

INSPECTION REPORT

THIS REPORT REPLACES THE ORIGINAL ONE DATED 2003

ST. DUNSTAN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Glastonbury, Somerset.

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123867

Headteacher: Mrs. P G Iles

Lead inspector: Liz Barthaud

Dates of inspection: 22nd-25th September 2003

Inspection number: 260947

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 11-16
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 669

School address: Wells Road
Glastonbury
Somerset

Postcode: BA6 9BY

Telephone number: 01458 832943

Fax number: 01458 831220

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. Bob Wilkey

Date of previous inspection: 9th - 13th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Dunstan's is a small community comprehensive school located on the outskirts of the town of Glastonbury. It draws pupils from a wide geographical area. Over the last two years, the school has been successful in gaining a number of both national and locally recognized awards, including the Arts mark, Investors in People, Schools Achievement Award, Sports mark and the Somerset Standard for Careers. Children joining the school at age 11 come from a large number of contributory primary schools. There is a wide social-economic mix represented within the school, with some pupils from backgrounds of social deprivation. Attainment on entry, as measured by tests at the end of Year 6, has fallen since 2001, but overall it is at the national average. The percentage of special educational needs pupils, including those with statements of special educational needs, is below the national average at 14.6 per cent. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals remains below the national average at 7.9 per cent. Less than 2 per cent of those attending the school represent ethnic groupings other than white and there is one pupil for whom English is not his first language, but no pupil is at a very early stage of English language acquisition. These percentages are both very low in comparison to national averages. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school during the last school year was 23, which is very low in national terms.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30317	Liz Barthaud	Lead inspector	Vocational: Health and social Care English as an Additional Language
12775	Judith Goodchild	Lay inspector	
33170	Julie Winterman	Team inspector	English Drama
4908	Ian Farquar	Team inspector	Mathematics
5714	Frances Thornton	Team inspector	Science
	Geoff Hancock	Team inspector	Design and technology
27485	Graham Sims	Team inspector	Modern languages: French and German
32209	Jane Burnett	Team inspector	Humanities: geography and history
28106	Michele Majid	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Special educational needs
32324	Frances Buckler	Team inspector	Music
3162	Philip O'Neill	Team inspector	Physical education Religious education
10741	Stephen Bellinfante	Team inspector	Art and design
32603	Janice Urban Smith	Team inspector	Citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

ALTECQ EDUCATION

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Dunstan's provides a **satisfactory** standard of education. Teaching is good and standards and achievement are good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's leadership group does not share a common perception of the issues, which need to be addressed to drive the school forward.
- There is good leadership and management by heads of department and heads of year.
- Although behaviour is well managed by some staff, this is not consistent across the school.
- Standards and achievement are good.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The governing body provides a clear direction for the school.
- There are good procedures for promoting good attendance.
- There is a wide range of additional opportunities available outside lessons.

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues for action and the additional weaknesses identified within the main body of the previous inspection report. The school has substantially improved the range of examination courses offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 and has made a significant investment in information and communication technology (ICT). Many of the good features identified at the time of the last report have been maintained. After a period of decline, the school is now improving, although it is not as effective as it was judged at the time of the last inspection. Some aspects of the school's leadership and management, although satisfactory overall, are not as good as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' behaviour has declined, which reflects changing local circumstances. The governing body has worked hard and successfully to manage the financial issues it has had to address over the last three years.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 11 results

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

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.

When pupils join the school in **Year 7, their attainment is satisfactory** based on results at the end of Year 6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented is **good**. By the end of **Year 9, standards are good**. Standards and achievement are **good** in English, mathematics and science. In most other subjects, standards and achievement are at least **good**. **Standards in ICT are below national expectations at the end of Year 9 and achievement is unsatisfactory.**

By the end of **Year 11, standards and achievement are good** overall. In 2002, boys achieved less well than girls in English, mathematics, science, geography, history, art and design and design and technology. This was the first time a significant difference in achievement had

occurred. Having analysed the results, the school concluded this to be a unique situation and not the beginning of a trend. Unconfirmed results for 2003 indicate no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls, except in mathematics. In ICT, all pupils are below national expectations at the end of Year 11 and **achievement is unsatisfactory**.

Across the school, pupils' **attitudes, values and the development of other personal qualities are good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **satisfactory**. The school has worked hard to develop rigorous procedures for promoting good attendance over the last two years, and, as a result, **attendance rates have improved and are now good**. In lessons, many teachers insist on high standards of behaviour although there is some inconsistency in practice. Overall behaviour is judged to be **satisfactory**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall. As a direct result of the **good teaching observed, learning in lessons is good** and the **achievement and progress of all pupils are good**. Teaching has many good and some excellent features, but the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Staff absence over a long period of time within the mathematics department has led to some unsatisfactory teaching with the consequent fall in standards at the end of Year 11. From the start of this school year, newly appointed teachers are addressing this with the result that the progress the pupils are making is now good and standards are rising. The way in which the work and progress of pupils are monitored and recorded in subjects is satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies in practice. Not all teachers have access to prior attainment data on each pupil. As a result, they are unable, at present, to set individual progress targets accurately for each pupil in their subject area.

The range of subjects and examination opportunities available to pupils in **Years 10 and 11 is very good**. The school has developed strong links with the local college so that all pupils have the opportunity to gain accreditation at NVQ and A/S level in addition to GCSE and VGCSE. This improves the motivation of all pupils and, as a result, achievement is **good**.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management, including that of the headteacher are satisfactory. This has been during a period of considerable change in the life of the school. **Good leadership** is provided by a number of key school staff. Governance of the school is good. Although governors have taken satisfactory steps to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements, there are some areas, including provision for collective worship, ICT across the curriculum and citizenship, where there are weaknesses.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum is satisfactory. The range of courses provided for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good, as is the range of additional learning and enrichment opportunities outside formal lessons. The citizenship and personal, social and health education programmes are **unsatisfactory**, as is the provision for ICT across the curriculum in Years 10 and 11.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school. Parents stated, and inspectors agree, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere and expects pupils to work hard, attend regularly, and achieve their best. A significant number of parents raised concerns about the deterioration of behaviour in lessons and inconsistencies in teaching in the mathematics department. Inspectors endorse these views. **Pupils are satisfied with the work of the school.** Over 90 per cent stated that they were expected to work hard, do their

best and they felt trusted. Inspectors endorse the positive views of the pupils. The area of greatest concern to pupils in all years was pupils' behaviour and the number of incidents of bullying. Inspectors uphold the views expressed by pupils in relation to behaviour in part. Whilst incidents of poor behaviour were seen in lessons during the inspection week, they were confined to a few subject areas and involved a small group of pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Ensure that the leadership group, governors and middle managers have an agreed understanding of what needs to be done to drive the school forward.
- Ensure that the senior management team consistently implements and monitors agreed policies and procedures.
- Strengthen the lines of communication between the leadership team and middle managers.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement in Years 7 to 11 is **good**. Standards in Years 7 to 11 are **good**. In 2002, girls achieved higher standards than boys in all core subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Special educational needs pupils make good progress.
- Very good standards are achieved in design and technology at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Very good standards are achieved at the end of Year 11 in English.
- Below national average standards are achieved at the end of Year 11 in mathematics.
- Standards and achievement in ICT are below national expectations.

The tables below show the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and Year 9, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Key Stage 3

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.4 (35.4)	33.3 (33)
Mathematics	35.3 (35.2)	34.7 (34.4)
Science	35.0 (35.0)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 153 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In 2002, standards at the end of Year 9 were above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement compared with prior attainment was above the national average in English, close to the national average in science and well below average in mathematics. For the first time, in 2002, girls did better than boys in all three core subjects. In previous years there was no significant difference in performance and the 2003 results indicate a return to that position. In 2002, the number of pupils achieving a Level 6 or above in English, mathematics and science was well above the national average. The trend in results for the last few years has been improving in line with the national picture. Pupils' achievement in the first three years is **good** overall. In the work seen in all subjects, the standards reached by pupils in Year 9 are above national expectations for their age, apart from in design and technology, where they are well above, and in ICT, where they are below the expected level.

Key Stage 4

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades	61.8 (66.1)	49.9 (48.4)
Percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades	94.4 (99.2)	90.9 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining one or more A*-G grades	97.9 (100)	95.0 (94.7)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	46.3 (49)	39.8 (39)

There were 144 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The 2002 GCSE examination results were above the national average in all reporting categories. There was a decline in results in all categories between 2001 and 2002. In part, this was because of a small, but significant, number of unmotivated boys. In 2002, girls did better than boys in most examination subjects. These results are not typical of previous years when the gap between girls and boys was not significantly different to that nationally. Results in English were well above the national average and above in science. In mathematics, results were at the national average for girls, but well below for boys. The long-term absence of the head of department coupled with staff recruitment difficulties, are two of the main contributory factors to this difference in standards.
3. The work of pupils in Year 11 shows that attainment is above average for their age, except in design and technology, where it is well above, and in mathematics and ICT, where it is below.
4. The progress made by all pupils currently in Years 7 to 11 is good. This is due to the high level of support they are given in class by their teachers and, where available, the learning support assistants. Staff work hard to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met and, as a result, inclusion in this school is **good**.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes towards school and their work are **good**. The attendance and punctuality of pupils are **good**. The behaviour of pupils is **satisfactory**. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility and display initiative are good.
- Most senior pupils provide positive role-models for younger pupils within the school.
- The actions the school has taken to improve and promote good attendance are very good.
- A high percentage of pupils are concerned about the standards of behaviour and the incidence of bullying within the school.
- There is an inconsistency amongst staff in managing unacceptable behaviour in lessons.
- There is a high incidence of fixed-term exclusions.

Commentary

5. Attitudes to learning are good overall. When pupils are stimulated with lively and interesting teaching, their attitudes to learning and behaviour are good and sometimes very good. Where teaching is less engaging, and pupils' interest is allowed to deteriorate, they demonstrate a lack of enthusiasm for their studies so that they do not make good progress in learning during the lesson.
6. Approximately 75 per cent of the pupils were concerned about the standards of behaviour of a minority of pupils in school and also about the incidence of bullying. The inspection findings are that there is an inconsistency in what some teachers expect as acceptable behaviour in lessons. The effective management of disruptive behaviour is also variable. The school's recording systems are not effective in enabling senior managers to monitor the quality of behaviour or the incidence of bullying. When incidents of bullying are brought to the attention of the leadership team and heads of year, they are quickly and effectively dealt with, but there is a variation in response from other members of staff. The number of pupils excluded from the school is high compared with all schools nationally. There has been a considerable rise in the number of exclusions since the previous inspection, which is partly because the school now has a more open recording system. In conjunction with other local schools, St. Dunstan's has recently become

involved in a project, which is aimed at supporting those pupils, who are considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion.

7. The school has made considerable and successful efforts to raise attendance levels and attendance is now good. This is a considerable achievement. A high level of support from the educational social worker, in conjunction with close monitoring strategies implemented by the school, has led to this success. Parents have responded well to the school's requests to ensure higher attendance levels for their children. The school has identified a group of pupils, who are indifferent to education. One way in which the school has tried to improve the motivational levels of this group has been through negotiating different curriculum packages for them in Years 10 and 11.
8. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactorily promoted in many subjects, but not all, so that the experiences of individual groups of pupils vary. Religious education makes an effective contribution towards pupils' moral development through the discussion of topics such as euthanasia and abortion. This raises pupils' cultural awareness of the differing attitudes of societies and cultures throughout the world. A considerable strength of the school is the opportunities provided for pupils' personal development. The peer-mentor and peer-mediator schemes recently introduced in Years 8 and 9 encourage these young pupils to develop a caring and responsible attitude towards the school community, particularly their peers. The school council has recently benefited from training with another local school and this, coupled with the other positions of responsibility they hold within the house system, provides a range of opportunities for all pupils to show initiative. Senior pupils, who act as prefects and carry out supervision duties quietly and effectively, and those, who help train junior sports teams, provide very good role-models for younger pupils.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-2003 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.24	School data :	1.0
National data:	7.21	National data:	1.08

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the last academic year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	655	58	2
White – Irish	1		
White – any other White background	9		
Mixed – any other mixed background	6		
Chinese	1		
Any other ethnic group	1		

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching throughout the school is **good** overall. Learning throughout the school is **good**. Assessment systems currently in place are **satisfactory**.

Teaching and Learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, except where they teach outside their own area of expertise.
- Lesson planning is good.
- Most teachers manage and organise their pupils well and use teaching assistants and technicians effectively. However, in some lessons, the school's expectations for behaviour are not consistently applied.
- Homework is used successfully to reinforce, extend and enhance class work.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across and within subjects.
- The school's procedures for assessing the work of pupils and tracking progress are not consistently monitored by senior managers, and not all teachers implement the assessment procedures consistently.

Commentary

9. Overall, the quality of teaching in the school is good and is one of the main reasons why pupils' progress and achievement are good. Very good teaching was observed in music, drama and design and technology in Years 10 and 11. Most teachers plan lessons thoroughly and regularly set homework to reinforce learning in lessons. As a result pupils' learning is good overall. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching not only between, but also within, departments. Weaknesses in teaching were identified in citizenship and personal, social and health education. There is no formal system in place within the school to identify and share good practice across the school and the school's monitoring has not effectively identified and addressed the weaker teaching.
10. Although during the inspection more excellent teaching was observed in Years 7 to 9, taking evidence from pupils' work into account as well, teaching is more consistently good in Years 10 and 11. There is some unsatisfactory teaching, largely as a result of two factors. Firstly, where teachers are teaching outside their usual area of expertise, their subject knowledge is not as secure. Secondly, particularly in some lessons in Years 7 to 9, teachers' expectations of standards of work and behaviour are inconsistent and, as a result, some pupils do not behave as well as they might and are sometimes disruptive. The good management skills displayed by heads of department ensure the attainment of all pupils at the end of Years 9 and 11 is good. Over 60 per cent of the pupils in Years 8 to 11 stated on their questionnaires that they were taught well, and this is supported by evidence gathered through observing lessons and looking at the work completed by pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 86 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (4)	18 (21)	30 (35)	25 (29)	8 (9)	2 (2)	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 were seen.

11. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory overall, and have improved since the last inspection, particularly in the way pupils' work and progress are tracked through Years 7 to 9. However, senior managers do not ensure that all staff make the best use of the established procedures to help pupils to improve. A simple, but effective, system operates for heads of year and form tutors to keep track of pupils' progress through half-yearly effort and achievement grades, although tutors vary in the effectiveness with which they use the information available to them to challenge and motivate their pupils.
12. Good use is made of assessment data from feeder schools to place pupils into ability sets, but the data held by the school is not disseminated widely enough to departments. Effective use is made of data to identify the needs of pupils with problems in literacy and numeracy in Years 7 and 8 and to provide them with additional support. Departments are responsible for maintaining their own data about pupils' progress. Some departments have clear and accurate records, whilst the information held by others is less useful in diagnosing how pupils might improve or where additional emphasis needs to be given in teaching. Steps have been taken to centralise the recording of assessment data using a computer programme, which will provide staff with a wider range of data and instant access to pupils' records. Some departments make good use of target setting. The school has an agreed set of procedures for marking pupils' work and providing them with feedback. Some departments provide very good guidance for pupils, whilst the marking of pupils' work in other departments is not particularly helpful in showing pupils what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum

The curriculum offered is **satisfactory**. The range of courses available to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is **very good**. The enrichment opportunities provided by the school are **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is committed to the provision for equal opportunity and social inclusion.
- Members of staff work hard getting to know each pupil so that individual support programmes can be put into place to enhance learning in the classroom.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum is weakened by the lack of a co-ordinated programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship throughout the school.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is enriched by the inclusion of drama and a second modern foreign language.
- There are weaknesses in the provision for ICT across the curriculum.
- The school does not comply with statutory requirements for providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

Commentary

13. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities that are designed to meet the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of its pupils. The range of courses available for pupils to study in Years 10 and 11 is very good. The curriculum areas of art, drama, design and technology and music are all strengths within the school. The use of ICT in lessons is yet to be fully developed. At present, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply the skills gained in ICT lessons to other areas of their learning. Opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of activities outside the school day are very good.
14. The school's setting arrangements enable teachers to provide effective support for pupils of all abilities. The school provides clear guidance to Year 9 pupils and their parents

relating to the range of courses available for study in Years 10 and 11. There is good extra-curricular provision. A wide range of well-attended sporting, dramatic and musical activities enrich the curriculum. A well-established Team Enterprise programme is offered to pupils in Year 11. This programme helps to encourage teamwork through developing problem-solving and communication skills. Current arrangements for the teaching of the personal, social and health education course and citizenship course are unsatisfactory. As a result, insufficient emphasis is given to promoting positive working relationships in all areas of the school's work.

15. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, although there are some accommodation issues in art and music.

Care, guidance and support

The provision of support, advice and guidance is **satisfactory**. The steps taken to ensure routine monitoring of health and safety are **satisfactory**. The involvement of pupils by seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a high level of commitment to the care of pupils.
- Induction arrangements for pupils coming into the school are good.
- The high-quality careers advice makes a good contribution to pupils' preparation for life beyond school.
- Pupils' views of the school are not routinely sought.
- Lack of allocated pastoral time inhibits the effectiveness of academic monitoring.

Commentary

16. The induction arrangements for pupils coming into the school are good. Heads of year work hard to meet the needs of their year group. Pastoral teams stay with their year group throughout their time in school. As a result, they are able to build strong relationships with the pupils and their families. This helps to promote good learning. The knowledge gained through the pastoral system relating to the pupils and their families enables the school to target support appropriately when needed. Pupils interviewed were confident that they could ask members of staff for help, either academically or personally.
17. The careers co-ordinator provides high-quality advice to individual pupils and tutors. Resources are provided for tutors to use with their classes to enable them to provide effective guidance to pupils in Year 9 when selecting their subjects for GCSE, when preparing for work experience or transition into post-16 education or the world of work. Severe restrictions on time provided for tutors adversely affect the quality of the delivery of the careers education programme. Good use is made of the services provided by the local Connexions service to provide pupils with individual careers guidance interviews in Years 10 and 11.
18. Pupils' views about the school are not routinely sought and this aspect of the school's work is unsatisfactory. There has, however, been a move towards empowering the school council and encouraging members to become more pro-active and involved in the day-to-day life and running of the school. Pupils are becoming involved in setting their own targets, both personal and academic, but the quality and frequency of this is variable. Pastoral staff have the overall responsibility for academic monitoring, but the lack of time available to carry out this important role affects the quality of the outcomes. Tutors have 20 minutes each day with their pupils. During this time, they have to undertake routine administrative tasks, deliver a personal, social and health education programme and attend assemblies.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with its parents is **satisfactory**. The school has **good** links with the community. The school's links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The positive partnership arrangements with other schools, which extend the range of learning opportunities for all pupils.
- The community is used well to enrich and extend the educational experience of pupils.
- Annual reports to parents do not contain information about how pupils' standards of work can be improved.
- The range of information about the curriculum provided for parents is good.

Commentary

19. Links with other schools and colleges are good. The assistant head, pastoral, has made concerted efforts to involve the school in joint work with a leading edge school that will include joint staff training opportunities during the coming year. This extended range of training opportunities will enable teachers to explore a wider range of teaching and learning strategies for use within the classroom. Links with the local education authority partnership for managing pupils, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, are further promoting relationships with local schools that will benefit both staff and pupils. Good links have been built between the school and its feeder primary schools, which result in effective transfer arrangements at the end of Year 6. The school has developed strong links with the local college. As a result, the school offers examination opportunities in addition to GCSE in Years 10 and 11. This includes NVQ courses and taster sessions in AS subjects.
20. The community is used well to enrich and extend educational opportunities for pupils. Pupils benefit from the Leisure Centre facilities. Good links with local industry extend pupils' knowledge of the world of work and also how information and communication technology is used in industry. The NSPCC provides a counselling service for pupils. Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their interpersonal and team-building skills by working with business mentors as part of the Team Enterprise programme.
21. The school's links with its parents are satisfactory overall. A number of helpful information booklets have been written for parents by members of the leadership team. On entry to the school, parents are provided with information to help them understand what will be covered in the subjects of the National Curriculum. As their children enter Year 10, parents are provided with booklets on the requirements of GCSE coursework so that they can work in partnership with the school to support learning. Parents have responded positively to the school's drive to raise levels of attendance. However, the views of parents about future changes to the school, or the quality of education provided, are not routinely sought. Prior to the inspection, parents identified a number of areas of weakness within the school. Some of these areas have been identified by the inspection team as areas for development by the school. Parent governors represent the views of parents on the governing body and are supportive of the work of the school. Reports to parents contain information about the National Curriculum levels currently achieved by their children, and how these compare to national norms, but do not identify what pupils need to do to improve standards.

Leadership and Management

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. Governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The senior management team does not give clear enough direction to the work of heads of department and year heads.
- There is a clear willingness by all staff to take the school further forward in its development.
- Most departments and year teams are well led and managed.
- Heads of year do not have sufficient non-contact time or clerical support to enable them to fully carry out the requirements of their job descriptions.
- The school improvement plan is not clear enough about key priorities and the time-scales within which they will be met.
- The governors know the school well and are very well led in supporting its work.

Commentary

22. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and her senior colleagues have implemented a number of initiatives to move the school forward in recent years and have a willingness to improve. They have been managing significant change and have also coped with tragedy.
23. The senior management team has not been effective enough in pulling together the work of department heads and year heads in supporting the strategic direction of the school. Leadership and management of departments and year teams are good overall. However, department and year heads are not always sufficiently rigorous in their monitoring of pupils' learning and the implementation of the school's behaviour management policy. The quality of the pastoral work in the school is hindered by the inadequate amount of time allocated to the pastoral team to carry out their prescribed duties and a lack of clerical support. The current arrangements in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning by the senior management team have not effectively identified and addressed the weaker teaching. Though most departments are well organised and effective, they tend to work in isolation from one another so that good practice is not shared enough. The school improvement plan is not supported by feasible, time-scales for meeting the priorities and goals stated within it.
24. The governing body knows the school well and is aware of what must happen for the school to move forward. It fulfils its role effectively, and successfully holds the school to account for the quality of education it provides. The school needs to address the weaknesses in the teaching of citizenship and in using and developing ICT across the curriculum. The current school strategic plan and school improvement plan do not have financial projections included within them. This makes it difficult for the governors to make decisions about spending based on educational priorities. Over the last two financial years, the governing body and newly appointed headteacher have had to make a number of budget reductions and in all cases, the principles of best value were applied. Governors are provided with detailed and accurate financial information by the school to enable them to fulfil their monitoring role.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,263,625
Total expenditure	2,252,775
Expenditure per pupil	3,173

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	78,574
Balance carried forward to the next	89,423

25. Governors, supported by the new headteacher, have worked hard to successfully manage the reductions in the size of the budget they have received from the local education authority over the last three years. This has resulted in staff cuts and a redistribution of roles within the school. They have managed to achieve these changes without having a detrimental impact on the standards achieved by pupils attending the school.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4 ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Overall, provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the head of department is very good.
- Very good marking within the department effectively supports progress in learning.
- The quality of pupils' writing is excellent because of the opportunities and support provided for extended writing.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to develop their speaking skills within lessons.
- Too little use is made of ICT.

Commentary

26. The leadership and management of the department are very good. As a result, standards in English at the end of Years 9 and 11 are very good. The head of department has high aspirations and a clear focus on improving standards. He has an excellent knowledge of the examination requirements of the subject and uses it to support teachers and pupils well. The guidance materials that the head of department provides for teachers and pupils are clear, detailed and very effective. Good systems are in place for monitoring the progress of pupils and supporting the performance of teachers.
27. Standards of attainment on entry in Year 7 are average over time, but with significant differences between individual year groups. Results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average when compared to all schools nationally. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 or above was well above the national average. Girls achieved better standards than boys, but both boys and girls did better than their peers nationally. The gap between the performance of girls and boys was greater than the difference nationally. Standards achieved in English were higher than in mathematics and science when compared to national figures. Unconfirmed results for 2003 show a significant improvement in standards with the number of pupils achieving Level 5 or above greatly exceeding previous performance and the school target. The gap in the achievement of boys and girls has narrowed with the result that achievement of both boys and girls is satisfactory.
28. The proportion of pupils obtaining a grade in the A*-C range in the GCSE English language examinations in 2002 was well above the national average. As in other subjects, for the first time in recent years, girls did significantly better than boys. However, boys performed relatively well in English compared with the standards they achieved in their other subjects. In the GCSE English literature examination, the number of pupils gaining a grade A*-C was just above the national average, overall. Girls' results were better than boys'. Girls achieved grades, which were significantly above national averages. Boys achieved standards below the national average.
29. Pupils of all abilities achieve excellent standards of writing. Imaginative writing is vivid and engaging, and pupils use figurative language very effectively. Although errors of punctuation and spelling persist in the work of some low-attaining pupils, these are minimal. Pupils are skilled at writing for different purposes. By the end of Year 11, the highest-attaining pupils produce excellent comparative and analytical writing, displaying

an originality of response to literature. Speaking skills are less well developed. Pupils had only limited opportunities to engage in sustained speaking activities in the sample of lessons seen. When asked to contribute orally to lessons, many lack confidence and appear reluctant to do so. High-attaining pupils show themselves to be very articulate when they are asked to explore their initial answers to questions. They use technical terms well and have a very good command of language resulting from their extensive reading.

30. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, and plan and use resources well. The quality of marking of pupils' work is very good with clear evidence that it supports progress. Pupils generally behave well and work productively throughout lessons. They do not, however, approach lessons with enthusiasm where teaching sometimes lacks pace and, therefore, makes insufficient demands of them. When given the opportunity to work collaboratively, pupils do so to good effect. The lack of opportunities provided for the head of department to monitor and develop the quality of teaching across the department and the school has not identified that the teaching of low-ability groups is varied. Where it is good, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the variety and challenge of the tasks and the informed support of the teaching assistant. Pupils' learning is well supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils can, for example, engage in public speaking, attend a reading club and participate in a reading week with the support of authors and illustrators. High-attaining pupils can attend local courses, which extend their learning.
31. Progress since the time of the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have improved in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE English language results. Standards achieved in the GCSE English literature examination have declined, but not all pupils were entered for English literature at the time of the last inspection and the results were unusually high at that time. There are too few opportunities for the use of information and communication technology within English lessons, which was identified as an issue at the time of the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

32. Standards of language and literacy across the curriculum are good. There is a clear focus on the accurate use of key vocabulary across the curriculum and pupils respond well, using technical terms in their speaking and writing. Pupils' handwriting is of a high standard overall, which demonstrates their pride in their work. When given opportunities to discuss and explain ideas orally, as in geography, history and art lessons, pupils do so to good effect. Pupils have a good command of the language of evaluation. In physical education, art and drama lessons, they evaluate their own work and that of their peers with knowledge and precision. In English, mathematics and science, lower-attaining pupils make good progress in the development of their literacy skills as a result of the support and guidance materials provided by the teachers. Occasionally, pupils are hesitant about speaking in class and this is particularly true where the scope for extended speaking has been limited.

Modern Foreign Languages

Overall, provision in modern foreign languages (French and German) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 3 and well above average by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well.
- The overall quality of the teaching is good.
- The quality of learning in lessons does not always reflect the good teaching.
- The good opportunity provided for all pupils to study two languages in Years 7 and 8, and the option of studying two languages in Years 9, 10 and 11.
- The very good leadership and management of the department promotes a strong team ethos.

Commentary

33. Pupils attain above average standards in French and German by the end of Year 9 and well above average standards by the end of Year 11. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, the percentage of boys and girls obtaining grades A*-C was well above the national average in both subjects, and a significantly high proportion of pupils gained the top grades of A* or A. The results for 2003 were similarly high. Overall, pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. Standards in modern foreign languages are in line with that of other subjects in the school, and significantly better than the national picture for both boys and girls. The department has maintained the high standards since the last inspection.
34. The school's success in modern foreign languages is founded on the importance the school attaches to languages, the leadership provided by the head of department, and a strong team of established teachers, who provide consistently good teaching. The school offers very good opportunities for pupils to learn a foreign language. The uptake of languages for GCSE is good. The school has a strong team of dedicated and enthusiastic language teachers, who have a very good command of their subjects. The department is led and managed very well and there is a shared commitment to achieving high standards. This is particularly evident in the way pupils are prepared for their GCSE examinations and the way that the more able pupils are extended in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are generally very well planned and contain a good variety of relevant activities, which help pupils to consolidate previous learning and acquire new understanding. Resources are used to good effect, and teachers employ a wide range of strategies to help pupils learn.
35. The impact of teaching is variable across groups. The quality of teaching is not always matched by the quality of the pupils' learning in class. The teachers work very hard to motivate the pupils and to encourage active participation and they are very successful in some classes, generally those in Years 7 and 8. However, some pupils are very reluctant to volunteer responses and to speak in front of others, and the quality of pupils' verbal response does not always reflect the understanding, which is shown in their written work. Whilst learning is satisfactory overall, in some lessons, the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils and the reluctance of others to get down to work hampers learning.
36. Pupils show a much more positive attitude to learning when working with a partner or on their own. In nearly all classes, pupils undertake paired work sensibly and are not afraid to make mistakes or try things out. They also respond very well to written tasks and to homework, which always reinforces what has been taught in class. Many pupils, particularly those in the upper-ability sets, present their work well and produce high-

quality work. Some of the teachers' marking is also of a high quality, helping pupils to see where they have gone wrong and what they need to do to improve. However, the approach to marking and getting pupils to correct their work is not always consistent, and pupils do not make the most of the opportunities presented to them to learn from their mistakes.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 9 are above the national average.
- Standards by the end of Year 11 are adversely affected by the number of lessons taught by non-specialist staff.
- Good support is provided in class for pupils, who find the subject difficult.

Commentary

37. Standards of attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 are in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 9, standards are above the national average, but below those for similar schools. Girls marginally outperform boys. Unconfirmed results for 2003 show an improvement on previous years, with an increase in the number of pupils gaining the higher Level 6 and above. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good.
38. Difficulties in recruiting qualified mathematicians over the last two years have affected standards at the end of Year 11. The situation has been compounded by the continuing long-term absence of a head of department. As a result, standards achieved at the end of Year 11 in the higher grades of A*-C in 2002, when compared to national averages, were below average overall. In 2002, the percentage of boys attaining a grade within the A*-C range at GCSE was 17.5 per cent below the national average and unconfirmed data for 2003 shows no significant improvement. In 2002, the standards achieved by girls matched the national picture. Unconfirmed data for 2003 shows a fall to the same level as that of the boys. As a result, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
39. In Years 7 to 9, more able pupils have a sound grasp of routine algebra and can apply trigonometry to practical problems such as finding the height of buildings. Pupils, who find the subject difficult, successfully apply number to everyday problems in areas such as money and budgeting, particularly when supported by classroom assistants. On current inspection evidence, achievement in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory in relation to prior attainment. More able pupils cope with the higher-level concepts of vectors, variation and the roots of quadratic equations. Average- and lower-attaining pupils successfully access web sites for mathematical programs, which enhance their learning. No significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls was evident in any year group.
40. The department is currently staffed by two specialists, both of whom joined the school in September, four non-specialists and supply staff. Teaching and learning are currently satisfactory as teachers clearly explain the work and use resources effectively to support the learning of all pupils. Currently, teachers are spending more time than usual establishing what pupils know and can do in order to set targets. As a consequence, the pace of some lessons is slow. Assessment data, which is provided centrally, enables teachers and pupils to monitor progress and set targets. Where good teaching was observed, teachers exercised good class control and this, combined with an enthusiastic teaching style, led to good progress and achievement. Teaching and learning are better when classroom assistants are available. In one lesson, the disruptive behaviour of a few girls and insufficient control exercised by the teacher had a detrimental effect on learning.

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting head of department, who was appointed to the school in September 2003, gives very effective support to non-specialist staff. All teachers are now provided with lesson notes and materials to support to them in improving the teaching of mathematics within the classroom. The acting head of department has already drawn up plans, which identify the main areas of weaknesses, and is starting to implement systems to address them.
42. There has been a complete change of staff within this department since the 1998 report. Aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy have been introduced and there is improved access to computers within the subject to support learning. However, the number of pupils gaining a GCSE in the A*-C range in recent years has fallen considerably, with the result that standards since 1998 have fallen.

Mathematics across the curriculum

43. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Most pupils have a secure grasp of place value and routine calculations. Boys and girls apply number successfully in other subjects and use calculators with confidence. With the exception of science, little evidence was seen of data-handling. Successful examples of using mathematics across the curriculum were seen in geography, where pupils studied climate and population, in a science investigation into the area of leaves, and an interesting example from music, which used mathematical symmetry to compose new tunes. As a result of the lack of consistency of teachers within the mathematics department, the National Numeracy Strategy is not sufficiently developed to have any positive impact on standards.

SCIENCE

Overall, provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in science.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Assessment helps pupils to improve their work.
- There are insufficient opportunities for information and communication technology in Key Stage 4 science.
- The Key Stage 3 Strategy has been introduced well in science.

Commentary

44. When they enter the school, pupils' attainment is average. By the end of Year 9, pupils achieve standards well above average. Standards for the majority of pupils at age 16 are above average. The school enters more pupils for GCSE double award science than other schools nationally. All pupils achieve a result and a higher proportion achieve the higher grades A*-C. Girls and boys achieve equally well in science, although there was a dip in boys' results in 2002. The head of department analysed results and identified underachievement by some boys. In 2003, pupils, who were dropping behind, were identified and offered extra support. Boys' results improved in Years 10 and 11, targets were met and the trend is upwards. Overall, the achievement of all pupils in science is good, and very good in Years 7 to 9.
45. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is better in Years 7-9 than in Years 10-11. In some lessons, teaching and learning are very good or excellent. In one very well-planned lesson observed, the teacher quickly and clearly explained what to do. She asked challenging questions to a targeted range of pupils to ensure they understood and were clear on what to do. Pupils made excellent progress because of the teacher's encouragement and insistence on high standards of achievement.

46. Progress made by all pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good as a result of a range of strategies used in lessons to involve pupils in their own learning. ICT is used effectively in Years 7 to 9 to enthuse pupils. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the teacher used PowerPoint to interest the pupils in placing a number of different organisms in the correct environment. Literacy development is supported through the use of key words and writing frames.
47. Teachers are helped in targeting work by good assessments of what pupils can do. When underachievement is identified, the teachers take action. For example, in Key Stage 3, they use booster materials to improve learning effectively. Marking is regular and overall achievement is tracked through regular tests. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have a clear view of what the examinations demand. Marking provides pupils with clear information on how to reach a higher grade and they respond to teachers' comments.
48. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of science works with a strong team, which is taking advantage of the opportunities provided through national initiatives, such as the Key Stage 3 strategy, to improve teaching and the curriculum. The lack of opportunity for pupils to use ICT in lessons, due to the lack of computers available, limits the range of resources available to them. Technicians work efficiently and effectively and provide very good support to teachers.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- Standards in ICT are rising, but remain below national expectations.
- The new head of department has a clear understanding of what is needed to improve standards.
- The opportunity provided by the department for all pupils to gain a full GCSE in ICT.
- Use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers do not use a wide enough range of teaching strategies to ensure the needs and expectations of all pupils are met.
- Assessment procedures are not in place to monitor the progress pupils make effectively.

Commentary

49. Achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is currently unsatisfactory. The recently appointed head of department has identified gaps in the acquisition of skills of pupils in this subject. The level of work set for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is very basic to help redress this issue, but, at present, standards by the end of Year 9 are below national expectations.
50. The GCSE (short course) results for 2002 were in line with national expectations in the A*-G grade range, but well below in the higher A*-C range. Pupils' progress was restricted by the absence of separate specialist ICT lessons when they were in Years 7, 8 and 9 and their consequent lack of certain basic skills.
51. Standards seen in lessons indicate an improving picture and are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 11. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 create effective web pages using text, clipart and hyperlinks. The programme of study for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has been very well planned by the current head of department. For pupils in Year 10, who wish to take a full GCSE in ICT, additional weekly one-hour lessons after school are planned. During the inspection week, the head of department held an introductory lesson, which was attended by 32 pupils. At present, no whole-school audit of ICT provision has taken place. This has led to a weakness in the opportunities provided for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 to receive their full ICT entitlement. From September 2003, all pupils in

Years 7, 8, and 9 will have separate lessons in ICT. This will improve the curriculum offered to the pupils and will support the drive to raise standards at the end of Year 9.

52. Good leadership and management is provided by the current head of department, who has taken over extra responsibilities in this curriculum area since September 2003. He has a very clear vision for the future direction for ICT and has already used his expertise to ensure an imaginative means of funding the department using open-source software. The support he provides to other colleagues is good. With greater support from the senior management team to provide greater opportunities for all teachers to access training, he has the potential for moving the subject forward by ensuring all staff can improve their ICT skills. This will, in turn, improve the range of learning opportunities for all pupils. A well-qualified technician has been appointed this term to manage the network for the whole school.
53. Teaching is currently satisfactory overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge, the majority of lessons are very well prepared, and relationships in the classroom are good. Teaching across lessons is variable. In some lessons, insufficient recognition is given to the individual learning needs of pupils and the learning objectives for the lesson are not clearly stated. In these lessons, the activities provided are not sufficiently varied to enable all pupils to make progress. The lack of assessment information available to staff relating to the prior learning of pupils makes it difficult to deliver a curriculum to meet their needs and enable progress to be closely monitored.

ICT across the curriculum

54. The use of ICT in other subjects is unsatisfactory and consists mostly of word processing. In some cases, such as modern foreign languages, pupils only retype work, which they have previously written, and are, therefore, experiencing little of the usefulness and power of word processing. In art, pupils are able to retrieve images, but no evidence was seen of digital imagery or image manipulation.
55. Good use is made of ICT in design and technology and very good use in music. In design and technology, ICT is taught according to National Curriculum levels and standards in ICT are well above average. The department has been given some sophisticated software by a local firm, which enables pupils in Years 10 and 11 to design shoes on screen. The science department has an effective curriculum map identifying science modules for all year groups. This identifies ICT experiences in data logging (sound, light, light gate and temperature), word processing, spreadsheets, databases, presentation software and research on the Internet. In history, pupils use the Internet well for research. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to use ICT in their science lessons. Interactive whiteboards are available in some classrooms and are used well in art and music. In ICT, the boards are used effectively for demonstration purposes.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Overall, provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Marking is not consistently used alongside assessment data to set targets to help pupils learn.
- The relationships between pupils and teachers are good, leading to an improvement in standards.

- Classroom management provides a secure and challenging learning environment for all pupils.
- The head of department provides clear direction to the work of the department.
- There is insufficient fieldwork in Years 7-9.
- The displays in the department create a stimulating learning environment.

Commentary

56. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are in line with national expectations. GCSE results in the A*-C range in 2002 were in line with the national average. Passes in the A*-G range were below the national average, nevertheless, most pupils gained a grade. Girls achieved a higher proportion of A*-G grades than boys in 2002. In the 2002 teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9, the percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 5 or above was below the national average. Evidence from lessons shows that pupils' achievement is now good and they are now attaining in line with national expectations.
57. Overall, teaching is good with some inconsistencies in Years 7 to 9. Achievement in lessons seen was good because teachers are very imaginative and create a successful, challenging and supportive atmosphere in which pupils thrive. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are willing to take part in discussions, listen to each other and share ideas. Most pupils benefit from the setting arrangements as this enables teachers to set work and provide resources tailored to their needs. Learning support assistants are deployed well to work with special educational needs pupils and make a significant contribution to learning. By Year 11, individual support and good relationships with staff enable all pupils to make good progress. Year 11 lessons seen during the inspection were good.
58. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. At best, comments are helpful and aid learning. However, in some classes, there were missed opportunities to show pupils how to improve their work and to acknowledge what they do well. Department systems for recording pupils' progress, monitoring work and pupil target setting have been successfully introduced. The next step is for the department to provide regular feedback to pupils using these targets, so pupils can be involved in assessing their own progress. Homework is used to challenge and effectively extend what is learned in the lesson. There are too few opportunities for fieldwork in Years 7 to 9 and this was identified as a weakness in the last report. Pupils' skills of enquiry are limited as fieldwork experience is limited to a Bristol study in Year 10, and a traffic survey in Year 9.
59. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department manages the day-to-day running of the department efficiently. She is a good role-model for the rest of the department and has worked hard to bring about change and to introduce various good initiatives. Displays in the geography areas are stimulating and help to create an attractive teaching and learning environment for all pupils and staff.

History

Overall, provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment and marking are not used explicitly enough to assist pupils to make progress with their targets
- Good relationships and classroom management of pupils supports a busy working atmosphere in most lessons
- The opportunities for individual support enables pupils to make good progress

- Creative use of resources and good planning of lessons enhances the teaching and learning of all pupils
60. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that standards are in line with those seen nationally. The 2002 GCSE history results were in line with the national average for grades in the A*-C range and broadly in line with those achieved by similar schools for grades A*-G. Girls achieved a higher proportion of A*-C grades than boys.
61. The quality of teaching is good overall. Good teacher knowledge and the use of stimulating resources encourage and foster a real interest in learning amongst the pupils. Opportunities for independent learning are encouraged using information and communication technology. The exciting environment within the department makes history a successful and popular subject. As a result, in all lessons observed, the achievement of all pupils was good.

Religious Education

Overall, provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is well led and supported by very clear documentation.
- Pupils are taught well, reach above average standards of attainment and make good progress in their work.
- In some lessons there is a tendency to teach the whole class at the same level so that work is too easy for the higher-attaining pupils.
- Pupils write well for a variety of purposes, but they are not always given enough encouragement to develop their ideas in discussion.

Commentary

62. In Year 7, pupils join the school with average standards and attain above average standards in their Year 9 tests and in the GCSE examinations. These standards are mirrored in the pupils' current work. Boys and girls reach comparable standards, though girls write more clearly and with a wider range of vocabulary. Almost all pupils achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment. They show an increasing confidence in handling religious ideas. At the heart of these achievements lies the enthusiasm and dedication of the head of department, who has worked very hard to place the subject on a secure footing in the school. Pupils enjoy their work and often engage in animated discussion of moral and religious views. Strengths are the quality of the pupils' notes and the range of writing in their workbooks.
63. Teaching is good overall and is driven by a desire to relate religious ideas to the lives and interests of the pupils. There is some stimulating work on Jewish initiation rites and, in the upper years, on different religious responses to the question of poverty. Teachers are good at relating different religious traditions to one another. Pupils are made aware, for instance, of the many myths of origin and their relation to the creation account in the Jewish and Christian creation narratives. This work leads to a growing curiosity amongst the pupils, who are quick to see the common strands of belief and moral understanding in the different faiths they study. Teaching is occasionally weakened by the provision of work that is too easy for the higher-attaining pupils. There are some missed opportunities to extend pupils' ideas through discussion.
64. A real strength is the quality of leadership and management, particularly the work done by the head of department to restore the pupils' interest in religious education and place

it on a firm footing in the curriculum. Clear and helpful documentation provides non-specialist teachers with a solid framework for planning lessons.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Overall, provision in design and technology is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in all design and technology subjects because of the very good teaching they receive.
- Pupils in Year 11 have very well-developed independent learning skills.
- The leadership and management are very good and are dedicated to achieving high standards.

Commentary

65. Standards by the end of Year 9 and 11 are well above average. GCSE results in 2002 were well above the national average. Girls performed much better than boys overall. Unvalidated results in the 2003 examinations confirm design and technology as one of the most successful departments in the school.
66. By the end of Year 9, pupils' making skills are well above average. They use a variety of tools and equipment accurately and with confidence in all material areas. Pupils' designing skills are well above average as a result of the very high expectations and creative approach of the teachers. By the end of Year 11, standards of designing and making are well above average. This represents very good achievement given pupils' standards upon entry to the school. Pupils' work is very good and often outstanding across all material areas. Thorough and detailed analysis, creative design and high-quality making characterise pupils' coursework; this reflects the commitment and pride that pupils take in their work.
67. Teaching throughout the department is very good. In Years 7 to 9, pupils benefit from knowledgeable and committed teachers. Lessons are always well paced and have clear learning objectives. Pupils are actively engaged in the lessons that capture the interest of pupils of all abilities; pupils with special educational needs learn at a rate that is similar to all other pupils. Positive learning environments are created by the very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and the purposeful relationships between pupils and teachers.
68. In Years 10 and 11, teachers use their own knowledge and experience to challenge and extend the learners. Pupils benefit from the high expectations set by teachers and respond positively to the challenging activities. Assessment is used effectively to motivate pupils and to set targets for future improvement. However, the most remarkable feature of the teaching is the capacity that pupils have developed for independent learning. As a result of consistently very good teaching, pupils have the ability to apply knowledge and understanding effectively when designing and planning.
69. The strength of the leadership and management of design and technology lies in the understanding, commitment and shared vision of the joint heads of department. The strong team ethos and commitment to continuous improvement have enabled the subject to sustain its very high standards. As a result of the focus on raising attainment and a commitment to high standards, very good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Overall, provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 11 are improving, but are currently too low.
- Provision for ICT in art does not enable pupils to experiment with new media during class teaching time.
- Achievement in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress from the end of Year 6 to the end of Year 9 is not used effectively enough to set challenging individual targets for improvement.

Commentary

70. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations. Progress in art is very good, as pupils' standards on entry to the school are below average. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve very well.
71. Since the previous inspection, standards at the end of Year 11 have fallen. The 2002 GCSE results were below the national average and boys' achievements were considerably lower than that of girls. Standards in the work seen for the current Year 11 GCSE examination groups show considerable improvement and departmental staff are providing sufficient support to raise standards in the future. Nevertheless, achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
72. In Years 7 through to 11, pupils are proficient in painting, drawing and working with mixed media, and they increasingly experiment confidently with less-familiar materials. Pupils do not have enough chance to work with a computer in their art lessons and, consequently, their coursework folders show very few examples of computer-aided design. Drawing from observation is of a high standard. Pupils are very good at research and evaluation, and are able to talk about their work and the work of others with confidence.
73. Teaching and learning in art are good, with some pockets of outstanding practice, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Planning and management of lessons are very good. Most lessons are well paced, showing good classroom management and efficient deployment of materials. Independent learning is promoted, learning objectives are clearly explained and techniques are demonstrated with flair and expertise. Teaching and learning are less effective when critical and contextual written work is over-emphasised and pupils are not given enough opportunity to explore their own cultural and personal experiences. Literacy is emphasised throughout the school in written and oral work. Learning opportunities for all pupils are enhanced through a variety of art trips and field visits, but the department does not make best use of artists' residencies. The after-school art club is effective in raising standards. The employment of a technician provides a valuable departmental resource, and classroom support assistants are deployed effectively, especially when working with special needs pupils.
74. Department schemes of work are well constructed and linked with clear assessment objectives. Pupils' progress is tracked across Years 10 and 11, and examination pupils are given appropriate and challenging targets. Current systems to monitor the progress made by pupils from the end of Year 6 to Year 9 do not result in challenging targets for individual pupils. As a result, pupils cannot easily monitor their own progress.

75. Since the last inspection, leadership and management of the subject have improved and are now good. Between the time of the last inspection and the appointment of the current head of department in September 2001, standards in art at the end of Years 9 and 11 dropped. The current rise in standards seen in the work produced by the current Year 11 is the result of the systems she has put in place. Accommodation continues to restrict some aspects of learning as there is a lack of adequate storage space, especially for large-scale and three-dimensional work. There is insufficient space for art administration and ICT equipment.

Drama

Overall, provision in drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved in drama in Years 10 and 11 are good because of the excellent subject knowledge and very good leadership of the head of department.
- Pupils' skills in self-evaluation, and the sensitive way in which they manage peer-evaluation, reflect the very good relationships established between teachers and pupils.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching within the department lead to variations in levels of achievement.
- The poor behaviour and attitudes of some younger pupils limit progress.

Commentary

76. The percentage of pupils gaining a grade in the A* to C range in the GCSE examinations in 2002 was above the national average. All pupils entered for the examination gained a grade. Unconfirmed results for 2003 show that standards have been maintained. There has been an increase in the percentage of pupils gaining grades A and B.
77. The standards of work seen in lessons and in the coursework of pupils in Years 10 and 11 show high levels of progress and achievement is very good. The standards of work seen in lessons of pupils in Years 7 and 9 are good overall, but too variable. Where teaching is good, pupils achieve well, but on occasion, teaching is not as good and achievement could be better. Some of the younger pupils, particularly in groups of lower-attaining pupils, have poor attitudes, resulting in unsatisfactory behaviour, which also limits the pupils' progress. As a result, achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory.
78. Overall, the quality of teaching in the department is good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 display very high skill levels of self-evaluation. The regular setting of individual and class targets for improvement is a good aid to reflection and, therefore, to learning. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are very good. Teachers' planning is excellent and pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons and remain engaged and productive throughout. Relationships between pupils and teacher are very good and pupils respond well to the high level of challenge. Pupils' written work is very good. High-attaining pupils produce scripts, for example monologues, which display a sophisticated synthesis between language and direction. Teachers use prompt sheets with low-attaining pupils to good effect. Pupils have a range of opportunities for extra-curricular activity and there are plans for more in the future. Currently, a number of pupils are rehearsing *The Tempest* as their entry to a schools Shakespeare festival.
79. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department is innovative and has a clear vision of how drama across the curriculum can support learning. She has high aspirations and has set up effective systems to track, evaluate and support pupil progress. However, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for her to monitor and develop the quality of teaching within the area.

80. Progress since the time of the last inspection has been good. Provision has increased in Years 7 to 9 with all year groups now benefiting from separate lessons of drama.

Music

Overall, provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress and reach high standards.
- There is very rich provision for extended curricular work.
- Very good use is made of ICT.
- The subject leader has excellent professional and management skills.

Commentary

81. When they start the school, pupils' standards of attainment in music are well below expected levels. By the end of Year 9, most pupils are currently working at or beyond expected levels and, on inspection evidence, many are reaching very high levels. This reflects an improvement in the 2002 end-of-Year 9 position. GCSE results have been rising and in 2002 were close to national averages. Standards of attainment have continued to rise and Year 11 pupils are now reaching very high standards.
82. Pupils make very good progress in lessons and achievement is very good. Year 7 pupils are starting to use technical language to discuss music they have heard, and by Year 9, pupils can read music and play their own complex compositions on keyboards. GCSE coursework is very imaginative and extremely well presented and notated.
83. Teaching in lessons, extended curricular activities and instrumental lessons is very good. High expectations and good relationships allow pupils to enjoy making music. Lessons are well planned to match pupils' interests and needs and very good use is made of ICT to give pupils a pride in their work. Homework is well used. In some lessons, the arrangements to support lower-attaining pupils to improve their literacy skills through their written work are unsatisfactory. The resources, time and the limited accommodation for music are very well managed. The leadership of staff is very good and results in very effective teamwork. Many pupils benefit from instrumental lessons and the work to extend their learning in orchestra, bands and choir has outstandingly good features. An impressive range of concerts, foreign trips and musical events in the school and the local community brings enormous benefit to the whole school community and to the musical and personal development of the pupils involved. If the school is successful in its bid to gain specialist arts college status, the music department is well placed to take a major lead.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

During the inspection week, this subject was sampled and no judgement can be made about standards and achievement.

Overall, provision in physical education is **very good**.

84. This is a thriving subject where the overall quality of provision is very good. It is improving steadily under the very good leadership of the head of department. Very good teaching engages the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils, with the result that they achieve very well in relation to their earlier attainment. Pupils also do well in competitive sport and games at district and local level. The excellent accommodation is used effectively to provide a wide variety of activities.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

During the inspection week, the work in this subject area was sampled and no judgement can be made about standards and achievement.

Health and social care

Overall, provision in health and social care is **very good**.

85. Work seen in lessons by pupils studying for a double award vocational GCSE in health and social care are above those expected nationally. Very good teaching enables pupils to learn well and attain high standards. In the lessons observed, all pupils were highly motivated, determined to gain the highest possible grades at public examination level and were aware of what they needed to do to gain them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Overall, provision in personal, social and health education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too little time is allocated to deliver an effective programme.
- The provision for pupil support and guidance is good.
- There is no leadership for personal, social and health education.
- There is a good range of opportunities outside the formal curriculum, which support pupils' personal and social development.

Commentary

86. Following the last inspection, the provision for personal and social education was reviewed, but the school has not yet implemented a whole-school planned programme and the amount of time allocated is too little to effectively teach the programme. There is a comprehensive programme for careers education in Years 9 to 11, but the time allocation is insufficient and, therefore, leads to unsatisfactory provision.
87. Standards and achievement are unsatisfactory across the school. The support and guidance provided by tutors for all pupils is good. One result is that the majority of pupils are confident and willing to take responsibility. Prefects, members of the school council and those involved in the house system are articulate and mature about their roles and responsibilities. Some pupils in Year 11 participate in the Team Enterprise initiative. This programme involves pupils in making decisions in a business setting and contributes to the development of their analytical and team-building skills. However, the lack of formally allocated curriculum time for PSHE makes it difficult for pupils to effectively develop their knowledge, understanding and skills to the expected level.
88. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but is too dependent on the skills and commitment of individual teachers rather than on an agreed and coherent programme and, as a result, the quality of the pupils' learning is too variable.
89. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is no clear vision or agreed plan for delivery, and leadership and co-ordination from senior management are essential. Subject areas have some responsibility and heads of year use assemblies and tutor time when they can. The relationship between personal, social and health education, careers education and citizenship needs to be carefully considered so that leaders can provide a clear direction for future development.

Citizenship

Overall, provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National Curriculum requirements are not fulfilled.
- There is no clear vision and direction for a whole-school approach to the delivery of citizenship.
- There is no provision for the monitoring and assessment of citizenship.
- There is an improving range of opportunities for pupils to participate in the life of the school and take responsibility, but too few planned opportunities for pupils to develop skills in citizenship outside of the formal curriculum.

Commentary

90. Provision for citizenship is not sufficiently integrated into the planning in all subject areas. In some subjects, citizenship is identified in documentation and aspects of the citizenship curriculum are taught through other subjects such as geography, religious education and drama. However, in many subjects, citizenship is not effectively delivered and pupils are not sufficiently aware of what they are supposed to be studying in this subject area.
91. Overall, standards in citizenship are satisfactory, but vary according to the strengths of individual departments. Many pupils understand elements of the democratic process through involvement in elections for the school council and house responsibilities. There are individual examples of achievement in citizenship, but formal recording and monitoring systems are yet to be developed. Achievement is unsatisfactory.
92. Teaching is satisfactory and often good where it occurs within individual subjects. In some subjects, such as history and religious education, teachers plan to cover citizenship, but this is not common practice across all subjects. The school offers a good range of planned opportunities for citizenship outside of the formal curriculum and, for many pupils, the extra-curricular opportunities provide a valuable contribution to their development as future citizens. There are developing opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility in leading their own learning and recent initiatives to promote pupil participation will support this.
93. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because there is no coherent, whole-school programme. The leaders of the subject have both the capacity and willingness to improve the planning and delivery. They know that many pupils are not aware of being taught citizenship and they have identified where the requirements for reporting and assessing are not met.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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