not full or extended enough.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils hinders the achievement of others.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in their work to achieve the highest grades.
- Leadership of the subject is good
- Performance data is not yet fully used to enable teachers to provide the best support for all pupils and marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality.

Commentary

52. In the national tests in English at the end of Year 9 in 2003, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was below the national average, but in line with it when measured against similar schools and the pupils' earlier achievement. These results were an improvement on those in 2002. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher than expected Level 6 was low and girls performed significantly better than boys, in line with the national trend. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 was average and showing rapid signs of improvement, attributable to good new programmes of work reflecting the national literacy strategy for this age group. Since these pupils had entered the school with a below average level of attainment, this represents good achievement. Results in English in the 2003 GCSE examination were below the national average, though in line with those of similar schools and were also an improvement on the previous year. Achievement, however, was unsatisfactory, since standards had not risen appreciably since the end of Year 9 for that particular group of pupils though rising steadily. English literature results were significantly below average, with a low percentage of the higher grades and girls attaining better than boys. However the school, in the last two years, has entered almost the whole year group for English literature. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are below the national average in English at the end of Year 11, but that they are rising, aided by some good teaching and much more teaching through the use of literature. It is apparent that results at GCSE are depressed by the high number of pupils with special needs, especially those of a behavioural nature, and by the high number of absentees who fail to complete the necessary work to enable them to obtain the grades of which they are capable.

53. Pupils' oral skills are not well developed. Even when they are willing to contribute in lessons and to answer teachers' questions, they often speak inaccurately and with little sense of audience or purpose. Listening skills are better developed in those pupils who are interested in their work. Reading skills are the strongest aspect of pupils' work in English. Pupils often read fluently, with technical competence, but they do not read with full comprehension, largely because of thin vocabulary and because they do not read widely. The standard of writing varies considerably. Higher attaining pupils generally write accurately, though spelling is not strong. They write willingly and relevantly. They do not, however, write sustained pieces of work sufficiently frequently and writing is too often limited to what is done in lessons. A substantial number of pupils, who are capable of more, write very little and do not use homework opportunities to sharpen their writing skills. Consequently,

they are unable to deal with writing in examination conditions and their written coursework is often incomplete, despite teachers' best efforts. This is particularly relevant in Years 10 and 11, where a larger number of pupils miss many lessons and do not do set homework. In Years 10 and 11, higher attaining pupils write well-planned, accurate and thoughtful pieces of coursework, on such topics as descriptions of 'City at Night', examination of the play 'The Crucible' and a comparison between two poems, 'Salome' and 'My Last Duchess'.

54. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching, and therefore learning, is more effective in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, largely because the high number of absences and the lack of interest and motivation by some pupils is greater in Years 10 and 11. There is some good and very good teaching throughout the school. Teachers' knowledge of their subject is good and most are now making imaginative and interesting use of the teaching of literature. Lessons are planned to include the national literacy strategy well, providing stimulating 'starter' activities and using a wide range of approaches and methods. Pupils know what they are expected to achieve in lessons and these targets are reviewed at the ends of lessons to assess their learning. Teachers use questioning skilfully to persuade as many pupils as possible into active participation in lessons. Teachers' great strength lies in their patience in encouraging pupils to try to achieve to their full potential and in the efforts they make to engage pupils with the work in hand. Behaviour management is often good, though, especially in Years 10 and 11, this can be very time-consuming. The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils hinders the achievement of others. Higher attaining pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, however, are not always offered a sufficiently high degree of challenge, particularly in Years 10 and 11, so that expectations of what they could achieve are lower than they might be. They are not always encouraged to work with independence and to research for themselves, preferring to depend on the information they are given by their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and those who do not speak English as a first language are adequately supported by their teachers, but there are not always sufficient learning support staff in lessons to ensure that they are fully engaged and learning as well as they might. Teachers' marking of written work is inconsistent in quality from teacher to teacher, so that much marking does not set targets for further improvement.

55. The new subject co-ordinator has a very clear vision of the ways in which the subject can move forward and has recently successfully co-ordinated the work of the faculty members in writing new programmes of work for Years 7 to 9. The curriculum is well developed and incorporates the national literacy strategy well. The subject contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development. She works with energy and commitment, providing a very good role model for other teachers by her subject knowledge and teaching methods. An almost entirely new team of teachers is moving the subject on well. Although the co-ordinator has little opportunity to monitor teaching with consistency, the priorities in her action plan for the subject are clear and relevant. Leadership is therefore good. The subject is satisfactorily managed, but performance data does not yet provide teachers with full knowledge of the potential and weaknesses of each pupil, in order to address these areas. Resources are satisfactory, but there is too little focused use made of ICT resources to aid the teaching of literacy as fully as possible.

56. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards and achievement have been raised by the end of Year 9, the performance of girls has been improved, all pupils in Years 10 and 11 now have the opportunity to take a GCSE in English Literature and there are good programmes of work now in place. Recently, intervention classes, Progress Units and the use of the literacy strategy have helped to improve standards. Teaching has also improved and the department now has the capacity to move forward at a more rapid rate.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Literacy skills remain below average by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11. Pupils enter the school with levels of literacy that are below average. Although standards in English are approaching average at the end of Year 9 and improving at the end of Year 11, the skills of literacy are not yet taught consistently throughout the school. There is a large number of pupils with special educational needs who do not find literacy skills easy to conquer. There are, as well, many pupils

who either refuse to use their skills through disengagement with their work or, through absence, miss much work. Since the proportion of these pupils rises in Years 10 and 11, standards and achievement remain below average, despite the fact that the majority of pupils work hard and are achieving well in literacy. Many pupils do not speak with confidence or with a sense of audience. They read too little, so that their reading is weak in deduction and inference. Much written work is thin and lacks extension.

58. The co-ordinator for whole school literacy is also the subject leader for English. This places an unfair burden on her, since her main focus is to raise standards in English and English Literature, which have many priorities of their own. The working party which has been formed for literacy has accomplished little as yet, apart from alerting other departments to the need for all teachers to be teachers of literacy as well as their own specialist subjects and the provision of Progress Units to link with all Year 7 work. Some subjects support literacy development well. For example, there is much attention paid to imaginative writing in history. Pupils write for different purposes, often in an extended manner. Modern foreign language teaching also promotes good literacy development, with its emphasis on structure and accuracy of tenses and grammar. There is often good emphasis on key words and specific vocabulary in such subjects as mathematics and design and technology. Pupils do not have full opportunity to present their ideas orally. At present, there is little use made of drama to promote oral skills or to help pupils in their understanding of literary texts through the use of drama. There is good practice evident in art and design, drama, design and technology and music, as well as in English. Audits are not yet made of all subjects' progress, though each department has now nominated a member designated to promote literacy skills. Teachers are beginning to be aware of the weaknesses in and advantages of literacy in their own subjects.

Modern foreign languages

French was the main focus for the inspection. German and Spanish were sampled. There is a small amount of German teaching, which is being phased out. Spanish has been recently established, and will replace German in the curriculum. In the **Spanish** lesson observed, teaching was good and led to good learning. In the **German** lesson observed, teaching was satisfactory, and led to satisfactory learning and achievement overall.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership is moving the faculty forward.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good.
- Pupils do not get sufficient guidance to help them improve their work.
- There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching.
- The use of ICT to support learning is insufficiently developed.

Commentary

59. Results in French at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below national averages. Girls performed better than boys. Standards of work seen during the inspection were also below average. Pupils can take part in simple structured conversations and understand short texts. They cannot write at length without support, and most can give short oral responses to what they see or hear. Achievement is satisfactory for those pupils who attend regularly, and pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as might be expected.

60. Results in French at the end of Year 11 in 2003 were above the national average. Boys performed better overall than girls, contrary to the national trend. Girls, however, obtained more higher level grades than boys. French performed relatively well in comparison with other subjects.

Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 were above average overall. Pupils can produce extended writing using complex sentences and can express opinions. Given average attainment on entry, this represents good achievement for those pupils who attend regularly. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are identified as gifted and talented achieve in line with expectations. These judgements have to be seen in the light of the small numbers of pupils who have chosen to study the subject in Year 10.

61. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. Stronger teaching, good knowledge of examination requirements and smaller groups of better motivated pupils in Years 10 and 11 ensure that achievement is good overall. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Relationships between pupils and teachers are generally good. In the good lessons, teachers present language energetically, and support it well with visual aids.. There are clear learning objectives that pupils understand, and learning is systematically reviewed. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, the subject matter does not engage pupils, and learning objectives are unclear. As a result they are easily distracted and lack motivation. More time is therefore spent managing behaviour than promoting learning. The significant numbers of pupils who arrive late to lessons often compounds this. This means that there are increased opportunities for disruptive behaviour and it is more difficult to settle classes. Pupils do not always know what criteria teachers use to mark their work. Consequently, they do not always know what levels they are working at and how to improve to the next level.

62. The leadership provided by the head of faculty is good. She is a good practitioner who has a clear vision for the subject, and is focused on raising standards and pupil motivation, for example by implementing the National Strategy and Framework for modern foreign languages. The management of the faculty is satisfactory. There are some systems in place for monitoring teaching and learning, but they are not fully developed. The use of assessment information for planning is also at an early stage of development. The faculty's accommodation provides a good environment for learning. Pupils use ICT occasionally for basic purposes such as word processing, but there are insufficient opportunities available to them to undertake research via the Internet, or to produce presentations using software packages such as PowerPoint.

63. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved because the amount of unsatisfactory teaching is reduced. The issue of assessment, however, is still not fully resolved.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teamwork within the department
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, but rarely inspires pupils
- There have been improvements recently in monitoring data and the work of teachers.
- Standards fell in 2003 in both Year 9 and Year 11.
- Pupils' poor attendance, combined with their negative attitude to learning, restricts achievement.

Commentary

64. On entry to the school, pupils' overall standards in mathematics are below average. Results in the national tests in Year 9 in both 2002 and 2003 were also below average. In 2003, girls performed much better than boys. Results are broadly in line with those in English and science. Compared with the results of pupils in schools with similar standards at the beginning of Year 7, standards are average. Pupils' achievement during Years 7 to 9 is therefore satisfactory. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades was well below average, and much lower than in 2002. However, a high proportion of the year group was entered for

the examination, and most gained at least a grade G. Boys performed better than girls, even though the girls had better results when in Year 9. Pupils' performance in mathematics was below that in most of their other subjects.

65. In work seen during the inspection, overall standards were below average in all year groups. In Years 10 and 11, it was well below average in a significant number of lessons. Pupils' standards are adversely affected by the low level of attendance, which affects progression, and by their lack of pride in their work. This unsatisfactory attitude to learning often results in an unsatisfactory working atmosphere in lessons. There is regular practice with number, particularly in short exercises at the beginning of lessons. However, pupils' confidence in their ability to manipulate number is often below average, and there is a lack of enjoyment in these exercises. In a Year 9 lesson about using algebraic formulae, too many pupils showed a lack of pride in their work; the accuracy of their answers suffered as a result. However, overall achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. It is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11, due to increased absence, and poorer concentration in class. Pupils in an average ability Year 11 class, for instance, found difficulty in explaining the meaning of surface area. Pupils with special educational needs are well known by their teachers, but their numeracy targets are not clearly specified. Their achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 when their attendance is less regular, and when they do not work as hard to overcome their difficulties.

66. Teaching is satisfactory overall. While learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, it is unsatisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11 because pupils' attendance is poorer, and this results in a lack of progression in their work. This causes difficulty in understanding the work, and teachers' management skills are not sufficiently high to overcome their resulting apathy. A small proportion of lessons is unsatisfactory, and there is little teaching of a very high standard. Very little use is made of equipment to add interest to lessons, to make understanding easier, and to make learning more enjoyable. Teachers are positive about using computers to extend opportunities for learning, and lessons are occasionally transferred to a computer suite. Teachers are rarely able to relax and enjoy their subject because a significant number of pupils have little motivation to learn, and require constant supervision if they are to remain on-task. Moreover, teachers' expectation of how hard pupils should work is not always high enough. Planning of the content of lessons is thorough, but strategies for learning lack variety, and too few lessons have extension work available for higher attaining pupils in the group. There is normally a good balance in lessons between teacher input and pupil activity. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent; teachers do not provide enough information about how to improve, and marking is often irregular. Many pupils develop casual habits of presentation as a result. The introduction of personal targets for pupils is beginning to have some impact, but this is not yet common practice across the department. The small size of rooms often restricts teachers' ability to circulate and provide support for pupils.

67. Curriculum leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There is good teamwork, and the scheme of work provides appropriate guidance for lesson plans. The monitoring of data is increasing, and beginning to result in strategies to improve standards. However, there is insufficient monitoring of these strategies, and the work of teachers, in order to ensure that plans are put into practice. This results in inconsistency across the subject, for example, in marking and in the use of equipment, including computers. There are still a number of non-specialists in the department. They are conscientious, and training has been provided to improve their knowledge and understanding, but there are still areas of weakness in their mathematical expertise.

68. Overall, there has been unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection. A number of initiatives have recently been introduced, but these have not yet produced the expected results. Standards in mathematics have fallen across the school, particularly in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades. One reason is that pupils' attitudes to work are now less positive, and more consistency across the subject is required to overcome this lack of motivation. Whereas in the last inspection it was the norm for pupils to 'work extensively', and 'to show their working', their concentration is now often unsatisfactory, and their presentation too often lacks pride and clarity. Consistently good teaching is required to overcome these traits.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. There is a policy for the development of numeracy skills across the school. This has raised teachers' awareness of the importance of all subjects contributing to pupils' ability to manipulate number. As a result, a number of departments have written their own policies. These policies increase opportunities for pupils to use their number skills consistently across the curriculum. A number of departments have yet to develop policies. Overall, support is satisfactory.

70. Pupils' standards, and their confidence in the use of number, are below average. Pupils often find difficulty in undertaking calculations because their number bonds are weak. There is also a lack of accuracy when using calculators. Pupils do not use common sense or mathematical logic when considering whether their answers are correct.

71. There is regular use of mathematics in a number of subjects. In science, for example, some teachers include numeracy targets in their lesson plans, but practice is inconsistent. There is increasing use of formulae as pupils move up the school, for example to calculate average speed, and regular use of graphs to analyse data. There are clear policies in both art and design and physical education, with good use of problem solving, for instance in using graphs to monitor the peak performance of athletes. There is also good support for numeracy development in design technology, presenting data in different formats, and when using computers to create the nets of 3D objects. These examples of good practice are not generally replicated across the curriculum, partly because there is insufficient monitoring to identify areas of good practice, and those in need of improvement.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 9 have dropped considerably over the last three years.
- Standards at the end of Year 11 are too low.
- Pupils do less well in Science at the end of Year 11 than they do in their other subjects.
- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Insufficient time is given to practical and investigative work
- The national strategy and the use of ICT by teachers are beginning to help improve teaching and learning.
- Good teaching assistants and good technical staff provide effective support to teachers and pupils.
- The teachers are not working together as a coherent team.

Commentary

72. Standards in science at the end of Year 9 are below the national average. Results have dropped considerably over the last few years compared with an improvement in standards nationally over the same period. Pupils are making slower progress than those in similar schools. In Year 9 pupils show a sound knowledge of both useful and harmful drugs but their lack of understanding of life processes means that they are unable to fully appreciate the effect of drugs on the body.

73. Results achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 have fallen since 2002 and are well below the national average. On average pupils' grades in science are more than half a grade below their results in other subjects. Only the most able pupils in Year 10 and 11 are working at levels in line with national averages. They understand how atoms are held together with bonds, cycles in nature and how the earth has changed over time. Most pupils have a more limited understanding of scientific concepts and have difficulty in recalling and explaining recent work.

74. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall. In lessons pupils usually make satisfactory progress but the evidence obtained from looking at pupils' work and by questioning them about their understanding shows achievement over time to be unsatisfactory for most pupils. The exception is for the most able pupils whose achievement is satisfactory.

75. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in nearly half of lessons but in nearly one in six it is unsatisfactory. Teaching is better in Years 7, 8 and 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons but many have difficulty in retaining knowledge and making links to previous work that adversely affects their achievement. In most lessons teachers are using a good range of approaches which help pupils learn but in nearly one in three lessons learning relies too much on pupils listening to the teacher for long periods of time. The ideas promoted by the national strategy such as the use of games and card sorting activities enable all pupils to participate, are helping improve achievement, and ensuring that the standard of work is now average in all years. Teachers are aware of pupils with special educational needs. Where teaching assistants are present they provide very good support to the pupils they are working with and those pupils make good progress. The setting of homework to reinforce and extend learning is not consistent. Teaching is unsatisfactory when lesson planning lacks detail, uses low level activities which reflects the low expectations of the teacher, uses poorly presented worksheets and marking is irregular and superficial.

76. Some teachers are using ICT effectively in their teaching by projecting good quality slides and photographs which captures pupils' attention and help them to see the relevance of the science they are doing. Computer animations, such as one modelling what happens to particles as a liquid is heated, are used well to help pupils understand difficult science concepts. Pupils' own use of ICT is more limited. Some Year 11 pupils use the internet revision sites, others have used spreadsheets to record results but many pupils have too few opportunities to use computers and related measurement equipment themselves.

77. Pupils value and enjoy practical work. This helps pupils develop skills of using equipment, recording and interpreting results as well as helping them improve their scientific understanding. However there is insufficient time given to practical and investigative work. The good technical support ensures teachers have well prepared resources and equipment and makes a positive contribution to teaching and learning. Teachers explain and enforce safe working practices.

78. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is well structured and enthusiastic pupil attitudes are good. However in 1 in 5 lessons some pupils show very casual attitudes, are difficult to motivate and the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils disrupts the learning of others and makes it difficult for teachers to teach. Pupils' presentation of work is unsatisfactory. Too many pupils do not take sufficient care with their written work, do not use pencils and rulers when they should and do not take pride in their work.

79. The department is not functioning as a coherent team. Roles and responsibilities are unclear. Leadership is therefore unsatisfactory. The day-to-day organisation is satisfactory. Recent changes such as the reorganisation of groups in Year 11, the introduction of the national strategy and the use of new resources are satisfactorily managed. The new assessment policy aims to involve pupils more in their own assessment. This policy has not been implemented consistently throughout the department and is yet to show sufficient impact on improving standards. Teachers are well supported by the very experienced technicians.

80. Accommodation is very old but generally well maintained. Some laboratories are kept well and provide a good working environment, others are cluttered and untidy.

81. Standards in science have declined since the last inspection and pupils are not achieving as well as they did in 1999. The quality of teaching and learning is similar. Issues raised in 1999 to improving learning and marking have not been successfully tackled. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new head of department is providing enthusiastic leadership.
- Governors have now put in place plans to tackle the curriculum shortcomings in Years 7 to 9.
- The school does not have sufficient computers and other ICT resources to teach the National Curriculum or devote sufficient teaching time in Years 7 to 9.
- The unsatisfactory management arrangements in Years 7 to 9 are failing to effectively co-ordinate the teaching of the ICT across the curriculum. The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11.
- There are unacceptably high levels of pupil absence in some groups.

Commentary

82. Standards seen during the inspection are below average. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment. Nevertheless achievement is unsatisfactory because there is inadequate access to ICT resources, insufficient teaching time, and unsatisfactory management arrangements to ensure the effective teaching of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Decisive action is being taken to raise standards in the ICT examination courses at GCSE. Here although standards are below average, achievement is good as a result of good teaching by a well-led team. There are unacceptably high levels of pupil absence in some lower attaining groups in Years 10 and 11.

83. The evidence upon which the statutory teacher assessments at age 14 are based is not robust. This is because key competencies have not been adequately covered in lessons or assessed by teachers.

84. GCSE results for summer 2003 are well below average. Pupils with a wide range of ability, motivation and aspiration have elected to take ICT courses. Leadership has taken decisive action to put in place accredited courses in Years 10 and 11, more carefully matched to the learning needs of pupils, so that standards are raised.

85. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. The lack of access to high quality dedicated ICT teaching and resources in Years 7 to 9 make for unsatisfactory achievement and below average attainment. For example, pupils have little knowledge, skills and understanding in the use of data bases. They have only a rudimentary understanding of the use of spreadsheets and because they have so little practice they easily forget how to use basic features.

86. In some lessons in Years 7 to 9 pupils progress well when teachers have good specialist knowledge and are able to design tasks that address the learning needs of pupils. For instance, in a design and technology lesson the teacher carefully demonstrated the applications software so that pupils quickly built their own templates ready for a computer aided manufacturing exercise. The lesson was carefully structured to ensure that pupils' designs led to effectively manufactured products within the time available.

87. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching and learning is good. This is because teaching and learning are carefully matched to the needs of the wide range of pupils taking the courses. Teachers use their specialist knowledge to tease out the requirements of the examination syllabi. There is also good use of interactive whiteboards to demonstrate routines and the key features of applications software to capture the attention of pupils. This is followed by individual teacher support, carefully tailored to each pupil's learning needs. With those pupils with modest prior attainments good teaching is characterised by tasks that begin simply but incorporate increasing degrees of challenge. There is little in the way of inspirational teaching that challenges pupils to their limits and injects high

pace and sense of purpose to keep all pupils on their toes and working hard. Pupils with special educational needs received good support in a Year 11 group because the teacher dealt sympathetically with their requests for help. Time was spent reframing questions and prompts to enable pupils to enter formulas effectively into a spreadsheet and make some basic manipulation of data. In a Year 8 ICT focused mathematics lesson two teaching assistants had been briefed by the teacher prior to the lesson and so this enabled them to more effectively support pupils. Although standards are well below average, the good teaching and learning is leading to good achievement.

88. Target setting for pupils is beginning to be established in the department. Pupils do not yet get the type of precise feedback that will enable them to take control and responsibility for their own learning. Submission of ICT assignments by email is beginning and these are marked and returned electronically. Pupils find the school email system annoying to use because of the need to enter and re-enter passwords at each stage of composing and sending email.

89. The leadership of the recently appointed head of department is satisfactory. Decisive action has already been taken in some areas. There is growing confidence amongst the ICT team that the new leadership has the capacity to make effective and sustainable changes. There are some bold ideas and written plans to develop ICT resources to the national benchmarks, introduce a framework of ICT lessons to ensure that the National Curriculum is fully taught, and introduce a strategy to raise standards. There is a will to improve. There is a clear focus upon developing the network manager's role and putting in place a team made up of curriculum and technical staff to develop an overall strategy.

90. Management is unsatisfactory though because the National Curriculum is ineffectively co-ordinated, delivered and assessed. Governors have put appropriate actions into place to remedy this situation, especially in Years 7 to 9. Access to ICT resources across departments is unsatisfactory. The school does not have sufficient computers for the number of pupils in the school. Some departments currently responsible for the delivery of aspects of the National Curriculum are not doing it and are unclear about precisely what is being asked of them. Improvements required since the last inspection have not been tackled; this is unsatisfactory. These are issues that pre-date the new head of department. There is a will and focus to put these matters right.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. The use of ICT in subjects in the curriculum is unsatisfactory. This is because departments have insufficient access to high quality computer resources to enable them to provide for pupils the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding. The ratio of pupils to computers is 9:1, which is very poor in comparison with national benchmarks. The school recognises this and plans are being developed to bring resources up to the required standard. Despite this there is some very good practice in physical education where digital cameras are used to record performance, analyse movement and act as an evaluative tool. There is a similar picture in art and design. There is good practice in mathematics, the use of formulas in spreadsheets to manipulate numbers and graph wizards to show different ways of presenting numerical data to different effects. In design and technology pupils use both computer aided design and computer aided manufacture effectively. However, overall the picture for both the core and foundation subjects is one of access to meagre, often outdated resources, which reflects a lack of an effective strategy to invest over a period of years in hardware and software that is of industry standard and fit for purpose. The programme of investment in staff skills through the New Opportunities Funding has also been largely ineffective. The new head of department has worked vigorously to identify the shortfalls and also to provide staff with support both inside and outside the classroom. A new network manager has been appointed who is committed to raising levels of service to all staff.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because of the good teaching they receive.
- Imaginative display work enhances teaching and celebrates pupils' work.
- Results of assessment are inadequately used to track pupils' progress and plan teaching.
- Departmental development plans and schemes of work are unsatisfactory

Commentary

92. Pupils enter the school displaying widely ranging levels of skill in geography. The standard on entry has been close to the national average in recent years although standards in the current Year 7 are well below average. At the end of Year 9, results of teachers' assessments are close to average. In Year 11 in 2003, results are above the national average. In Year 11 pupils perform as well in geography as they do in other subjects that they take and there is little difference in the performance of boys and girls.

93. Achievement in geography is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils who enter the school with levels of attainment at or just below the national average are attaining at the national average by the end of Year 9. Standards of work are above average at the end of Year 11. Many of the pupils who choose to take geography as a GCSE subject respond well to the individual teaching that is given, especially in the completion of course work assignments.

94. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good in Years 10 and 11, with no unsatisfactory teaching being observed during the inspection. In those lessons in which teaching is good, teachers' expectations are high, the pace of work is brisk and activities engage pupils in their own learning and encourage them to work both independently and collaboratively. Close monitoring of learning and the setting of appropriate goals for individuals ensures good progress and the management of teaching assistants; especially in meeting the needs of pupils with emotional or physical difficulties is good. Pupils make slower progress in lessons that are teacher-dominated, involve less active and less demanding tasks and in which the expectations of how much should be done are lower. Imaginative display work enhances teaching by maximising the visual and topical nature of geographical studies and it also celebrates pupils' work providing examples of good achievement across the age and ability range.

95. Marking and assessment are inconsistent. In some marking, teachers provide helpful comments, praise and encouragement and set short term targets for improvement. However, not all pupils understand the marking codes and the use of assessment information to track progress and to inform lesson planning is unsatisfactory overall. Grading of work in relation to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades is good. Pupils' skills in literacy are developed through well-managed discussions and by reading activities although not all teachers demand high quality written work. The use and development of skills in numeracy in geography is satisfactory. There are good examples of the use of ICT in pupils' work.

96. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. The newly appointed head of department is also carrying a significant extra managerial responsibility as head of Year 9 on a temporary basis. The combined demands of these two responsibilities have had the effect of limiting the amount of time given to the management of the geography department. and there have been considerable staff changes and absence in recent months. The schemes of work are not sufficiently detailed or complete although they are adapted to meet the range of pupils' needs. There are no priorities for development identified in a departmental plan. Target setting in Years 7 to 9 is

weak. A good range of field work opportunities that are local and accessible to all are provided and teachers make valuable contributions to the teaching of citizenship. The specialist teaching rooms with adjacent storage space are very good but a significant proportion of teaching takes place in non specialist rooms which has a limiting effect on the use of resources. The department is adequately resourced.

97. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall with improving standards of work at GCSE.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The knowledge and understanding of teachers enable them to provide very good guidance for pupils.
- Good use of group work enables pupils to learn from each other.
- Tasks encourage pupils to use their imagination and empathise with the people they study.
- There is insufficient effective monitoring of teaching to ensure consistent quality..
- The overall standard in GCSE is lower than it could be, because some pupils do not take responsibility for ensuring their written work is completed to a high enough standard.
- The department's development plan does not specify the steps needed for improvement or identify when they should be effective.

Commentary

98. Results in the GCSE examination in 2003 are average. All pupils achieved at least a pass grade. Boys achieved significantly better than the girls in that year when girls' results were well below average and they underachieved.

99. Standards in Year 9 are average. A significant number of pupils achieve above average standards in their oral work when they develop their responses through the prompting of the teachers. Pupils are encouraged to analyse the information they gain and to develop an understanding of the 'wider picture'. A good example is the work that seeks to explain the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland and present an overview of the causes and features. The analytical skills of many pupils are limited and often stereotypical; however, with good supplementary questioning, pupils consider alternative viewpoints. The use of an interview style of writing is enabling pupils to develop understanding of the viewpoints of historical characters, such as Queen Victoria.. Pupils are developing a sound knowledge of the development of democracy in Britain and recognise how it has developed over time. Achievement is only satisfactory, although teaching is good, because it is affected by the high rate of absence and the unfinished work in books.

100. Standards in Year 11 are average, and achievement is satisfactory. Progress in lessons is good because of the high expectations of the teacher who increase pupils' ability to analyse through the use of supplementary questions. This enables the pupils to develop their thinking further. The use of diagrams and 'mind maps' is enabling pupils to develop their understanding of the causes of events and the links that may be made between them. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good level of understanding of historical events. Pupils are encouraged to consider different viewpoints and to present them in a balanced written form. A formal debate that compared the League of Nations to the United Nations, encouraged them to compare and contrast before arriving at a reasoned judgement. Effective use of evidence to support their judgements is developing amongst higher attaining pupils. They use sources confidently to select and extract information. They recognise the use of propaganda and the methods used to influence people, and through it they identify the opinions of the day. Higher attaining pupils recognise that even biased and inaccurate sources have a value to an historian. Pupils' oral work is better than their written work and the overall

standard of this is lower than it could be because some pupils do not take responsibility for ensuring their written work is completed to a high enough standard.

101. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject and this enables them to respond to pupils' questions clearly, incorporating clear explanations. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives that enable pupils to identify key points. Tasks are designed to ensure pupils think about the information they receive, and group work enables pupils to collaborate and learn from each other. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and their good questioning challenges pupils to analyse what they learn.. Pupils are encouraged to use their imagination and to empathise with the people they study. They achieve well in lessons and with the support of directed questioning their oral work displays secure understanding. Written work has weaknesses, however, and pupils' notes in books do not always support revision or review. Teachers do not ensure that missing and unfinished work is completed.

102. The leadership of the department is good and management is satisfactory. The faculty system is enabling teachers to develop common practices and this supports pupils' confidence and expectations. Since the last inspection more ICT tasks have been introduced and the department is playing a significant role in the development of the pupils' understanding of citizenship. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have good opportunities for first hand investigation, and to develop an appreciation of their local history. The department is widely spread about the school. As a result there is insufficient monitoring of teaching or direct support for non-specialists to ensure key skills of history are developed. The department reviews its work, but the development plans do not incorporate the steps needed for improvement or identify when they should be effective. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are encouraged to consider a variety of viewpoints about contemporary moral issues.
- Teachers treat the responses of their pupils with respect and this encourages them to participate.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they learn.
- Pupils collaborate effectively and this is helping them to achieve well in class.
- Teachers accept standards of written work that are too low.
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistent quality.

Commentary

103. Results in the 2003 short course GCSE examination are well below average. Girls achieved better standards than the boys, whose results were poor. Results in the 2002 examination were much higher.

104. Standards in Year 9 are average overall. While achievement is satisfactory overall, it is significantly affected by the poor attendance of some pupils, and by the amount of work that is left incomplete. Most pupils recognise the main Christian teachings about how life should be lived and can explain how these can be demonstrated in the parables. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of the Sermon on the Mount as a source of Christian teaching and can give simple explanations of why people hold different views about its teaching. There is no evidence that pupils understand Christian teaching on redemption or its links with religious ritual. Pupils achieve well when they work independently in small groups to investigate a particular aspect that they then present to the class A display celebrating the Bible demonstrates a good understanding of its history and composition. Pupils are developing their understanding of the origins and the key features of Buddhist worship. Whilst there is some evidence of recognition of the practices of Buddhism, pupils' understanding of its beliefs and philosophy and its appeal today is weak.

105. Standards in Year 11 are below average. Pupils consider contemporary moral issues from a secular and religious viewpoint and identify the Christian and Islamic teaching about them. They can identify a variety of views and higher attaining pupils consider their relative merits and reflect on them before giving their own opinion. A well-planned essay demonstrated some understanding of the reasoning behind arranged marriage, and incorporated a personal response to this custom. Lower attaining pupils identify religious teachings, but do not take them into consideration when giving their own opinion. They recognise the value of family life and the importance placed upon it by the religions studied. In a Year 11 class, pupils clearly demonstrated an understanding of prejudice and they identified examples of discrimination. Higher attaining pupils could identify the reasons for prejudice and the religious teaching that opposed it. Many pupils who achieve a high level of oral response in class however, do not make the effort to record their work effectively in their books, reducing the quality of work available for review and revision. Achievement is therefore unsatisfactory.

106. Pupils demonstrate respect for the views of others and are willing to listen to the opinions of their peers. They collaborate well and this is helping them to achieve in class. Pupils achieve higher standards in their oral work when supported by good questioning by teachers than in their written work. Careless writing and low levels of literacy affect some pupils' written work. This results in responses that are brief or unfinished and so achievement is unsatisfactory. Although most pupils work well in lessons, they do not have a complete record of the course so learning is fragmented. There is little use of differentiation to support pupils with weak literacy skills who cannot complete work in time.

107. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good in Years 7 to 9. The best lessons start promptly and teachers encourage pace and punctuality through the use of opening tasks that review the previous work and make the links with the current lesson. Teachers set out clearly the aims of the lesson and this enables the pupils to focus on the key points. They treat the responses of pupils with respect and this encourages pupils to develop the confidence to contribute. In lessons where teaching is very good, teachers use a variety of methods that encourage pupils to work together and to take responsibility for their learning. Through research they have the opportunity to explore the topics, and in sharing their findings, they increase their understanding. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are well supported in their research of the key features of the religions studied, for example by their visit to the local church. Pupils' group presentations develop their confidence and team working skills. Where lessons are less successful, particularly in Years 10 and 11, tasks lack challenge and teachers accept responses that demonstrate little thought and reflection. Pupils collect information from text and apply it to questions with little need for thought or analysis. The achievement of pupils is reduced because teachers accept inadequate written work, and do not demand higher standards. Opportunities to investigate the religious beliefs are limited and non-specialist teachers in particular teach the content of the lessons, but fail to identify the philosophies involved. Marking does not inform pupils of their attainment or how to improve.

108. The leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory. All pupils in Year 11 now have the opportunity to receive accreditation for the work they do and the department now has a positive role within the school. There is more emphasis on reflection and the pupils appreciate the opportunities for meditation the department has introduced. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Teachers are good role models for their pupils and their manner with the pupils encourages good social skills. The monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is unsatisfactory, however, and there is insufficient time for leaders to develop the team's skills. There are clear policies in the handbook, however monitoring does not ensure that these policies are delivered. The department reviews its progress and suggests ways forward, but there is no clear development plan to ensure that these suggestions are put into action and are later evaluated.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well, gaining GCSE results that are above expectations.
- Good teaching overall ensures pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 need to be set clearer targets so that they are better aware of how they can improve their work.
- Pupils need better access to computers so that they are used as a matter of routine when designing and making.

Commentary

109. GCSE results in 2003 were a little above average. Girls did better than boys, the gap being similar to that seen nationally. When compared with the other subjects they do, all pupils do better in design and technology and boys particularly so. Overall pupils do better than their prior attainment would suggest, indicating good levels of achievement.

110. Entering the school at well below the nationally expected level in design and technology, pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 9 teachers assess standards to be below nationally expected levels. In the work seen of those approaching the end of Year 9, standards are much nearer national expectations. Pupils of all abilities in Years 7 to 9 achieve well because teaching and learning are good. The teaching of skills and processes is a strength, resulting in pupils developing a good understanding of how to use tools and the working characteristics of materials. Standards of designing have improved and are now satisfactory, aided by an approach which helps pupils meet requirements more quickly, and a format which helps them present their ideas well. There are good systems in place to assess the work of pupils in Years 7 to 9 but their impact is satisfactory because there is too much variation in their application. Particularly in the setting of targets for improvement and the way these targets can be used to improve future work. Assessment is satisfactory.

111. In the work seen of those approaching the end of Year 11 standards are a little above average and are similar to recent GCSE results. Estimated grades for these pupils indicate that attainment will be above expectations representing good achievement. This is because teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a very good understanding of the requirements of the design and technology examinations. As a result, folders are of a good standard with the most able producing work showing good skills of design, ideas development, review and evaluation. Pupils enjoy making things and lower attaining pupils, though less good at designing, achieve well as a result. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils particularly in relation to the quality of finished products. Pupils are well informed about how well they are doing. Teachers are good at providing plenty of verbal feedback as work progresses and the assessment of GCSE work is well structured ensuring pupils have every opportunity to meet the assessment criteria of the examination.

112. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Day to day procedures are well managed ensuring that the department has effective systems of review and evaluation. The introduction of a product design course, which encourages diversity of outcome, is a good example of effective management ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of pupils. Leadership shows a clear vision for the future, particularly in relation to the use of modern technology and its application. However the fewer than average numbers of computers available means that these are not used enough as a matter of routine.

113. Since the last inspection improvements have been good. GCSE results have improved particularly the amount of added value the department provides. In contrast to the last inspection the department is now fully staffed by specialists. Assessment, which at the last inspection was embryonic, is now good, and the accuracy of the assessment of standards in Years 7 to 9 has improved. Standards of designing, which was a weakness, have improved.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Drama was lightly sampled. Three lessons were observed. Results in the GCSE in 2003 were above the national average. In lessons seen and in written work sampled, the standard of work in the current Year 11 is at least in line with that found nationally, although there is a wide variation in standards between pupils. Most impressive was the attitude of pupils towards their work, whether practical or written. Pupils in Year 11 worked in silence and with great effort in order to finalise their presentations for GCSE from its original draft form, in examination conditions. They are very ready to discuss their work and show great interest in all the theatrical experiences to which they are exposed. Pupils in Year 11, for example, worked very effectively when developing their work for the practical performance module of the GCSE examination, based on their piece of devised theatre on 'A Ballad of Charlotte Dymond' and 'Maria Marten'. All the work seen of the GCSE course was committed and enthusiastic. In Years 7 to 9, standards are below average, since most pupils enter the school with little or no experience in the subject. By the time they reach Year 9, however, they are able to recognise some dramatic styles and genres, improvise on character with some success and speak with confidence and a sense of audience. Oral skills are poor in general, but improve as pupils move through the school. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed is good. The teacher provides a very good role model for the pupils and her knowledge of the subject is very good. Although large classes in the lower years are often difficult to manage, pupils enjoy the lessons, work willingly with the teacher and enter into the spirit of the lessons, even when proving over-boisterous. Management appears effortless in Years 10 and 11, where the subject is an option for GCSE. Leadership in drama is extremely good in its imaginative methods, its stimulating programmes of study and the opportunities for confidence and self-esteem offered to the pupils. Productions and participation in events in and out of school involve many pupils. The co-ordinator for drama shows excellent commitment to the planning and delivery of the subject and is rewarded by pupils' effort and interest. There is much good education for citizenship and moral and social development built into the programmes of study. Pupils of all abilities find the lessons accessible and involving. Good cross-curricular links are also forged with other subjects, such as English and history. **Media studies** was sampled. It was only possible to see one Year 11 lesson, in which teaching was very good, pupils were engaged and enthusiastic, and, as a result, learning was very good. Pupils were preparing for the pre-release module of their examination, looking at different styles of reporting on radio programmes for different audiences. Very good emphasis was placed on informed personal response and the lesson was enlivened by the very high level of competence of the teacher and by her presentation of the topic.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and above average in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of assessment is good and used well to plan learning activities.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Further development of the use of ICT is needed.
- The range of GCSE art and design courses could be extended further.

Commentary

114. Standards achieved by the end of Year 9 are above average with the majority of pupils working at level 5 and some beyond. Achievement is very good with many pupils making significant progress throughout the lessons and across Years 7 to 9.

115. Standards at Years 10 and 11 are consistently well above average with GCSE art and design results well above the national average for grades A* -C for the last two years. Achievement is very good. Further use of critical writing with more advanced art vocabulary is now needed.

116. Teaching and learning of all pupils at Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 are very good. Pupils with special needs make good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and the quality and use of assessment is very good. Planning, teaching methods and use of resources are all very good. This in turn enables pupils to learn, acquiring new skills and techniques sequentially, and a thorough knowledge and understanding of art and design, craft and design. Pupils are aware of how they are doing and successfully apply intellectual and creative effort to class work and homework.

117. Pupils arrive with a varied level of previous art and design experiences and make very good progress through the school quickly learning the essential elements of line, tone, colour and pattern using a good range of media. Pupils achieve high standards of drawing, painting, graphics, printing, and sculpture, understanding contextual studies, and learning about different artists and art of other cultures. Displays and portfolios demonstrate high standards of portraiture, figure work, landscape, textiles work and photographic records of ceramics and sculpture.

118. The curriculum is structured very well building on nationally available schemes of work with the use of local galleries and the Tate to explore and utilise the work of professional artists. Pupils in Year 7 are able to abstract landscapes recreating linear drawings and understand perspective and aerial views, they mix colour well to devise earth tones and represent nature relating this to aboriginal art. Sketchbooks reveal the process of research and realisation is well practised throughout Years 7 to 11, although written annotations are minimal and their range of vocabulary and spelling is varied. Many pupils are able to research artists using the Internet and library resources and the majority are able to download images from gallery sites. Further development of ICT in art and design is needed, for example the use of scanners and software to manipulate original artwork

119. In Year 8 pupils are fully engaged in devising cartoon strips and animation, creating exciting three-dimensional characters from original drawings building on research from comics, games and film. In Year 9 pupils successfully explore Egyptian history and ritual in developing cartouches and use of hieroglyphics. Sketchbooks show a high standard of experimentation with materials and mixed media using sand, string and recycled cards and papers.

120. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Relationships in the classroom are good and there is a respect for all artwork. Most pupils listen well in lessons but opportunities to lead evaluation are limited. The teachers are very well respected and foster a spirit of inclusion.

121. The Applied Art in Years 10 and 11 offers opportunities to devise site-specific installations or murals and challenges pupils' marketing and entrepreneurial skills well. Pupils taking the double award are able to speak confidently about the work of Hockney, Seurat, Picasso, Lichtenstein and Cockrill using examples to contextualise their own work.

122. Leadership and management of the art and design department are very good; effective documentation is in place and regularly reviewed, targets and procedures are robust. There is good use of resources and adherence to best value principles. There are positive links to community education and with primary schools through the work of the Advanced Skills Teacher. There is no technician for art and design and this is impacting on the time available for art clubs and preparatory work. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently appointed head of department is giving good leadership.
- Appropriate development plans are in place to provide an interesting and practical curriculum for all pupils.
- Current and previous work by GCSE pupils is of a good standard.
- Teachers are currently relatively inexperienced in working with challenging secondary pupils whose behaviour is hindering learning.
- Departmental resources are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

123. The standard of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 is average overall but in the lowest ability sets, many pupils are working at much lower levels. Teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 in 2003 reflect inflation of gradings by previous staff; 82 per cent attaining level 5 compared with the national average of 67 per cent. Assessments of standards by current teachers are accurate. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 with some areas of good achievement. However, unsatisfactory behaviour is restricting achievement in some lessons.

124. 2003 GCSE results of 73 per cent A*-C are above average and compare favourably with the national average of 68 per cent. Attainment in Year 11 is above average overall in performance and composition work. Pupils have good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. Achievement is good.

125. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some examples of good practice with Year 11 and the upper groups in Years 8 and 9. The best teaching is well structured, motivational and supports good learning, for example when pupils are involved in improvisation and ensemble performance. Lesson content is practical and provides activities to engage all pupils, such as vocal and rhythmic clapping activities, at appropriate levels of difficulty, accommodating pupils with special needs appropriately. Talented pupils perform successfully at more challenging levels on their instruments individually or in an ensemble, particularly in Year 11. Teaching by motivational visiting instrumental staff enables good levels of learning in western and world music activities. The quality of pupils' learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall. Talented pupils in Year 11 are more committed to the subject and have instrumental lessons; consequently their learning is of a good standard..

126. Poor pupil behaviour, which could sometimes be reduced by more classroom resources, limits learning. The teachers are relatively inexperienced in working with such pupils. The best learning reflects pupils' very positive attitudes to their work, good relationships with teachers and an enthusiastic enjoyment of their work.

127. The head of department has made an impressive start this year in setting out a viable action plan together with thorough and appropriate curriculum planning. A determination to engage pupils in various forms of practical activities of a high standard in the school and community reflects good leadership. Management of the department is satisfactory overall with some good features. There is productive liaison with the line manager and the member of staff in charge of special needs but the head of department needs help via training in risk assessment and data analysis.

128. The department benefits from being part of an Arts Mark Gold Faculty. However, significant financial investment in ICT resources is essential to enable development and the raising of standards across the subject. Changes in the pupil groupings to create more mixed ability groups and further staff to support pupils in their practical work would significantly help to achieve this task.

129. Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 is satisfactory. However, the department is still under resourced in many important curriculum related areas. There are insufficient keyboards, classroom instruments and computers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average and above average in Years 7 to 9.
- Assessment is used very well to improve standards of learning
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- There is excellent partnership with the school arts teachers, the Sports College and the School Sport Co-ordinator Programme.
- An excellent range of extra curricular opportunities and community links are provided.
- The department is a strength of the school and well placed to disseminate good practice in behaviour management and the use of assessment data

Commentary

130. Standards achieved by pupils at Years 7 to 9 are above average with most pupils working at level 5 and some beyond. Achievement is very good with many pupils making effective progress throughout the lessons and in Years 7 to 9.

131. Standards at Years 10 and 11 are consistently above average with GCSE results in physical education above the national average for grades A*-C for the last two years and above average results in GCSE dance. Achievement is very good with many pupils making very good progress throughout their lessons, exam courses and when representing the school and County at sport

132. Teaching and learning of all pupils in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 in physical education and dance are very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and quality and use of assessment is very good. Planning, teaching methods, the use of resources, structure of lessons and the teaching of basic skills are all very good. This in turn enables pupils to learn, acquiring new skills, techniques, knowledge and understanding in physical education and dance. Pupils know how to improve and successfully apply their skills to class work and homework.

133. Pupils arrive with a range of previous physical education experiences and at differing physical abilities. The school is effectively tracking improvement via a booklet that monitors pupils' attainment on entry, at the start and finish of schemes of work, at eight points during the year and through the Years 7 to 11. Pupils also evaluate their own performance and record this in the booklet. These levels of attainment are posted on the changing room walls and all pupils can monitor and compare their performance in all activities. Assessment is good.

134. In Years 7 to 11, pupils learn to choreograph dances and gymnastics sequences with complex form and structure, dynamics and impact, performing to a very high standard. In Year 8, pupils understand health and fitness, testing and the impact of diet and exercise. Most pupils are competent game players and standards in badminton, volleyball, hockey, rugby, soccer and netball are all good with many pupils achieving above expectation. There is a sense of fair play, collaboration and competitive spirit and pupils are able to articulate how they are doing and know what to do to improve. Pupils in Year 9 are able to use digital cameras and DVD recordings to analyse movement and performance.

135. The numbers opting for GCSE physical education have increased and many of the school's elite performers excel, achieving high grades. They understand the national sporting context and its funding regimes, the impact of training programmes, anatomy and physiology and can apply this learning to the game situation.

136. Most pupils' attitudes and behaviour at across all years are very good. Many enjoy effective teacher - pupil relationships and there is a respect for the work of others both in physical education and dance. Teachers ensure that behaviour is well managed and does not interrupt the flow of lessons or learning. Most pupils listen well in lessons and contribute to conversation about their work, mostly in an evaluative sense, although opportunities to discuss critically their own work and that of others are limited and little extended debate was seen. Teachers have high expectations and set appropriate tasks that maintain constant positive attitudes towards physical education and dance.

137. Leadership and management by the Head of the physical education department and the Head of the dance department are very good. Planning and documentation for both subjects are in place and regularly reviewed, targets are set and procedures are robust. The learning environments are well organised and displays in changing rooms are very good. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

138. There is a very experienced partnership of all physical education, arts teachers, the Sports College and the School Sports Co-ordinator Programme staff establishing effective working practice and departmental collaboration. Teachers work corporately to achieve the success and pursue excellence with a passion. There is a thriving programme of clubs and opportunities for performance. The department self- evaluates its own work very well and now needs leading in the strategic development of the Key Stage 3 strategy and the re-designation of specialist status.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Standards seen in **business education** during the inspection are below average. Achievement is satisfactory and a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. Absence from lessons is too high. Pupils' GCSE results at age 16 in 2003 are well below average. Standards seen in lessons are below average. There is a very broad range of prior attainment in the groups. Lessons are well structured. Sometimes lessons are too teacher dominated. Where tasks are set to enable pupils to use their own initiative, learning accelerates, pupils become involved and animated and develop their understanding. Links with the local Eden project help pupils to get to grips with the practical applications of what is taught in the classroom. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Thought is given to the place of business education in the wider school curriculum and the importance of links with local businesses to bring the courses alive.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is very good and management is good.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in citizenship activities outside lessons, particularly through the Global Institute for Student Aspirations project.
- The provision of specific citizenship days in Years 10.
- The arrangement of inviting and interesting activities, so that citizenship is becoming part of the culture of the whole school.
- Citizenship is well built into the programmes of study in most subjects.

- Not all teachers are adequately trained to teach the units of work and not all departments are fully involved in its inclusion.
- The assessment of pupils' level of attainment is helping to modify and review the provision.

Commentary

139. The leadership of the subject is very good and is making a strong impact on the school's curriculum and ethos. The joint co-ordinators have drawn up thorough and thoughtful programmes of study for all years. The units of work contained in them are all firmly anchored in the need for pupils to develop skills of enquiry and communication, knowledge of important issues of a moral or social nature legal and human rights and diversity and relationships with others. The opportunities for reinforcement of all these topics in other subjects is firmly and clearly delineated, as well as the role of citizenship within the personal, social and health education courses and the Life Skills classes in Years 10 and 11. Citizenship is mainly taught as a special part of the personal, social and health education course. Several lessons were observed during the inspection in which citizenship featured largely. Other evidence is based on a sample of pupils' work, on a meeting with the heads of citizenship, on evidence of citizenship in other subjects, and on evidence of other citizenship opportunities in the school's curriculum. Citizenship has developed well through the commitment and enthusiasm of its leaders.

140. The subject is enriched by the provision of very good opportunities to participate in events, such as the occasional citizenship days, and through the school's participation in activities such as its very successful venture into the BBC's competition for 'Question Time' and 'The Big Vote' interactive programme. All opportunities are taken to tie areas of the subject in with the school's commitment to the activities and opportunities provided by the Global Institute for Student Aspirations project, with a great deal of success. As a result, pupils are becoming involved and interested in aspects of the subject and enjoy motivating themselves and others into enthusiastic participation. The culture of a desire to understand the world in which we live is beginning to be part of the culture of the school.

141. Baseline assessment of pupils' general knowledge of society is done when pupils enter the school. As a result, the subject co-ordinators can see the greatest area of need and review their programmes of study to match the need. Pupils' understanding is re-assessed at the end of Year 9. The evidence indicates that pupils' attainment is in line with the broad national picture and that their achievement is now good by Year 9 and satisfactory by the end of Year 11, since Years 10 and 11 have only begun to profit from the subject recently.

142. Not all teachers are confident as yet in the delivery of aspects of the subject. The quality of teaching and learning is currently satisfactory but improving because the school is successfully ensuring better consistency of teaching and learning through well focussed training activities. Some subject areas, too, have not yet firmly included it in their schemes of work. There are examples of very good practice, particularly in English, geography, history, drama and science. Overall, the subject is rapidly becoming strength in the school's curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	7
Attitudes	5
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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