

INSPECTION REPORT

**SLOUGH AND ETON CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SCHOOL**

Slough

LEA area: Slough

Unique reference number: 110081

Headteacher: Mr Graham Lush

Lead inspector: Dr Faysal Mikdadi

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th October 2003

Inspection number: 261475

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 11 - 16
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 634

School address: Ragstone Road
Slough
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Telephone number: (01753) 520 824
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Zafar Ali

Date of previous inspection: 12th January 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Slough and Eton Church of England School is an 11 to 16 secondary modern non-selective school in Slough. It has 634 on roll of whom 33 are in the post-16 extension course offered to those who need to extend their learning in preparation for further education. Boys outnumber girls. The school serves culturally diverse communities. Over a third of students come from a substantially deprived background with a significant number being refugees and asylum seekers. Four out of five students speak a first language other than English. Four-hundred-and-fifty-eight students receive support funded by an Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. The largest of the minority ethnic groups is that of British Pakistani Muslims. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. Over 40 per cent of local students are creamed off to go to the local grammar schools as well as to other schools across the boundary in Buckinghamshire. A third of the school population is identified as having special educational needs, which is almost double the national average. When students join Year 7 the majority come in with significant weaknesses in literacy and numeracy skills and their attainment is well below the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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24142	Sylvia Argyle	Team inspector	Art and design, 16+ art and design
10679	Michael Aston	Team inspector	16+ information and communication technology
11021	Leonora Davies	Team inspector	Music
14596	Anthony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Religious education
20457	Brian Fletcher	Team inspector	Mathematics
20832	Mohindar Galowalia	Team inspector	English as an additional language, community languages
16786	Dr Selwyn Hodge	Team inspector	Science
8183	Gillian Keevil	Team inspector	Special educational needs
21825	Eileen Kelly	Team inspector	Design and technology
12003	Dr Andrew Marfleet	Team inspector	English
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10666	Patricia Wheeler	Team inspector	Geography, history

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Slough and Eton Church of England School, which is a small multi-racial school in Slough, was inspected on 6th - 9th October 2003 by an inspection team led by Dr Faysal Mikdadi.

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which provides its students with many opportunities to achieve well. The headteacher leads the school very well. He and his senior team have succeeded in uniting the staff who work hard to help all students, including both the majority who have English as an additional language needs and the minority ethnic white students who are fully included into the life of the school. **The school achieves good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- it provides good value added education for its students particularly between Years 9 and 11 and enables them to make good progress regardless of ability, race, background or any other individual feature;
- staff share a high commitment to raise standards and to support all students;
- relationships are good and students are given many opportunities to experience success and to have their self-esteem raised, including many activities outside the classroom;
- although teachers mark work regularly and give a lot of praise for effort, they do not always tell their students what to do next in order to improve;
- provision for the arts is very good;
- there are very good links between the school and its local community. These help students to receive support both in and outside the school and to achieve well;
- the headteacher does an excellent job raising large amounts of extra funds for the school;
- although test and examination results are below the national averages, students do well given their prior attainment when they enter the school. Students' language and number skills improve;
- there are three subject areas with weaknesses in teaching and in leadership: geography, information and communication technology (ICT) and French;
- the use of learning support assistants is inconsistent across the school; and
- the health and safety risk assessment is incomplete.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Leadership keeps a close eye on how agreed policies are used and ensures consistent practice. Subject areas are well reviewed, with a strong focus on teaching and learning and the annual reviews focus strongly on student achievement. All students make good progress. The school is a racially harmonious community. Weaknesses in teaching have been addressed satisfactorily. The use of computers across subjects has improved significantly, although the teaching of ICT, as a subject, is unsatisfactory. Health and safety issues raised have been addressed, although the current risk assessment is yet incomplete.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	C	D	E	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 is good overall. The standards of work seen during the inspection are below the national expectations with students starting off with very poor language skills which improve significantly especially in the first three years of schooling. In particular students with English as an additional language make good progress in learning English and consequently do well. Students'

competence in mathematics is low, as is competence in the use of information and communication technology although provision for the use of computers across subjects has improved. Students with special educational needs achieve well. Achievement in subjects is at least satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 in English and mathematics, in Years 7 to 9 in art and design and in all years in science, citizenship, design and technology, modern languages, music, physical education and post-16 ICT. It is at least good in Years 7 to 9 in English, mathematics and art and design as well as in all years in citizenship, history, religious education and post 16 business studies. Achievement is very good in Years 10 and 11 as well as post-16 art and design. It is unsatisfactory in GCSE French, in geography and in ICT. The overwhelming majority of students enter the school with very low prior attainment. Standards improve by the time they leave, although in comparison with all schools in the country they are still below the national averages. However, students make good progress and do well to achieve these standards so that in comparison with similar schools, they are well above average.

Students' personal qualities are developed well. Provision for social and moral development helps create good relationships and very good racial harmony. Students behave well and they arrive punctually to school although they are occasionally late to some lessons. A few behave badly in lessons but teachers deal with them effectively. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching is at least **satisfactory and often good**. Teachers work hard to enhance their students' self esteem and to praise their efforts. They do not always tell them what they need to do next in order to improve. Students do not get sufficient opportunities to work independently although older students get such opportunities outside the classroom where they organise and run events effectively. The school works well with its community to help students learn.

The school takes **good** care of its students. It works closely with parents and has **very good** links with its community, resulting in opportunities for students to enhance their achievement through better links with the home, improved setting of homework and work with other local schools, including visits to and from the local primaries.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He has inspired his staff and students to do their very best. Governors support as well as challenge senior managers. Day-to-day school management is **satisfactory**.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Both parents and students invariably speak highly of the school and of its provision.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- ensure that teachers assess their students' work in a way that ensures that each student knows what he/she needs to do next to improve their work;
- enhance the quality of teaching and learning in geography, information and communication technology and French; and
- ensure that learning support assistants are more effectively used across all subject areas.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the full ICT programme of study is covered; and
- complete the health and safety risk assessment.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in all five years and for those taking extension GNVQ subjects after 16 is good. Standards are below the national averages although the standards of those attaining five or more GCSE pass grades A*-G is above the national average. Value added is remarkably high. It is excellent in both key stages with significant progress being made in all five years but especially in Years 10 and 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The students' prior attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average. By the end of their time in the school their achievement is good.
- Many students join the school with very low literacy skills. The majority have English as an additional language (EAL) needs. They make good progress and the achievement of students with EAL is good.
- The achievement of students with special educational needs (SEN) is at least satisfactory and it is good in history and music.
- Gifted and talented students make good progress and achieve well.
- Students' attainment in English and mathematics is below national expectations. It is well below in Years 7 to 9 in mathematics.
- Students' competence in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is well below the national expectations.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (29.4)	33.3 (33)
mathematics	29.3 (29.3)	34.7 (34.4)
science	27.8 (27.4)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 108 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	30.4 (29.8)	49.9 (48.4)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96.3 (97.9)	90.9 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	31.8 (32.6)	39.8 (39)

There were 108 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. When the students join the school their prior attainment is well below the national averages for all three core subjects. The majority have serious shortcomings in both literacy and numeracy skills. The majority use English as an additional language, a significant barrier to their learning. By the end of Year 9 students' attainment in all three core subjects is below the national averages. Over the last three years the trend in National Curriculum test results has gone up so that, by the summer of 2003, students attained the highest results the school has had with

the biggest improvement being in mathematics. The targets set are ambitious and they are based on effective use of data on prior attainment. These targets are met.

2. Attainment in the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 is well below the national expectations. Results over the five year period to 2002 doubled for the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C. The figure dipped in 2003. Almost every student in the school attains five or more GCSE grades A*-G which is above the national average for all schools. In 2002 results were in line with the national averages in double science and business studies and above in art and design. Results were well below the national averages in English, mathematics, design and technology, English literature, French, geography, information and communication technology, religious education and Urdu. Art and design improved in 2003.
3. Achievement is equally good for those students taking the one extra year extension vocational courses in art and design, business studies and information and communication technology. Examination results are in line with national averages in art and design and business studies and below in information and communication technology.
4. Students' achievement is good. In Years 7 to 9 students, including those with English as an additional language needs, make sufficient progress in their literacy and numeracy skills to enable them to access the curriculum. Students generally do as well as they are able to and they make good progress. Comparing the students' achievement to other students in similar circumstances locally, students are in the highest quarter by the end of Year 9 and in the very top five per cent by the end of Year 11.
5. Students with English as an additional language achieve well as do gifted and talented students. Those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They achieve well in music and history but their achievement is unsatisfactory in French and geography.
6. Achievement is good because the school has made it a priority to enhance its students' self-esteem. Students join the school having been unsuccessful in passing the Eleven Plus. Many have significant weaknesses in their use of language. The headteacher has specifically set strategies in place aimed at making students feel that they are capable of succeeding. Teachers and other staff in the school share this vision. Extensive opportunities are provided to enable students to experience a sense of success, eg extra-curricular activities, school council, a highly successful debating society, twilight sessions, tapping into home languages and effective support funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. These activities and the teachers' commitment to their students' realising their potential cause achievement to be good and in some areas better, eg in art and design, students are given such opportunities for independent learning that many of them shine in a way that had not been possible for them before. Other subject areas are building on this success. Students showed the extent of their achievement by organising a highly successful and outstandingly well run debating society. They took full responsibility for organising and running it, asked intelligent and challenging questions of their distinguished visitor and behaved immaculately all through the session. Such occasions are deliberately created by the school to enhance a sense of personal success.
7. Students who are not ready to go on to further education stay on at the school for an extra year and follow GCSE retakes and a choice of one of three GNVQ subjects in which they make at least satisfactory progress. During the extra year this small number of students get a chance to mature and enhance their achievement.
8. In order to broaden students' social and cultural horizons, the school governors and senior managers have worked hard to entice new students from as many ethnic and cultural backgrounds as possible. The result has been a lively and successful mix, which has enhanced students' perception of their individual abilities to achieve well alongside others. Consequently, the value added that the school gives its students is impressive.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, students' attitudes to school and behaviour are satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality to school are good, though punctuality to lessons is at times unsatisfactory. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of students behave well, have positive attitudes and enjoy being at school.
- The level of attendance is above the national average.
- The school's provision for social and moral development leads to good relationships around the school and very good harmony between the different cultures.
- Some students behave badly in lessons and affect the learning of others.
- Some students' late arrival to lessons reduces learning time.

Commentary

9. The level of attendance is now above the national figure and reflects the various initiatives the school has introduced, including the appointment of an attendance officer and the regular monitoring and support by the senior management team. Nevertheless some families still need to take their children on extended visits to be with relatives abroad; sometimes these last for up to six weeks. The school is working hard to lessen the adverse effect that such absence has on students' achievement, eg setting relevant homework and supporting students to catch up on their return.

10. Punctuality is very good at the start of the day with few students arriving late and, even then, normally by only a few minutes. The very effective procedures at that time result in the students settling very quickly ensuring a prompt start to the day. However, the start of some of the lessons during the day is disrupted by up to ten minutes by the late arrival of some students. In some physical education lessons this, together with changing and moving to outside pitches, results in the students being active for only 20 minutes of the 50 minute allocated lesson time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.0	School data:	1.3
National data:	7.8	National data:	1.2

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

11. As at the time of the previous inspection students' social development is good. The school provides very good opportunities for students to interact with classmates in sports activities, group work and paired discussions. The students in Year 11 have a range of responsibilities around the school as prefects and others act as 'friendly ears' or mentors. The school council enables students of all ages to work together. Their awareness of the wider world is enhanced with, for example, inter-school sports matches and activities in the local community. Students respond to such opportunities with a high degree of maturity as seen in the high quality question and answer session with a local police commander. This was a debating society event successfully set up and run by Year 11 students. Students' relationships with their peers and with adults often contribute to the quality of work in lessons and to the progress they make. Nevertheless, a number of students, especially boys, were seen to be disrespectful to the teachers, not following their guidance and causing the learning of others to be adversely affected.

12. The students' personal development is satisfactory. Their spiritual development is enhanced at the beginning of the day by assemblies. As well as providing a brief time for reflection, school assemblies help students to develop a sense of belonging to a whole school community. The students are from a wide range of different cultures. They mix well with each other and they show respect for each other's beliefs. Racial harmony is one of the main strengths of the school, which has deliberately and successfully expanded the racial and cultural mix over the

last few years. Nevertheless the teachers closely direct much of the work in lessons and opportunities for independent working are limited.

13. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Its strength lies in the fact that many subjects provide students with a fuller understanding of the world around them. The study of world faiths in religious education helps them to appreciate others' practices and beliefs. The school builds upon the religious background of its students, for example, to enable them to celebrate Eid within the school itself. Nevertheless, given the great linguistic range of students, the celebration of this and the cultural diversity of modern day Britain are not strongly reflected in the school's activities.
14. The students' attitudes towards learning are satisfactory. The majority of students enjoy their work and want to do well. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and usually settle quickly to the task given. They respond well in those lessons where the good management and pace maintain their interest. Nevertheless, many of the students can be passive during lessons if the work is not presented in an interesting way. This leads to a lack of attention and an unsettled atmosphere, limiting learning. In other lessons they appear to listen to the teacher but do not attempt to answer questions or to take part in discussion.
15. Overall, students' behaviour is satisfactory. The majority behave well and respond well to the moral guidance. The Raising Achievement Centre does a good job in helping improve students' behaviour through guidance and through its stated policy of raising self-esteem. They behave well in the classroom, at break and lunchtimes and move sensibly about the school. They are generally open, polite to adults and welcoming to visitors. When waiting to be served at break and lunchtime the queues are orderly. However, in some classes the inappropriate behaviour affects the learning of the majority; during the inspection examples were seen of the students showing a lack of respect for the teachers, being reluctant to obey instructions or to pay attention. Students state that instances of bullying are rare and the school has appropriate procedures to deal with any incidents that may take place. Students also confirm that behaviour has improved significantly in recent years. As shown in the table below the number of exclusions is low.

Ethnic background of students	Exclusions in the last school year	
	No of fixed period exclusions	No of permanent exclusions
Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	
White - British	49	1
White - Other	7	0
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	5	0
Mixed - White and Black African	1	0
Mixed - White and Asian	3	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	426	14
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	6	0
Asian or Asian British - other	10	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	6	1
Black or Black British - African	13	0
Black or Black British - other	37	0
Any other ethnic group	17	0
Parent/student preferred not to say	4	0
Information not obtained	47	0

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

16. Post-16 students are highly motivated. They are keen to do well and work hard to achieve well. Their behaviour around the school provides a good role model for the rest of the school. They are self-disciplined and students are able to think for themselves as seen in an art and design lesson when they worked with concentration with no teacher present. The presence of the small number of post-16 students following three extension vocational courses has a dramatic effect on the rest of the school. They are role models to younger students who see them as having succeeded in reaching further education. Younger students are beginning to talk about going on to further and higher education and those that are not ready to do so know that they have this opportunity for an extra year during which to prepare themselves in various ways. One such student, who had performed rather badly in his GCSEs, reflected on the opportunities now available to him “to have another go” through the extension courses.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided is satisfactory. Its main strength lies in the value that the school adds to its students’ achievement under the very good leadership of the headteacher. This is an inclusive school that gives its students the opportunities to achieve their potential. Such opportunities for achievement are also made available to those who are not quite ready to go on to further education. The areas of weakness include the provision for the use of information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and geography although the school is aware of the need for improvements in these areas and has them as priorities within its improvement plans.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is invariably satisfactory and often a great deal better. Students learn within a good ethos provided by an effective school. The main strength of the school is its committed and hard working staff who do a great deal to enhance their students’ self-esteem. A main weakness in the teaching is the insufficient use of information gleaned from assessment to help individual students improve their performance and the lack of sufficient opportunities for students to work independently.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are enthusiastic, keen, caring and hard working.
- Relationships between teachers and their students are good.
- Lessons are clearly structured to allow students to work at their pace and to make progress although there is a lack of opportunities for students to work independently.
- Although there is a great deal of assessment data, these are not being effectively used to enhance learning by telling students exactly what they need to do in order to improve.
- Teachers work hard in and out of the classroom to encourage their students to achieve and to give them a sense of well-being and enhance their self-esteem.
- Learning support assistants are not consistently effectively used.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 143 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (2%)	13 (9%)	49 (34%)	65 (46%)	10 (7%)	3 (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 are seen.

17. This is a school with teachers who passionately care for their students. The overwhelming majority of students come into school with very low self-esteem, caused by failing the Eleven Plus, by a lack of literacy skills, by frequently economically deprived backgrounds and by the difficulties and confusions that often attend being of dual heritage. Teachers’ first stated priority

is to enhance self-esteem which they do successfully through high expectations of behaviour, a great deal of patience with individual needs, running lessons in structured small bite size, offering opportunities for activities that enhance social skills and by treating all students with respect and courtesy. Students whose home language is other than English are given appropriate support where needed and the use of their home language, though infrequent, is encouraged and treated with respect. Teachers and other staff in the school do a good job encouraging students to strive for higher levels of achievement. Students find it hard to concentrate and to remain on-task for long periods of time. Teachers plan lessons with such a structure as to allow students to be guided through tasks at their own pace. Teachers set appropriate homework that helps students to learn further. The result of all these positive qualities is that students are encouraged to remain engaged with their work.

18. The school has very good data on prior attainment. These data are widely diffused but inconsistently used. Teachers mark work regularly and make great efforts to praise their students in order to raise their self-esteem. What teachers do not always do is give students comprehensive advice on how to improve. The consequence is that there are subjects where students repeat the same errors in their work. The school is aware of this weakness in teachers' assessment of students' work and has plans to offer opportunities for relevant continuing professional development. A significant minority of students arrive to lessons late after breaks. This often causes a loss of valuable learning time. Support by learning support assistants is variable and this is not being fully addressed because their work is insufficiently monitored.
19. Teaching in the three post-16 vocational subjects is satisfactory in information and communication technology, better in business studies and very good in art and design. Teachers work very hard to help these students ready themselves for further education not only through classroom strategies but also through support outside the classroom. Older students are given many opportunities to learn to work independently and to organise themselves. By the end of the extra year in the school, these students are made ready for further education and almost every one of them has gone on to sixth form during the last year.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactorily broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the overwhelming majority of students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum.
- The personal, social and health education programme is good.
- The Raising Achievement Centre's work has improved behaviour dramatically.
- The national strategies have had a positive impact on students' achievement.
- Enrichment opportunities are satisfactory.
- Accommodation is good.
- There are insufficient students taking up opportunities to study applied subjects in Years 10 and 11 which would provide them with the full range.
- Opportunities for students who wish to study their home language and a European language as well are limited.

Commentary

20. All statutory requirements are met. In response to the views of parents the school offers a fairly traditional curriculum particularly at Key Stage 4 where the emphasis is on academic GCSE provision. A notable exception to this is the applied business studies course, which is a popular course. The school has tried to offer more applied courses, for example in art and design and in science, but these courses failed to recruit sufficient numbers. The beginnings of a more flexible approach have been offered this year through the 'Skill Force' government initiative. This course with an emphasis on outdoor education is providing well for students who find

difficulty with more traditional approaches to learning. It is popular with boys but has not recruited any girls this year. There is further work for the school to do in providing for the full capability range and persuading students and parents that more vocationally based courses have both credibility and will provide better opportunities for success for some students. The programme for personal, social and health education is good, giving appropriate attention to sex and relationships and to alcohol and drug misuse. The school has embraced the national strategies to raise achievement for students in Years 7 to 9 and this has had a positive impact on students' achievement in both English and mathematics. Students are adequately prepared for the next stage of education with nearly all students continuing in full-time further education.

21. The curriculum is inclusive and the school has begun to find ways to ensure all students make good progress. For example some subjects are taught in single sex groups to raise attainment. There is a strong emphasis on determining aspects that inhibit students' learning, such as special educational needs, English as an additional language, behaviour and attendance. These aspects focus the work of the Raising Achievement Centre. The centre is successfully addressing issues of attendance and behaviour and has significantly reduced the number of exclusions from school. For example students are given clear targets for improving behaviour that are monitored by all teaching staff and are regularly reviewed and amended. In addition the provision of a short time-out of the main class for students whose behaviour is more challenging has a positive effect. The centre also recognises that other behaviours can inhibit learning and has run successful self-esteem classes for some students, particularly girls. Overall the provision for students with special educational needs is satisfactory and these students make similar progress to their peers, but there are some significant areas in need of improvement. Most students with special educational needs have adequate individual education plans, although those at earlier stages of identification do not. These plans are used well by some teachers, to provide for these students, but not by far too many teachers. The school provides support for students with special educational needs through a number of strategies but particularly through support for students in lessons by learning support assistants. The school has recognised that the effectiveness of this support is not consistent, but has still to address the issue.
22. A few students who finish their Year 11 studies without being ready to go on to higher education are offered the opportunity to stay on for a further year at the school. They follow one or more of three vocational courses. The school's aim is to prepare these students for further education. This it does successfully since all students who stayed on in recent years have gone on to a successful further education programme. The school also gives such students a sense of success, which engenders the confidence that they need to carry on.
23. Extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are satisfactory overall with some strengths, for example the provision in art and design is excellent. A successful summer school was run for over 50 new Year 7 students. Some useful links with the community enhance the curriculum provision. Students from a nearby public school mentor and support students in French classes and a local dance company has provided dance classes for students. The students' citizenship skills are successfully enhanced by a series of activities both in and outside the classroom. Year 11 students run a highly successful debating society which enjoys the participation of some distinguished visitors. Art and design students have worked in the community to produce beautiful artwork enjoyed by the local inhabitants.
24. The school has been able to recruit and retain a satisfactory match of teachers to the needs of its curriculum. It has done this against an increasingly difficult national picture of recruitment. The school has undertaken to train teachers to ensure it meets its recruitment needs and has a good partnership with a local higher education institution to provide this successful training.
25. The accommodation is good overall and resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is good for music, history, French and information and communication technology; very good for physical education and excellent for art and design. Some aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory; in geography the rooms are small for the class sizes and space is limited for

special educational needs provision. Resources are good in history, religious education and physical education and excellent in art and design. A new student who is visually impaired does not yet have the required adapted resources. These resources have been ordered and are awaiting delivery.

26. Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory and most of the recommendations of the last report have been successfully addressed; in particular the accommodation is significantly improved for physical education.
27. At the end of Year 8 two-thirds of the students choose to take Urdu; many are keen to learn to write their language and to learn more about their culture. One-third take French. No students study two foreign languages. Students joining the school after Year 8 must take French unless they understand Panjabi or Urdu. This results in very wide ability lower French sets and also limits the opportunity for those who wish to study both their home language as well as a European language.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for students' care, welfare and health and safety are good overall and support students' learning appropriately. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. The involvement of students in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are weaknesses in the procedures for the monitoring of health and safety.
- There are effective arrangements for following locally agreed child protection procedures.
- The school provides good opportunities for students to express opinions about life in the school.

Commentary

28. The staff generally know how to deal with any situations that may arise on child protection issues and who to report to in the school if necessary. The trained designated teacher ensures that all staff are aware of the procedures. The arrangements for first aid are appropriate with several fully trained members of staff and records kept of any treatment. The governors have a working party to oversee health and safety and the building manager tours the school weekly to identify any potential hazards. The teachers ensure that students are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and technology. However, some of the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection are still present. In particular, the school has not yet completed a statutory whole school risk assessment, even though the local authority highlighted the urgency for one to be undertaken when it carried out a health and safety audit in January 2002.
29. Students consider that they are guided well by the staff and know to whom they would go if they needed help. This would often be their tutor or head of year, but they know and would be willing to speak to one of the older students who are mentors or 'friendly ears'. Their self-esteem is raised by the way they are supported by the staff and by the range of rewards, such as praise and merits. The staff in the Raising Achievement Centre in the school provide very good support to any students with behaviour or emotional difficulties. All racial incidents are recorded and reported to the Local Education Authority, although such incidents are rare. The very good, long established links with Connexions result in students actively seeking careers guidance. Years 11 and 12 students also benefit from the wide range of visiting speakers from business, college and grammar schools to successfully guide 95 per cent of the students into further education. The very small number not yet ready to move on to higher education are given an opportunity to follow three vocational subjects. This strategy has been much appreciated by the local community getting more and more used to the idea of higher education as an entitlement. The house system leads to students having opportunities to relate

to students in other year groups. The friendly rivalry between students (and between staff!) enhances the community spirit.

30. The effectiveness of the assessment of students' achievement is discussed elsewhere in the teaching section of this report. The school provides appropriate support to guide the students. Three times each year all the teaching staff for the various subject areas pass the grades from the academic assessment, together with attitudes and behaviour etc, to the student's tutor and subsequently parents, to enable them to understand how well the student is performing. Students have a good understanding of the targets that are set for improvement. In the autumn term one day is set aside for staff, parents and students to discuss how the student can improve. In addition, for most subjects, students are aware of the levels they are working towards and what the requirements are to achieve those levels although teachers do not consistently give them day-to-day advice on how to improve their work further.
31. Students are encouraged to influence what happens in the school. In the OfSTED questionnaire the majority of respondents consider that the teachers and tutors listen to and act upon, their views. The school council meets monthly with representatives from each tutor group. The representatives are elected by their classmates and discuss the agenda with them in tutor led lessons. The school council has its own budget and the school has responded to their ideas with improvements such as to the toilets, installation of security cameras and a revised colour scheme.
32. Since the introduction of the Local Education Authority initiative to reduce the need for a statement of special educational needs the school holds regular multi-agency meetings to discuss provision for students and also regular meetings internally with representatives from each department to discuss student progress issues. These are both good initiatives under the Three Star Scheme which is the school's equivalence to statementing. Under the Three Star Scheme the school fulfils the students' entitlement to help plan their transition from Year 9. Overall, students' behaviour and attitudes have been improved significantly since the last inspection. The school's priority of raising students' self-esteem has been a main strength of its care and guidance.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good overall. Links with the local community are very good. Links with other schools and agencies are also very good in particular the provision made by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- Involvement of a wide range of organisations and people in the community extend experiences which further students' personal, social and academic development.
- Links with local primary and secondary schools are very good.
- The annual reports provide inadequate information to parents on their children's progress.

Commentary

33. As at the time of the previous inspection, in their response to the OfSTED questionnaire parents showed that they are pleased with what the school provides. They consider that their child likes school, is making good progress and is encouraged to become mature.
34. The information provided by the school is satisfactory. It sends newsletters home every half term outlining the various activities that the students are involved in as well providing general administrative information. Other letters refer to more specific matters. Teachers send home good news cards and certificates. The students' planners provide regular information on the merits so parents are kept aware of students' achievements (as well as misdemeanours). However the planners are generally little used as a means of two-way communication between the school and home. Information about progress in each subject is provided each term in the

student profiles. In the autumn term the tutors meet the parents with their children to review targets. The annual reports on progress provide only limited information. The statements about each subject provide little or no information about what the students know and can do and some of the targets for improvement are very general.

35. Parents' contribution to the attainment of the students is satisfactory. The great majority of students come regularly to school wearing their uniform and on time. Conversations with students show that while their parents may not help with homework they ensure that their children complete it. These attitudes reflect the extent to which many parents encourage their children to respect the school and education process. The great majority of parents come to the meetings with staff to discuss their children's progress. However, few come to more general meetings and parents are reluctant to be involved in a parents' association. In addition, few parents come to support their children in sports matches. The headteacher seeks the views of those parents who meet their children at the end of the school day but the school has not yet developed a structured approach to involving parents generally in what the school provides.
36. The very good links with the local schools provides additional opportunities for the students. The secondary schools co-operate in supporting students with behaviour problems. For example, students who may be excluded can attend another school temporarily. Sixth form students from Eton College act as mentors to younger students in the school and students visit the chapel for music performances and artwork. The links with the grammar school have resulted in the joint appointment of a teacher. The very good contacts with the feeder primary schools prepare the Year 6 students well for their transfer. In addition Slough and Eton run a summer school in the holiday prior to their arrival. About half of potential students join in these activities and they have spoken very highly of their experiences.
37. The links with the wider community are also very good. Several governors work in business and, for example, have provided a minibus. The school has developed very good contacts with a variety of businesses in the area to ensure that usually all students in recent years have had a work experience placement. A partnership with a private company, on the school site, enables the school to make extensive use of the five-a-side football pitches. Fortnightly, Year 11 students invite members of the wider community such as the police or army to talk to them extending their understanding of society. The post-16 students spend two afternoons a week on community service. There is also close co-operation with the public services to support students with behaviour difficulties.
38. Students with challenging behaviour and their parents and carers are well involved in reviewing their pastoral education plans and targets. These reviews are recorded and targets amended accordingly.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Governance is good. Leadership by other key staff is good. Management is satisfactory overall, with particular strengths in the management of the recruitment, retention and deployment of staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership is very effective since he inspires his staff to share his passion for students' right to achieve their potential. He has also been very successful in enhancing teachers' professional self-esteem and therefore decreasing the rate of turn over.
- Governors support and challenge senior managers. They are also a strong link between the school and its community.
- Planning - including strategic long term planning - is effective.
- Financial management is good.
- The use of student data to aid planning and to enhance learning is inconsistent across the school. Senior managers are aware of the need to coach staff in the effective use of data.

Commentary

39. The school serves a severely disadvantaged area. Its students start school with well below average prior attainment. They have low literacy and numeracy skills. They also join the school with a strong feeling of failure having been unsuccessful in the Eleven Plus. The headteacher has made it his mission to enhance his students' self-esteem and to make them feel that they are capable of success. Whatever idea a student or a member of staff might come up with the headteacher gives it a sympathetic ear and responds with an encouraging "make it happen". The result is a friendly, happy and self-critical school that has made significant improvements because of its leadership. Staff, the community and all who have a connection with the school speak well of the headteacher's efforts to improve the school including his highly successful entrepreneurial efforts at successfully raising vast sums of money from local businesses and industries.
40. The governors support the headteacher in what he is trying to do. They also challenge him and his senior team as was evidenced by their strong challenge to the test and examination results of last summer. They are willing to ask difficult questions and to hold the headteacher and his senior team accountable for what happens in the school. They fulfil their statutory duties although risk assessment needs to be completed.
41. Key staff partly reflect the headteacher's leadership although there are some shortcomings in modern languages, geography and information and communication technology. Subject leaders work as hard as their teaching colleagues to support students and to enhance their achievement. They monitor their subject areas although there have been shortcomings in monitoring the effect of assessment on students' progress and in the use of learning support assistants.
42. There is a clear focus on inclusion through the leadership of the Achievement Centre and day-to-day management of special educational needs is satisfactory. There are however some important areas for improvement in the management of special educational needs. The co-ordination of information does not facilitate easy tracking of students' progress, as information about individual students is kept in too many different places. The work of learning support assistants is not sufficiently monitored as there are significant inconsistencies and weaknesses in this provision, possibly because of there being seven new learning support assistants who started in September 2003. New staff are well supported and all staff are effectively deployed and well looked after. The result has been a dramatic increase in the number of staff who stay in the school after a turbulent period of recruitment difficulties. Key staff also replicate the headteacher's ability to motivate those around them to achieve.
43. Monitoring is comprehensive, with each subject area fully reviewed every two years. Such reviews focus on teaching and learning. There is insufficient focus on student achievement. An annual mini-review visits the progress toward the review targets and has a strong focus on achievement. This weakness is reflected by the lack of effective use of assessment results. Students' work is marked well and regularly with much praise offered to them. However, students are not given advice on how to improve their work based on the teachers' assessment. Some department heads have not responded to this weakness although it was picked up in the senior leaders' reviews.

Financial information for the year April 2001 to March 2002

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,254,796
Total expenditure	2,265,309
Expenditure per pupil	3,912.45

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	164,184
Balance carried forward to the next	153,671

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average and are well below up to Year 9.
- Students achieve well, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Good teaching leads to the good achievement.
- The subject is very well staffed.
- The department is well led and managed.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

44. Results in tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average, although well above average when compared with their attainment on entry to the school. Provisional results for 2003 show a similar picture. GCSE results in 2002 were below the national average but represent good achievement in English and very good achievement in English literature. Provisional results for 2003 show a drop in the number of students achieving higher grades, but this was in line with the school's expectations.

Standards and achievement

45. Students enter the school with literacy skills well below average and many find the work very difficult. Almost four out of every five students are not native speakers of English. By Year 9, most students have made satisfactory progress, but are still well below the national average. Their speaking and listening skills are very limited; reading and writing skills are also well below average. Many students can write imaginatively, but too few are able to construct a piece of non-fictional prose. By the end of Year 11, these skills have improved and the higher attaining students speak and write with some confidence. The majority are still below average, although good achievement has been made overall.

Teaching and learning

46. The team of specialist teachers has a very good subject knowledge, which ensures that students make progress in all aspects of the English curriculum. They set a good range of tasks to their students, but these are sometimes too difficult. Not enough consideration is given to the needs of the students who struggle with the language and some of them become disaffected, particularly in Years 7 to 9. A few teachers have problems with students who call

out in lessons and are not very good at listening. However, in most lessons, relationships are good and teachers engage their students well. Overall, teaching in Years 10 and 11 is better. Lessons are well planned and students are given relevant tasks. One member of staff is skilled in using an interactive whiteboard and this was seen being used to good effect. Good use of videos and other resources was also observed. Staff are not afraid to challenge their students and are keen to ensure that students of different groups and of both genders are fully involved in the lessons. Teachers set homework regularly and a good range of writing activities is covered by students, although only from Year 10 can many write at any great length. Work is assessed well and students know what they must do to make further progress.

Leadership and management

47. The head of department manages the subject well and has a clear vision for its future direction. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection; there is now more good teaching and standards have risen.

Language and literacy skills across the curriculum

48. Two out of every five students joining the school have not reached the expected standard in English; four out of every five have another first language. Although up to 40 attend a summer school before starting here, there are many who are unable to fully access the curriculum they are expected to study from Year 7 onwards. The Raising Achievement Centre is one way in which the school addresses these needs successfully, but more needs to be done within subject areas to enable students to overcome language difficulties. The recent appointment of a literacy co-ordinator has begun to make inroads into some subject areas although it is early days.

English as an additional language

Provision in English as an additional language is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The specialist staff are committed and provide good individual support to very early learners of English in small groups in a specialist room.
- Some class teachers use good strategies to support learning in their subjects as well in acquisition of English. As a result students who have English as an additional language achieve well.
- Some class teachers do not have or do not make effective use of skills to promote acquisition of English. Some teach in ways that do not allow support staff to teach productively in their classes.
- Assessment and monitoring of progress are weak. As a result students do not receive the amount of support that they need in the mainstream classrooms.
- Leadership and management of the provision are unsatisfactory. The needs of a significant minority are not met as well as they could be.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

49. Students with English as an additional language attain the same test and examination results as those for whom English is a home language. At the end of Year 9 their attainment is similar to other students in the school because their English has improved significantly. Their GCSE results do not differ from the rest of the school because of English not being a home language. By the time that these students stay on for an extra year in order to be acclimatised to further education, they are on a par with all students following the three GNVQ/AVCE subjects. By the end of that extra year many of the small number that stay on go on to sixth form.

Standards and achievement

50. Students who have English as an additional language achieve well during early stages of language acquisition because of overall good support given by the specialist staff. Effective support also results in developing confidence and early independence. Most lessons have appropriate balance for developing listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, sometimes the text is made too challenging to read. This hampers language acquisition. Sometimes they do not make enough use of students' home languages to develop English, for example letter sounds and meanings of words such as wash, chase and dried.

Teaching and learning

51. Some mainstream teachers have very good awareness of what makes learning more effective. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson, the teacher provided a good model of language by inviting students to read the lesson objectives and parts of a well-planned work sheet. Explanation of meaning of words such as thermometer (thermo + meter), asking students to sequence assorted letters to make the word thermometer, asking questions such as what happens to temperature when something gains or loses heat and playing a version of 0 and X involved all groups of students and consolidated new learning. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, clear explanations and progressively more challenging work benefited English learners in how to solve sums with brackets. In a Year 8 English lesson, effective use of word cards and questioning promoted understanding of the difference between 'there', 'their' and 'they're'. In a Year 7 history lesson, good focus on literacy and use of a range of effective methods in a well planned lesson improved students' language and grasp of the account of the war between Hannibal and the Romans. These lessons promoted good learning and good achievement. However, not all mainstream lessons are equally successful in supporting new learners of English. Some lessons are dominated by the mainstream teachers, making support staff far less productive in meeting the needs of the students in the class. Some lessons have no support because there are not enough support staff. Teachers in such lessons do not have effective strategies for supporting these students. In such lessons students who are relatively new to English do not make enough progress.
52. The school has recently introduced assessment of language acquisition according to the national guidance. Whilst early stage assessment and monitoring are satisfactory, this is not the case when the students move on to the National Curriculum criteria. As a result, there is no monitoring of how many students in the mainstream need support, how well they are doing and what needs to be done to meet their language development need.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management of the support are unsatisfactory because of severe constraints placed on the person designated in charge of English as an additional language who works very hard to support students and to help raise their self-esteem. The main strengths include introduction of language stages according to the national guidance, all learning support assistants doing a training module in this area of support and most teachers having done some training in meeting the needs of learners of English as an additional language. Despite this training, the quality of support that the teachers provide is not consistent. The structure and organisation of the provision within the school has a low profile, particularly given the very large number of students who need English as an additional language support. It is a servicing

department bolted on to special educational needs rather than being a central and prime driving force that would benefit the students in the school who are predominantly learners of English as an additional language. Monitoring and evaluation of the provision is not effective. As a result the provision has not been made more responsive to the needs of the students throughout the school. Progress made since the previous report is satisfactory. However, the quantity of support remains limited. The school spends its specified funding for its intended purpose. Despite these weaknesses the school does a very good job in significantly raising students' self-esteem from a low point on entry.

French

Provision in French is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers speak very good French but often use too much English, so that students do not hear or speak enough French.
- New structures and vocabulary are not practised sufficiently so that students do not gain confidence to use them accurately.
- Unsatisfactory class control of the poor behaviour of several students, mostly boys, prevents progress in several classes.

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

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

54. GCSE results are poor, significantly below the national average. Boys and girls attain poorer results than in most of their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

55. Students' best skills are listening and understanding the gist. When reading, most rely on English to understand. Most make many mistakes when writing and speaking from memory. Standards have not improved since the last inspection.
56. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Poor language skills and many temporary teachers last year contribute to underachievement in Years 10 and 11. About a fifth of students in Years 10 and 11 have recently arrived in England. Performance is not noticeably different across minority ethnic groups. Many more boys than girls study French from Year 9 so that gender comparisons are unreliable. Many girls contribute little in lessons, but in the top Year 10 set girls contributed well and a few achieved well.

Teaching and learning

57. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall; they were unsatisfactory or poor in well over a third of lessons. In addition to poor class control, poor explanation of tasks, excessive use of English and insufficient practice of correct French hinder learning. Good features are setting boundaries for behaviour, good questioning, well matched to the students' capabilities and increasing students' awareness of French-speaking countries, especially in Africa. Good

homework tasks are not always well explained. Marking, while generally accurate, does not make clear the level of the work and how the student can improve.

Leadership and management

58. The fairly new head of department has spent much time supporting and preparing lessons for temporary staff. He has improved testing, equipment and documentation. Schemes of work are not detailed enough.

Other factors

59. Only a third of students continue with French after Year 8. Students joining the school from abroad after Year 8 must take French unless they understand Urdu, so that the capability and experience range is very wide in relatively large second French sets. It is difficult to prepare all satisfactorily for GCSE. Support is often ineffective. Little use is made of information and communication technology because the equipment is unreliable.

Urdu

Urdu was sampled. Two lessons were observed, one each in Years 9 and 11.

Overall provision in Urdu is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students start from very low levels of literacy. They make good progress and achieve well.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject but use a limited range of strategies to develop students' skills in all areas of language.
- The new leadership of the subject is good and is beginning to have a positive impact on students' success.
- Improvement from the previous inspection is satisfactory.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

60. Results in GCSE in 2002 were below the national average. The distribution of grades in 2003 is similar to 2002.

Standards and achievement

61. Students' understanding of Urdu is good but their speaking, reading and writing are below average. Although they start from very low literacy, they make good progress and achieve well, a few reaching the highest grades. Not all students value learning of Urdu equally. As a result a few students do not work with expected interest and concentration. Consequently they do not achieve as well as they could.

Teaching and learning

62. Year 9 students are more keen to learn Urdu. They benefit from the expert knowledge of their teachers who prepare their lessons well. Good pace and appropriate focus on listening and speaking as well as on reading and writing lead to good learning and achievement.

63. Learning in Year 11 is satisfactory because of satisfactory teaching and weaker listening skills of students. Students are exposed to a good range of vocabulary but there is not enough focus on speaking and reading.

Leadership and management

64. This is a new appointment and the subject leader is making steady progress. He is clear about what will have the biggest impact on students' success in examinations and is putting these measures into practice, for example, coursework and a link with a university in India to provide enrichment.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There were very significant improvements in Year 9 national test results in 2003.
- The early entry to the GCSE for some Year 10 students enables them to undertake more advanced work in Year 11.
- The hard work of all teachers creates a good climate for learning and the drive to raise standards.
- The department is well organised and the collection of performance data to aid lesson planning and student progress is good.
- Numeracy across the curriculum is in place but requires significant development.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough.
- Lesson planning does not always provide adequately for students with special educational needs.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

65. Standards are below average overall. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have been well below average in the past three years. In 2003, however, the number of students achieving the expected Level 5 rose dramatically by 19 percentage points. There was a similar significant rise in the proportion of students achieving the higher levels, Level 6 or better. Results are below average when compared with schools with similar intakes but, in 2003, indicate good progress when compared with the students' own attainment at the end of primary school. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2002 and 2003 were well below average but reflect satisfactory progress when compared with the same students' results at the end of Year 9. Students perform marginally better than in most other subjects and broadly in line with their performance in English and science. Almost all students obtain a GCSE grade.

Standards and achievement

66. In Years 7 to 9, the lessons and samples of work seen indicate a wide range of attainment but, on average, students are working below the standards expected for their age. In the higher sets in Year 9 a good proportion of students reach national standards. The majority of students make good progress and achieve well. Most teaching groups are large and students are taught

as a class group, which means that some individual needs, for low and high attainers, are not always taken into account. Higher attainers are not challenged enough and sometimes repeat work in which they are already competent. In the observed lessons little targeted in-class support was provided for students with special educational needs or English as an additional language. This had the effect of limiting progress. Students work quite well together and provide mutual support.

67. Many students have a good working knowledge of basic number and most know the multiplication tables. This helps them with their work on shape and data collection. Most place the decimal point correctly and use the four rules of number in decimal calculations. Students convert simple fractions to decimals and percentages and apply what they know to finding areas and perimeters of regular shapes. One class identifies the pattern in a linear sequence of numbers and calculates the next number. The search for the formula proves a little more elusive. Most students are more secure in basic number operations than they are with algebraic terms and expressions. A check of students' past work shows a satisfactory knowledge of probability and a bar graph illustrating the results of two coins spun simultaneously. Students in the higher attaining Year 9 sets successfully graph a linear equation and make accurate intermediate readings from the graph.
68. Achievement and progress is steady in Years 10 and 11, as students struggle to come to terms with the more demanding aspects of the mathematics curriculum. The range of attainment is very wide. Setting by prior attainment enables students to work at the level that is most suited to their needs. High attaining students in Year 10 show agile minds in finding and applying the formula for quadratic number sequences. They respond eagerly to the challenge of harder questions. Some students prepare for early entry to the GCSE examination so that they may move on to more advanced mathematics in Year 11. These students are quick thinking and engage in a challenging dialogue with the teacher. Information is later transferred to a variety of graphs and appropriately interpreted. In Year 11, higher attaining students work hard to uncover the mysteries of factorising quadratic expressions and, through diligent practice, meet with some success. Lower attaining students build on prior knowledge of factors and multiples to factorise numbers into the product of their primes. In this lesson, students with special needs and English as an additional language were given individual support by the teacher's assistant to enable them to progress. Most students use calculators effectively but believe what they see on the screen rather than estimating first and discounting obviously incorrect answers. Students in post-16 are given an intensive revision course to enable them to improve upon their previous grades. These students have positive attitudes and are keen to advance their skills.

Teaching and learning

69. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has several good features. In 11 of the 12 lessons seen, it was at least satisfactory and in three it was good or very good. In the best lessons, the learning objectives are well focused and made explicit to the students. There is clear and lively teaching that engages the interest and attention of the students from the start. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. The most effective questioning is open, well targeted and used to develop students' thought processes. Relationships are good and a sense of humour is used to oil the wheels of learning. Most of all, there is a feeling of shared endeavour; students and teachers are embarking on a journey of discovery together.
70. There are some weaknesses in teaching, even in some lessons that are satisfactory overall. Mental arithmetic is not always as crisp and demanding as it needs to be. Students are not given enough time to formulate their own ideas and to explain their reasoning. The plenary session does not always draw out the main points of the lesson so that the teacher is not clear what has actually been learned. Too little support is available for students with special needs and computers are not used enough to confirm and extend learning. The quality of lesson planning is uneven and rarely makes reference to assessment information although this is readily available. Consequently lessons do not always start from the point that would be most helpful to the students.

71. The quality of students' learning closely mirrors that of the teaching. Overall, students are willing to learn and many are eager to progress. They listen well initially but some drift off-task, although a change of activity usually reclaims their interest. Some classes are very attentive, especially where the lesson content is stimulating and challenging. Other classes are noisy but settle quickly as soon as work is set. Very occasionally the poor behaviour of a handful of students spoils the learning of others.

Leadership and management

72. The leadership of the department is good and the staff work with a common purpose. The development plan identifies the right priorities which, when implemented, will lead to a further improvement in standards. The department is managed well. Initiatives to boost attainment have been carried through with determination. For example, the improved results for Year 9 students in 2003 were a direct result of the plan to have some separate classes for boys and girls. This decision was reached after a comprehensive review of students' performance. Teaching is monitored and evaluated but more needs to be done to ensure that good practice is shared. As was the case at the last inspection, resources are adequate except for access to classroom computers.

Numeracy across the curriculum

73. Numeracy across the curriculum is a priority for the department and there have been a number of well-planned training days to promote this initiative. Further development is planned. At present, the use and development of numeracy skills is dependent upon individual teachers although some departments have been more explicit in their planning than others. In art and design, for example, the department highlights skills in symmetry, measuring and drawing to scale. Students study the repeated patterns of Islamic and Japanese art and make the link with patterns in mathematics. During the inspection, in history, students use timelines to chart historical events and in geography, they use their knowledge of co-ordinates to read maps. In science, students take readings and measurements while conducting experiments and in design and technology, they draw plans to scale in preparation for completing design projects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well organised.
- Teachers make effective use of their subject knowledge to explain scientific ideas.
- The head of department provides good leadership.
- Teaching should focus more on helping all students to learn better.
- The use of ongoing assessment needs to be improved in order to make proper provision for individual students.
- Students require more help with managing their own learning.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

74. In 2002, standards at the end of Year 9 were very low; they were above average if students' prior attainment is taken into account. Results in the GCSE examinations were below average in single award science, for which most students were entered and close to the national average in double award science.

Standards and achievement

75. By the end of Year 9 most students can apply scientific ideas correctly to familiar situations. However, many have poor study skills and progress is restricted by inadequate recall of earlier work. Students find it difficult to relate different aspects of the subject. The work in students' books is sometimes insufficient and fails to provide a good basis for revision. Most students are too reliant on teachers for guidance and require more opportunities to work independently. By the end of Year 11, students use more advanced concepts appropriately in new situations. Most make satisfactory use of their knowledge of planning and carrying out investigations, although their evaluation of results is weaker. Some students are insufficiently motivated by GCSE level work, for which the school offers no alternative at present. In Years 10 and 11 some underachievement results from teachers failing to address fully the needs of the wide capability ranges found in several classes.
76. Most students are keen to learn and are inquisitive. When teaching is challenging, they respond well and show interest. However, many students have poor listening skills and lose concentration easily, mainly when teaching fails to involve them sufficiently in the work. This results in boys in particular underachieving in some lessons. While teachers' management of inappropriate behaviour is satisfactory, this occasionally leads to over-controlled lessons where students are reluctant to contribute. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, sometimes make less progress than others in lessons. This is due to inappropriate work being provided and a lack of targeted support. Some teachers fail to assess the progress of students adequately and provide insufficient help for individuals. The deployment and use of learning support assistants is poorly planned in some classes.

Teaching and learning

77. Most teaching is at least satisfactory. In good and very good lessons, teaching engages students' attention effectively and promotes high levels of individual challenge. Teachers' subject knowledge is used well to explain ideas and promote understanding. Lessons are well structured and move along at a good pace, ensuring that all students are constantly motivated. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers fail to ensure that students are learning at the appropriate level. Expectations are too low. A few teachers, mainly as a result of inexperience, are not aware of the standards students should be achieving. In a significant number of lessons, the work is not geared sufficiently to individual needs. Teachers' descriptions of scientific ideas are effective, but would benefit from the use of more stimulating visual and information and communication technology generated materials. In the best lessons, practical work is used well to extend students' understanding and to improve investigative skills; however, some practical work is over-directed and too concerned with proving scientific theories. While work is marked regularly, students are not always sure of how well they are doing. Too little advice is provided to help them improve. Homework is set regularly, but is not focused enough on developing and assessing students' understanding. While the Key Stage 3 strategy has improved the structure of lessons, teachers do not use starter activities to challenge and excite students enough.

Leadership and management

78. The head of department has a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards. Appropriate improvement strategies have been developed and are having a positive effect. Good guidance is provided on policies and procedures. Improved team working has led to more consistent approaches. The management of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but more attention needs to be given to raising the achievement levels of all students. While the monitoring of the

work of the department is effective, the outcomes need to be evaluated more to determine what still needs to be done. The department has the capacity to improve further. Greater sharing of the very good practice in the department would help to raise standards and reduce the small number of unsatisfactory lessons.

79. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. There is a good focus on raising standards; a wider range of teaching approaches is used; most teachers have higher expectations and students' investigational skills have improved. However, students still have poor recall of earlier work and the support for students with special educational needs is insufficient. The absence of gas cut-off valves in some laboratories, reported in the health and safety audit, still has to be addressed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The accommodation for the teaching of information and communication technology lessons is good.
- The standards of students in Year 11 are very low.
- The achievement of students in Years 10 and 11 is very poor.
- The management of information and communication technology resources and technical support is unsatisfactory.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Poor

Commentary

Examination results

80. Results in the GCSE examinations were very low for the last two years. Boys performed slightly better than girls did overall.

Standards and achievement

81. The quality and quantity of students' work reflect many gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding because of poor provision in previous years. Work seen does not cover the full programme of study for the subject in either key stage; there is no evidence of work on modelling or control.
82. Most students show confidence in using computers in Years 7 to 11. In all years students have below average knowledge and understanding of the use of information and communication technology and its impact on society. In Years 7 to 9, although the standard of work is below average, students' progress is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school. The standard of work of Year 11 students is very low. Much of the GCSE examination coursework is incomplete and it includes very little evaluation. Achievement by students in Year 11 is unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

83. In all years students respond well to lessons where the teacher makes good use of the screen and involves them in both starter activities and plenary sessions. Teachers are making little use of the features of the interactive whiteboards. The pace of learning in the middle part of the lesson is often slow, some students do not remain on task and learning objectives are not always met for all students. Students have little understanding of how well they are doing or what they have to do to improve. In Years 7 to 9 students' attitudes to the subject are good and they generally concentrate well when using computers.
84. In Years 10 and 11 tasks are not presented in a way that motivates students. Students are not given adequate feedback on GCSE coursework. Weaker classroom management in some lessons results in some students completing very little work during lessons.

Leadership and management

85. The new head of department has plans for the development of the subject but they are yet to be implemented. Key Stage 3 strategy materials are not yet being used. Storage of portfolios and management of individual students' network space is at an early stage. Recording of marks and assessments is not systematic. Apart from the provision of two computer suites poor progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards are no higher and the quality of teaching has not improved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. The quality of provision of information and communication technology across the curriculum was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Since then there have been significant improvements in the accommodation designated for information and communication technology. There has also been an improvement in resources around the school. Staff are better equipped to use computers and to support students in using them. Computers in the library are used outside lesson times to complete homework and carry out research. Teachers themselves use technology to enhance students' learning although this use is inconsistent across the curriculum. There are subjects that use technology well as happens in art and design where such use allows students to work independently. Students word-process their coursework and they use other functions competently. The management and maintenance of resources is likely to improve with the appointment of a new technician. The main weakness now is in the school not carrying forward the subject development plans in a way that ensures that every single student has regular opportunities to enhance his/her learning.

HUMANITIES

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of the good teaching.
- Students receive many very good opportunities to enhance their civic skills.
- The quality of leadership is very good and provides a clear vision for the subject.
- A few subjects do not make sufficient contribution to citizenship.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

Commentary

Standards and achievement

87. Students arrive in school with low self-esteem and many with a very low level of social skills. By the end of Year 9 students are more confident and can speak their mind about issues in the school council, in tutorials and in the many activities available to them. By the end of Year 11 students organise events in the community successfully. They are able to attend meetings, listen attentively, ask intelligent questions and respond appropriately. They have a clear understanding of the difference between their duties and their pleasures. The result is responsibly behaved students who are willing to take the initiative. At both key stages students gain an understanding of democratic processes. They also have a clear understanding of each other's cultures and show respect and considerable empathy.

Teaching and learning

88. In Years 7 to 9 students benefit from a good personal, social and health education programme delivered by knowledgeable teachers. Teaching is particularly good in English, art and design, music and physical education. In Years 10 and 11 it is similarly good in the same subjects as well as business studies. Other subjects occasionally focus on citizenship issues when they arise but they do not have citizenship as a recognised part of their lesson planning.

89. Students show considerable interest in civic issues. They delight in debating current affairs and have a high level of understanding of political issues. In Year 11 students have created a strong and highly successful debating society which offers outstanding sessions with many worthwhile speakers. Students arrange everything, invite speakers and dress up for the occasion. Their behaviour is immaculate and their debating skills are successfully enhanced. Teachers work very hard to support their students to achieve such successes. Students in both key stages also show great interest in taking their art and music work out into the community. They work well independently and collaboratively, representing the best of the school's democratic ethos.

Leadership and management

90. The deputy headteacher in charge of citizenship provides very good leadership. She has an outstanding vision for the subject and has worked with colleagues to audit provision and produce excellent documentation, including a very good tracking booklet and an outstanding self-assessment programme.

Geography

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good specialist knowledge.
- The new head of department is committed to raising standards and has the capacity to succeed.
- Standards are well below national averages.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory.

- A significant number of students have a negative attitude towards the study of geography and this adversely affects teaching and learning.
- There are few structures and systems in place as a result of staffing problems in the past.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

91. GCSE results in 2002 were well below the national average and results fell further in 2003 largely due to staffing problems during that year. In work seen within the school, attainment is still well below national averages and in Year 11 many students have become disaffected. Achievement in terms of prior attainment is unsatisfactory. Numbers opting for geography have declined and for the first time for many years there is only one GCSE option group in Year 10. Students have few enquiry and fieldwork skills and have a sketchy knowledge and understanding of geographical processes. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology.

Standards and achievement

92. Students arrive at the school with low levels of literacy and few skills in the subject. Many have English as their second language and their writing skills are weak and even higher attaining students have problems with sentence construction and syntax. Insufficient attention is paid to supporting these students so that by the end of Year 9 levels of literacy in geography are still low and there are few examples of extended writing. Students make insufficient progress in the development of geographical skills. In 2002 standards were very low in comparison with national expectations. Achievement is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, most students have learned some basic geographical skills. They can for example use an atlas to locate places and use simple graphs to present data. Year 7 students have demonstrated their enquiry skills by keeping up with the news for a week to extract examples of topical geographical features. They have also acquired some knowledge as shown by a group of students in Year 8 who were able to define industry in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary giving examples of occupations to show their understanding.

Teaching and learning

93. The quality of teaching overall is unsatisfactory though many satisfactory and some good features were observed. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this helps students to learn effectively. However, largely because of the department's history of staffing problems, there are significant pockets of disaffection and negative attitudes towards the subject, mostly from boys, that manifest themselves in poor attitudes and poor behaviour in lessons leading to unsatisfactory learning. This is aggravated by the small size of both of the geography teaching rooms where students are crowded together and teachers do not always manage effectively to control the situation.

Leadership and management

94. The new head of department arrived five weeks before the inspection began to find few systems and structures in place. For example there were no formal schemes of work or assessment arrangements. Records of students' work were non-existent and GCSE fieldwork

had not been started. Textbooks are old and outdated and resources are inadequate. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. However, it is evident that, with the new management of the department, there is a commitment to improve the subject provision and a start has already been made in planning for the future.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the last inspection is very good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are good and promote enthusiasm for the subject.
- Achievement is good in terms of students' prior attainment.
- Too many exercise books are poorly managed with unfinished work and gaps in content and present an unsatisfactory record of students' work.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Examination results

95. GCSE results in 2002 were well below national averages but this result is out of step with a rising trend in standards since the last inspection. In 2003 results were below national average but show good achievement in terms of prior attainment and students did better in history than in most other subjects. Standards in the current Year 11 are also below national averages but achievement is good. Students have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of twentieth century European history and evidence evaluation skills are being developed. Literacy is still relatively weak and students with English as an additional language find extended essay writing difficult. However, most can write descriptive or explanatory essays, for example "Why was Russia hard to govern in 1905?"

Standards and achievement

96. Students arrive in the school with low levels of literacy and few skills in the subject. By the time they reach Year 9 most students, including those with special educational needs, have a satisfactory knowledge and some understanding of personalities and topics they have studied. They know that history is based on evidence and have some understanding of the concept of cause and consequence. Achievement in terms of prior attainment is good.

Teaching and learning

97. Teaching and learning are good with some very good features. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers have good specialist knowledge. In the best lessons confident lesson management and very good relationships promote a positive interest in students and a purposeful learning environment. These lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and are structured to ensure a starter activity and a plenary that reinforces learning. However, the department does not have consistent strategies to help students complete written tasks in exercise books so that they may have a carefully presented written record of their learning. Too

many books are poorly managed with unfinished work and gaps in content and some students take little pride in their work.

Leadership and management

98. Leadership and management are good. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have improved and the issues raised then have been successfully addressed. The head of department has worked hard to promote the subject within the school and the numbers who opt to continue their study of history to GCSE have doubled recently. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the teaching of an unqualified graduate teacher, who has recently joined the department, is not sufficiently rigorous.

Religious education

The overall provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching overall is good.
- Examination results are good and improving year on year.
- Work is often related to students' own experiences and beliefs.
- The use of information and communication technology is insufficient.
- The management of students in a very few lessons is unsatisfactory.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

99. Results in GCSE examinations are good and above the national average. Relatively few students are entered for full GCSE examinations, but nearly all Year 11 are entered for the short course. There is a rising trend in results.

Standards and achievement

100. Students' attainment by Years 9 and 11 is average and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Muslim students, as would be expected, know much more about Islam, but overall, students through all years have average understanding of the range of religions studied. They relate their work well to their own faith and experience and this is helping them to understand more and achieve well. For example, in a good Year 7 lesson about the Ten Commandments, students were able to think of corresponding words from the Holy Qur'an and find the similarities. This made their understanding clearer and they learnt well. Students in Years 7 to 9 study aspects of Christianity and Buddhism. More emphasis is placed on Islam in Year 9, but they also study rites of passage and religion and the environment. Students in Years 10 and 11 deepen their studies by considering matters of life and death, the existence of God and aspects of spirituality.

Teaching and learning

101. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, another improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are planned well and provide a good range of activities, helping students to learn. They are encouraged to express their own opinions whenever possible. For example,

Year 9 were discussing Christian baptism. They were asked whether it matters if godparents are not practising Christians. Most students expressed ideas and thoughts about this well. They could compare this topic with the naming rites of other religions and they understand the importance of the promises made at baptism. Reflection and quiet also plays a part in lessons. Year 7 took part in a guided meditation led very well by the teacher. It was an imaginary journey, moving round the school and encountering a problem that they needed to solve. In later discussion, they used words such as 'calm', 'peaceful' and 'refreshed'. It is a very good addition to their religious educational experience.

102. Years 10 and 11 were seen using Christian and Muslim texts and unravelling the meaning of some of the difficult words. Some good work is to be found in students' books, where teachers include up to date material well. Some used a news item about the Taliban. They wrote their own views of the piece of film and whether it was fair, or had its own bias. In a similar way they wrote about the film "Jesus Christ, Superstar".

103. In a very few cases, students' behaviour is not managed well enough by the teacher. Students' lack of respect for teachers and, in some lessons, for the Holy Qur'an itself, causes the pace of the lesson to slow and impedes those who want to work.

Leadership and management

104. The head of the department is very newly appointed. Having made a satisfactory start, he has already identified several actions for the future, such as revision of the schemes of work to provide a broader base for study. The use of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory at present and is largely about the allocation of time on the computers. He has already noted this and is taking action.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Overall the provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving in most areas albeit slowly.
- Initial lesson planning is sound. Targets are not precise enough.
- Teaching is satisfactory and motivates students so that they are enthusiastic learners.
- The department does not provide a balanced curriculum.
- There are no facilities for delivering food technology and inadequate expertise and equipment for Electronics and CAD CAM.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

105. Results in the GCSE examinations were below average although much improved on the previous three years.

Standards and achievement

106. The test results and current standards in Years 7 to 9 are in line with the national averages. Improvement over the past two years indicates an upward trend and, considering the entry levels, some students have done well. Girls achieve higher levels than boys. Standards are improving in Years 7 to 9 as a result of the introduction of new schemes of work and an effective assessment and monitoring programme. Students' practical skills are developing well in most areas.

Standards and achievement

107. In Years 10 and 11, GCSE standards were below the national averages. Over the past three years standards of attainment show an upward trend in most areas, with girls still achieving higher grades than boys. There has been a significant improvement in both graphics and resistant materials which is very encouraging and as a result two talented students were entered a year early for GCSE graphics and gained B grades. The coursework standards overall in Years 10 and 11 were satisfactory, all coursework was creative and practical skills were satisfactory.

108. The progress of students with special educational needs is satisfactory, they are well supported and cope well alongside others.

Teaching and learning

109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in most areas of technology. The majority of lessons were adequately planned and organised with clear objectives but with a weakness in the delivery of textiles in Years 7 to 9. Resources used in all areas were well chosen to suit the tasks set and ensured students had equal access. The teaching in most lessons motivated and enthused the students with a positive impact on their learning. There was good recap of previous work supported by effective question and answer techniques which aided the reinforcement of their knowledge. All homework set was relevant and used as part of the lessons.

Leadership and management

110. The head of department manages the department satisfactorily and provides adequate curriculum leadership. However, there is a requirement for further in-service training. Most of the staff have changed since the last inspection. The department is now a fully committed team and this is reflected in the improving standards.

111. The school does not offer a sufficiently broad and balanced technology curriculum. Currently students only have access to resistant materials, graphics and textiles. Students do not have opportunities to study food technology due to the lack of facilities. Insufficient expertise and equipment restrict the opportunities to study electronics and CAD/CAM.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well in relation to their capabilities.
- Teachers give generously of their time and share their enthusiasm with the students.
- Partnerships with other schools and community projects are exciting and extend provision.
- Accommodation is excellent. Students are inspired by the visually stimulating displays of good work.
- The department is excellently led with energy and flair.
- Students with learning and language difficulties lack the benefit of extra support in the subject.

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

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Examination results

112. Students enter the school with standards that are below average. At the end of Year 9 in 2003, teachers' assessments placed students' attainment well above expectation with almost half the students attaining higher National Curriculum levels. In 2002, GCSE results were above the national average and they were even higher in 2003. The trend shows a significant improvement since the last inspection. For many students, both boys and girls, art represents their best result.

Standards and achievement

113. Standards seen during the inspection were good. Year 9 students are confident about using colour because they learn the principles of the colour wheel and how to mix paint in Year 7. In observational drawing students have a thorough grounding in line and tone. They learn to look carefully at entire objects and small details. By Year 9, students have a secure knowledge of these techniques, an important factor in their good achievement. At all levels, students link their own work to that of professional artists and their homework tasks frequently include such research. Students in Year 7, for example, had found out about the work of artists famous for their use of colour. They scanned and printed images by Van Gogh, Mark Rothgo and Albers and stuck the images into their sketchbooks beside collages of their own in primary and secondary colours. Students studying for GCSE on themes of optical and pop art made good use of the Internet and books to find artists like Bridget Riley, Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. A close study of artists, western and eastern, contemporary and from the past, is helping students to support and extend their own work. Students learn the correct terms for art styles, media and techniques and these are reinforced as they move through the school. By Year 11, most students talk knowledgeably about their own work and the work of professional artists and designers. As a result, almost all students studying for GCSE achieve very well and make very good progress. Higher attaining students in Years 9 and 10 are preparing to enter GCSE a year early and, through effort and extra work done at home and after school, their attainment is already higher than some of the students in Year 11. Although the art teachers make considerable efforts to help students with learning and language difficulties, there is generally no extra support available and their progress is slow and achievement limited as a result.

Teaching and learning

114. Teaching is very good overall. Expectations in lessons are clear and students follow regular routines at the start and end of each lesson. Good practical techniques are taught and returned to so that students develop and refine their skills. Teachers monitor students' progress thoroughly. Students keep a record of marks, comments and National Curriculum levels at the back of their sketchbooks so that they know how well they are doing. Teachers are aware of students' circumstances and base their sensitive guidance on their knowledge of individual students' needs. Students have good attitudes to their work. They are, for the most part, absorbed in their art. They feel valued and appreciate the extra effort the teachers make on their behalf. They are helpful, considerate and enjoy returning to the art rooms after school to continue with work started in lessons. They respond well to the stimulating displays of their

work around the school and take a keen interest in the certificates awarded to 'Artist of the Week'. A minority of younger students are attention seeking and noisy and it is to the credit of the teachers that these students are not allowed to distract others from their work.

115. A wide range of workshops run by professional artists enriches the curriculum. The stained glass window in the front door of the school is an example of Year 7 students' work with a professional artist. A sculptor is currently working with Year 9 students on a public mural to be mounted alongside the national cycle network which passes near the school. A major exhibition of students' work from primary and secondary schools across the town is due in large part to the efforts made by teachers in this school. The school's very good resources are improved further by the partnership with other schools and the many community projects in which the students are involved.

Leadership and management

116. Leadership is outstanding and central to the success of art and design in the school. Clear vision and a dedication to achieving the highest possible standards characterises the department. Courses are excellently managed. Good monitoring of lessons helps improve teaching and learning styles throughout the creative faculty. Very good records are kept and analysed to target areas that could be better. The splendid conversion to studios of an older part of the school makes accommodation a major improvement since the last inspection.

117. Since the last inspection, standards have risen and students' achievement is very good. Art makes a very good contribution to the wider community and has a significant impact on the creative and cultural life of the school.

Music

The provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership is good. The new head of department demonstrates a real enthusiasm for the subject and a willingness to learn.
- ICT continues to be a weakness.
- As yet there is no provision for instrumental teaching.
- Extra-curricular activities are as yet underdeveloped.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Standards and achievement

118. Generally students achieve to the best of their capabilities. In Year 7 students are developing rhythmic and notational skills which they are able to apply effectively in their practical work. They are making satisfactory progress given their prior attainment. Higher attaining Year 8 students were working on four bar phrases using syncopated rhythms. They were beginning to notate these and work in pairs to play them.

119. Students with special educational needs and with English as an additional language needs take a full part in the practical parts of lessons and are guided sensitively and patiently and generally achieve to the best of their abilities though there is very little learning assistant support.
120. Students in Years 7 and 8 are generally enthusiastic and keen to learn. It is more difficult to establish an appropriate work ethic in Year 9 and there is underachievement in this year group. Much of this is due to inattention and inappropriate and poor behaviour.
121. In the mixed Year 10 and 11 GCSE group, one Year 11 student is achieving in line with national expectations and one Year 10 student is identified as gifted and talented and will take the examination a year early. Students are beginning to listen critically and acquire appropriate terminology.
122. Assessment records are computerised and show Year 9 to be working at Levels 4 and 5. Observations on this inspection concluded that Year 9 students were only working within Level 4 where group compositions produced were little more than 'sound effects' and lacked any effective/developed structure.

Teaching and learning

123. Students in Years 7 and 8 are already benefiting from effective teaching. Good classroom management skills and clearly established classroom routines enable students to work hard. Lessons are carefully planned and generally well paced, though practical tasks are not always explained clearly enough.
124. Homework is set and marked in compliance with school policy. Students receive verbal feedback though the work scrutiny revealed that this is not done consistently. Lower attaining groups find the written tasks challenging.
125. The teacher's subject knowledge is secure and she has good practical, instrumental skills and excellent self – evaluative skills.
126. Extra-curricular activities are as yet very underdeveloped, in part due to the cultural difficulties of students unable to remain after school and in part due to the complete lack of instrumental provision – a hiatus whilst the school uses recently released new funds to establish instrumental provision. A small choir takes place and these students will collaborate with other schools to perform Vivaldi's 'Gloria' at Christmas.

Leadership and management

127. The head of department is enterprising and has made important connections with other neighbouring institutions.
128. She is making effective use of collaborations with Creative Partnerships and other funding that will support additional projects for the department and provide significant support for the GCSE students.
129. The departmental paper work and handbook are well organised and comprehensive. Schemes of work are thorough, though there is a need to think about the balance of theory and practical work as appropriate for the needs of these students.
130. There has been considerable improvement in the status and recognition of the subject in a short time. The new head of department is having a significant impact and shows great potential.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The insistence on high standards of student behaviour produces good results.
- The provision of GCSE (games) is good.
- The accommodation provided has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- The new scheme of work which, when fully implemented, will make a significant impact upon standards.
- Provision of after-school activities, including competitive games fixtures, is good.
- A significant number of Years 10 and 11 students do not take part in lessons.
- Lesson time is seriously eroded by students' late arrival at the sports hall.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Standards and achievement

131. By Year 9, students' attainment is in line with national expectations. Students achieve satisfactorily in acquiring basic physical skills and in applying them in team games. Students learn the elements of gymnastics and are given good opportunities for working independently on challenging activities. By Year 11, attainment has fallen behind national expectations, primarily because of the attitude of a significant number of students who choose not to take part. The GCSE group attends satisfactorily but, as the assessments show, have fairly limited games skills. The large majority of students in Years 10 and 11 do take part enthusiastically and their achievement in lessons is satisfactory and sometimes better. Most students arrive at lessons properly prepared and properly equipped. Students with special educational needs take a full part in all activities.
132. Students in Year 7 take part in a discussion about body posture before performing a series of increasingly intricate balancing movements. The students experiment with body movement and the most impressive balanced positions are demonstrated to the class, who spontaneously applaud the work of their classmates. In Year 8, students practise and refine body movements and the best are gracefully executed. Students learn the effect of exercise on their bodies and measure heart rate before and after a range of strenuous activities. In another lesson, students demonstrate their ability to travel in between benches and mats. There are several enterprising efforts, including one boy who walks several bold steps on his hands. Students in Year 9 revise their dribbling skills and how to create space by running with the ball. A vigorous practice game follows in which students demonstrate a wide variation in skill levels.
133. In Year 10, after a team talk by the teacher, students practise netball skills in a team game but show little enthusiasm for it and several students opt out altogether. Year 11 successfully complete a challenging set of exercises designed to tone up muscles and compete against their own previous bests. The Year 11 GCSE games group practises 'how to beat your man' in soccer and tackles the work so energetically that the teacher is outmanoeuvred and left on the

floor. Others from the group practise trampoline skills. In both groups a wide variation in skills is apparent but all have the opportunity to work at their own level. Skills improve steadily.

Teaching and learning

134. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, although its impact is lessened by the failure of some students to take part in lessons. In seven of the eight lessons seen, it was satisfactory or better and in five it was good. The lesson plans give a very clear focus to the development of skills. Teaching is energetic and teachers ably demonstrate what they want students to do. Thus challenged, students make a good response and engage fully with the activity. Relationships are good and laced with humour and this creates a good climate for learning. Lessons are safely conducted and students are expected to understand the effect of exercise on their bodies. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, most students had very little motivation and about one third of the group opted not to take part. This may have been a legacy of the previous year when there were timetabling difficulties but the students who opted out were not met with a sufficiently strong response. Students arrive late for most lessons, dawdling on their way from the main building. Some lessons are reduced from 50 minutes to 25 minutes activity time, which falls a long way short of the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Leadership and management

135. The department is energetically led and all teachers are working well together to raise standards and to remedy the standards deficit in Years 10 and 11 that was also apparent at the last inspection. The development plan has the right priorities, in particular, raising achievement at GCSE level and planning a residential adventure trip for Year 7. Students are taught predominantly in single sex classes, which is appropriate to the needs of the school. The management of the department is satisfactory but is compromised by the dual role of the head of department acting also as a year tutor and by the absence of the head of girls' physical education on duty as the authority's sports co-ordinator, for two days a week. The accommodation, including a sports hall and the shared use of five-a-side soccer pitches, is very good and greatly improved since the previous inspection. The recent arrival of the indoor cricket nets supplements good quality resources. The range of activities provided by the department is good and includes games, gymnastics, outdoor education and athletics. The school has recently played host to an outdoor education day in which 40 Year 10 students took part in a series of adventurous challenges. The department contributes well to after-school activities and provides regular practice sessions in major sports. There are competitive fixtures in soccer, cricket and netball.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES POST-16

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teacher support for students is very good.
- Achievement is good in relation to prior attainment and to schools in a similar context.
- The use of time and pace is not always appropriate in all lessons.
- Learning targets are not sufficiently specified to help students to raise their standards.

	Post 16
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

Commentary

Examination results

136. Results in the GNVQ intermediate examinations were average in relation to national standards. There is a rising trend in merit grades achieved.

Standards and achievement

137. Students develop sound understanding of basic business concepts, structures and goals. They understand how business develops and the influence of stakeholders on the way business enterprise operates in relation to its customers, shareholders, employees and the community. The students are acquiring good skills in the interpretation of customer information, understand why it is collected and how it is used to improve customer satisfaction. They articulate their ideas clearly and concisely, using correct terminology; this was especially well exemplified in a discussion about the impact of a major business closure on a local community and policies that might be put in place to remedy the impact. Students have a less secure grasp of simple accounting techniques used in cash flow analysis and balance sheets, sometimes a result of poor numeracy skills. Several students are producing good well-written assignments with well-structured questionnaires, others are still developing the literacy skills required. Students are gaining confidence and the level of achievement is always good, sometimes very good. The overall standard of student work is at least average in relation to national standards and good in relation to schools in a similar context.

Teaching and learning

138. Students benefit from very good teacher support and an awareness of their needs. Teaching is based on secure subject knowledge, a thorough understanding of the curriculum and a clear sense of purpose. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives. Excellent and outstanding teaching challenges and stretches the students with learning opportunities which demonstrate their potential to perform well beyond expectations. Some lessons however proceed at a much slower pace, time is used less effectively and the range of differentiation strategies less well formulated to ensure sufficient progress of more able students. Students are always encouraged to contribute their ideas and opinions and this leads to lively and interesting lessons creating a co-operative learning environment. Students are enthusiastic about business studies and make a significant contribution to their own learning. Homework is well used to reinforce learning. However, closer monitoring and the use of specific individual learning targets require development to raise standards. Key skills training is provided by the key skills team.

Leadership and management

139. The head of department is responsible for business studies provision at GCSE and GNVQ levels. The schemes of work are well developed for the GCSE examinations but less clearly specified for teaching GNVQ. There is a comprehensive policy document in place, but no systematic action plan.

Information and communication technology GNVQ (Foundation)

Provision in post-16 information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

	Post-16
Standards	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Access by students and staff to information and communication technology hardware resources in classrooms, the library and around the school is good.
- Some teachers are making good use of interactive whiteboards in their classroom teaching.
- The co-ordination of teaching, learning and assessment on the course is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching methodologies lack sufficient variety.

Commentary

Examination results

140. Results in the GNVQ IT (Foundation) examinations were well below average with the small group taking the GNVQ IT (Intermediate) all gaining a pass.

Standards and achievement

141. Most students are working at a level that should ensure a 'pass' grade in the GNVQ (Foundation) examination. They understand the vocabulary of the subject and are able to explain key aspects of text processing and database management. Improvements in teaching methods could ensure that a number gain a 'merit'.

142. There is little evidence of any independent learning, although the GNVQ students work hard to make progress in class time, having around 14 lessons a week on the subject in total. However, this progress is not reflected so significantly in their practical work. The work saved by the students on the network is disorganised and less than satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

143. Most of the teaching is satisfactory and some good, with students' learning and progress matching the pace set by the teachers. Knowledge of the subject is good. The quality of teaching is not consistent throughout the team and co-ordination is not a strong feature of the course. As a result, the students' learning is discontinuous and not always progressive. Schemes of work, to guide the course, are incomplete. Consequently teachers rely too much on the coursework provided by the examination board. There is room for more customisation of the materials by teachers. No co-ordinated assessment procedures are in place across the team of teachers.

Leadership and management

144. The newly appointed head of department has responsibility for leading the GNVQ course and this is not currently seen as a priority. Delegating the responsibility to another teacher might be the way forward in the short term, allowing more time for him to take a stronger lead on information and communication technology in the main part of the school.

145. The management of the computer network – now school-wide, is not sufficiently dynamic or robust for the amount of use that is likely to be experienced in the future.

Art and design GNVQ/AVCE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement is very good in relation to their previous attainment.
- Teachers give generously of their time and share their enthusiasm with the students.
- Excellent use is made of partnerships with other schools and community projects which involve visiting artists.
- Accommodation is very good and gives these students the space to work on different scales.
- The department is led with energy and flair.

	Post-16
Standards	Average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Examination results

146. Students start the course with standards that are below average in GCSE English and mathematics. Students who took GNVQ in 2003 all passed. Students who took the first year of AVCE gained grades which are currently being re-marked at the school's request. Numbers are currently too small to make any valid national comparisons.

Standards and achievement

147. Overall, standards are satisfactory. Students develop appropriate vocational and technical skills based on very good achievement earlier in the school and very good attitudes and commitment. They talk about their work with energy and enthusiasm. They develop ideas through a range of media, paying attention to function and purpose. They display confidence in using advanced information and communication technology skills in their assignments and product designs. Students' sketchbooks show good effort and application in work often motivated by visits out of school. The school addresses weaknesses in literacy through lessons in communication skills.

Teaching and learning

148. As a result of very good teaching, appropriately channelled to the three different courses, all students achieve very well. Teachers are enthusiastic and particularly successful at involving the students in community art projects. A recent competition won by two students is on display in Heathrow Airport Visitors' Centre. Students' ideas for tree dressing designs which they were making to display in a local beauty spot were inspired by a workshop with a professional artist. This moves their work into a public arena and gives students a better understanding of their local environment. Studies on the vocational aspects of the subject took on a new reality for students after an engaging talk from a professional sculptor, who they knew was also making a mural for public display with younger students in the school. Work on a large scale and in different media is possible because of the very good space reserved for students. Teachers integrate theory and practice effectively. Work is very well monitored and teachers are gaining experience in judging assessment against the examination criteria.

Leadership and management

149. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. Students benefit from regular support and feedback on their progress and are aware of how well they are doing. Courses are very well managed and teachers from partnership schools bring valuable additional experience to the teaching team.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	3
Attitudes	4
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	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).